

The Venezuelan Diaspora:
Toward a New Understanding of Forced Migration

By

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To my parents, María Magdalena and Julio César,
to my beloved wife Carolina and my sons Martín and Simón,
for their endless love and support

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With more than 3 million leaving the country between 2016 and early 2019, Venezuela has emerged as a leading source of migration in the world. Amidst the collapse of its economy, the progressive deterioration of the health care system, shortages of food, and an unstoppable process of hyperinflation, the case of Venezuela has not only drawn the attention of the international community but also challenged the traditional notion of forced migrations. In spite of having the largest oil reserves on earth, the country became the fourth largest flow of asylum-seekers in the world in 2017, just surpassed by Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. The next year the Norwegian Refugee Council included Venezuela among the world's 10 most neglected displacement crises even though the country does neither suffer war nor massive human right violations

I argue in this thesis that the current flow of Venezuelan emigration should be understood as a non-voluntary flow because of the similar patterns that this ongoing process shares with previous experiences of compelled displacements. I also argue that the case of Venezuela offers an exceptional opportunity to expand and improve our understanding on forced migrations, a conflicting term which still remains unclear, amidst unsettled academic debates. Based on the case of Venezuela I also suggest that, beyond violence and persecution, closer attention should be given to economic collapse as an independent triggering factor that may cause compelled migrations. Finally, I highlight the necessity of analyzing the patterns of timing and volume as intrinsic characteristics of this kind of movements.

In order to address the transformation of Venezuela from a foreigner-receiving country into a migrant-sending nation, and understand the Diaspora as a case of non-voluntary migration, it is first necessary to examine the meaning, scope and complications of this term. As such, I begin in Chapter 1 by analyzing the historical evolution of the theory on forced migration. The discussion is organized chronologically, beginning with Fairchild (1925), who coined this concept at a time when Europe was dealing with millions of expatriates and expelled populations after the end of World War I. As a consequence, the concept of forced migration as a sociological category became conflated early with the legal notion of “refugees.” Thus the understanding of the former term ended up framed in terms of a system of sovereign-state obligations to deal with the unplanned arrival of populations of other nations and the human flow resulting from political persecution and armed conflicts.

The post-World War II order helped to consolidate this approach. Although originally modeled as a restricted international mechanism to protect certain people from threats to their lives, safety and freedom, the 1951 Refugee Convention and its further protocols eventually evolved into a universal system providing assistance to victims of aggression, internal conflicts, serious disturbance of public order, generalized violence, or massive violation of human rights. As a result, the notion of forced migration was circumscribed to the movement of victims of violence and physical coercion and the process through which they become beneficiaries of international protection. By mid-century, the study of international human flows was split into two main areas: voluntary and involuntary migrations. The former were understood as economically driven free movements while the latter became synonymous with politically forced displacements.

Over time, a clear distinction in the analysis of migrations arose between this two mutually exclusive categories and a whole system of binaries emerged around concepts such as forced/voluntary, political/economic, or refugee/migrant. While every economically driven movement was defined as voluntary migration, involuntary movements beyond the scope of the refugee framework were rendered something different than forced migrations. With this last label restricted to cases of war and persecution, scholars started to focus on volition and motivations as defining characteristics of all other involuntary movements. An array of new migration categories were proposed to account for the previously unaccounted scenarios: Petersen's "impelled migration" (1958), Kunz' Kinetic Model of anticipatory and acute movements (1973), Jenny's non-voluntary migrations (1984) or Richmond's "Proactive" and "Reactive" migrations (1993).

With the growth in the numbers of refugees and migrants in the late 1990s some scholars started to argue that the distinction between forced and economic migration was becoming blurred (Castles, 2003: 17). After 2000, however, the outbreak of new situations posed by human international movements has resulted in a new wave of definitions and categories to analyze the emerging challenges: IOM's "mixed migrations" (2004), Betts and Kaytaz' "survival migration" (2009), Martin's "crisis migration" (2014), or Rigaud's et al. "distress migration" (2018), are some examples. Thus, while a consensus on what voluntary migrations mean has been in place for a long time now, the concept of forced migrations still remains elusive after almost one century since its initial formulation. Over this uncertain ground I undertake the analysis of the Venezuelan Diaspora, aware of the risks and challenges of treading into an unsettled debate, but convinced that the case of Venezuela offers an invaluable opportunity to better understand the process of forced migrations and expand the existent theory on this matter.

Chapter 2 focuses on the nature of the Venezuelan crisis and the beginning of the Diaspora. A first section explores the political, economic and social dimensions leading to massive emigration. Following McCarthy's taxonomy (2017), the opening segment addresses the three main stages of the political process from 1999 onwards, which gradually transformed a weak democracy into an autocratic regime: First, I describe an early period of polarized political competition and significant pressures on democracy between 1999 and 2006 (including a Coup d'état and a general strike against the government) in spite of which constitutional order prevailed. Then, I explore the emergence of an autocratic model between 2006 and 2012, in which a constitutional reform implemented by way of legislation, altered the rules of legislative proportional representation, and rendered elections biased. Finally, I address a phase after 2012 of open governmental repression against political opponents, in which the international community denounced the alteration of the democratic order, and put into question the legitimacy of Caracas authorities, while a number of countries (55 up to May 2019) recognized the National Assembly head, self-proclaimed president of the country, as Venezuela's legitimate leader.

Next in Chapter 2, I analyze how in spite of an early boom that increased the price of oil by four-fold in less than five years, Venezuela ended up stuck into a deep and acute economic crisis one decade later. First, the new wealth allowed the government to implement a bold welfare policy, which encompassed an expensive system of subsidies, strict price controls, and expropriations. Then, under the expectation of rising oil revenues, the Venezuelan socialist government continued to increase public spending and embarked on an expansive monetary policy that multiplied the supply of money far beyond the real growth of the economy. Finally, the contraction of the private sector and the distortions produced by expropriations, subsidies,

and price regulations along with the monetary policy, ended up decimating the economy, and the fall of the oil prices precipitated the collapse of the system.

Regarding the social crisis, Chapter 2 explores the way in which the loss of oil revenues affected the provision of public services, and negatively impacted the daily lives of people in several ways: scarcity, purchasing power, endemic diseases, malnourishment, children mortality, poverty violence and security, among other dimensions. Following, I present the volume and destinations of this massive flow which increased the number of Venezuelans living abroad from around 640 thousand at the end of 2015, to three times such number two years later and 3.7 million by April 2019. In analyzing how emigration became the adaptive response of Venezuelans to the multiple crises affecting their country, I finally address the role of South American governments, who kept open their frontiers to Venezuelan migrants and maintained, adapted or created legal instruments to allow them to stay and enjoy state protection.

In Chapter 3, I revise the four typologies of studies conducted in regards to the Venezuelan Diaspora and analyze this migratory wave based on the theories of non-voluntary migration. The first part focuses on the statistical information regarding the migrant communities, and the qualitative profiles of these populations. The second one evaluates the applicability of these models to better understand the nature and patterns of this fast and massive human flow. Among the several categories devised by scholars to analyze non-voluntary migrations, I focus on the theories of Anticipatory and Acute Movements, by Kunz; Jenny's Non-voluntary Migrations; Richmond's Reactive Migrations, Betts' Survival Migrations, and IOM's Forced Migrations. I selected these theories because they offered insights regarding human movements encompassing states of generalized deprivation, failure of the social system,

severe human suffering, and people trying to escape from outstanding perils, which produce diffuse anxieties and for which there are no foreseeable solutions.

If emigration from Venezuela is a response of Venezuelans to their internal crises, it is important to analyze the differences in the migration patterns until 2015 and after that year. The final chapter 4 focuses on the characteristics of emigration for Venezuela within the Latin American context during the period 2005-2017, and the profile of prospective Venezuelan migrants before the beginning of their Diaspora. Using LAPOP data, this section tries to show the gradual socio-demographic transformation of prospective migrants and the trend towards the surge of a negative selection pattern in the composition of the migrant flow. Finally, I will present the results of a non-probabilistic survey conducted in the summer of 2018, which provides qualitative information regarding the characteristics of current Venezuelan migrants at that time.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though forced displacements of people have existed throughout history since ancient times, its analysis only started in modern times as a subset of the voluntary migrations that rocketed worldwide in the 19th century. In his seminal study *The Laws of Migration*, Ravenstein (1889) identified among the reasons governing the movement of people, the existence of oppressive factors such as “bad (...) laws, heavy taxation, unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings and even compulsion” (p. 286) According to Ravenstein, such causes triggered flows of migration, but not comparable in volume with those arising “from the desire inherent in most men to "better" themselves in material respects” (p.286).

In his analysis on the forms of migration, Fairchild (1925) used for the first time the concept of forced migration.¹ The author coined this term to refer to those bodies of people which, “for any reason (and) without any choice of their own, are compelled to leave a certain region and go elsewhere, either with or without a specific destination” (p. 27). By stating that people are reluctant to move without external interference the sociologist identified the presence of physical coercion as a distinctive feature of forced migration. He also analyzed the objective forces that act upon people and enumerated a set of pressuring factors (scarcity of natural resources, temporary natural calamities such as drought, famine, and floods), which may interrupt “the course of an ordinarily tolerable existence” (p. 9). These factors notwithstanding, Fairchild basically circumscribed forced migrations to political reasons and the slave trade.

¹ Besides forced movements, Fairchild proposed four other forms of migration: Invasion, Conquest, Colonization and immigration, which was, according to him, the only one peaceful and completely volunteer.

2.1. Forced Migrations and Refugees

During the 1920s, the notion of forced migrations became linked to that of “refugees,” a word recorded as having been used for the first time in 1573 in France, to denote the protection and assistance provided to foreigners escaping persecution (Zolberg, 1989: 5). After the end of World War I, Europe was dealing with the almost 10 million of displaced people leaving outside their countries (Marrus 1985: 51). Russians and Armenians comprised the largest groups of those who had been forced to migrate due to political reasons after the Bolshevik Revolution and the collapse of the Armenian first republic (Holborn, 1938: 681). On May 1926, an Inter-Governmental Conference held by the League of Nations in Geneva defined for the first time the term refugee as follows:

“Any person of Russian origin (or Armenian origin, respectively) who does not enjoy, or who no longer enjoys, the protection of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the Government of the Turkish Republic, respectively) and who has not acquired another nationality (League of the Nations, 1926).

As a result of the policies implemented by Hitler’s National-Socialist regime, the League of Nations extended in 1936 the notion of refugees to German forced migrants. Two years later, in 1938, an Inter-Governmental Conference added the concept of *apatrides*, to include those persons possessing or having possessed German nationality as well as stateless persons who had left Germany and did not enjoy the protection of Berlin’s Government (League of the Nations, 1938).

After World War II, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was created in 1946 with a three-year mandate to deal with the new wave of displaced people in Europe. In 1949 the United Nations established the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and in 1951, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of

Refugees. In its article 1, the document stated that the term "refugee" would apply to any person who:

"As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UN, 1950).

In spite of its wider scope, such a definition of refugees restricted the notion of forced migrations within the ambit of international law to cases of persecution due to ethnic, religious, national or political motivations. In addition, the Convention circumscribed in its article 2 the ambitus of application of refugee status to "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951" (UNHCR, 1951). This lack of universal coverage remained until 1967 when a Protocol removed its time and space limitations to address the new refugee situations around the world. (UNHCR, 1966).

In 1969, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) expanded the definition of refugees of the 1951 Convention to include any person compelled to leave his place of habitual residence to seek refuge outside his country "owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order" (OAU, 1969). Due to the massive flows of forced displaced people in Central America during the civil wars and revolutions of the 1980's, the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984) enlarged that concept at the regional level to include those "persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order." In this way,

International law has restricted the understanding of forced migration by framing it in terms of sovereign-state obligations based on cases of political persecution and armed conflicts.

2.2. Volition and Motivations

With the rise of international movements of people after World War II, modern theory on voluntary migrations grew around neoclassical economic notions about geographical differences in the supply and demand of labor (Lewis, 1954; Ranis and Fei, 1961); cost-benefit calculations (Sjaastad, 1962; Borjas, 1990); differentials in wages (Harris and Todaro, 1970); labor needs of industrialized countries (Piore, 1979), or minimization of risk and household strategies (Stark and Levhari, 1982); among others. On the side of forced migrations, scholars started to focus on volition and motivations as defining characteristics of non-voluntary movements. Petersen (1958) proposed a subdivision of forced migrations and coined the term “impelled migration” to refer to those migrants retaining “some power to decide whether or not to leave” (p. 261). According to this typology, forced migrants would encompass only those individuals without such a power, who have no choice other than to leave. Petersen called this last category “displacement.”

Without addressing directly forced migrations, Olson (1963) argued that rapid economic growth produces winners and losers whose sense of grievance, insecurity and social dislocation, may act as a destabilizing force (p. 538). Connected with this idea, Lee (1966) suggested in his *Theory of Migration* that when responding to negative factors at the place of origin, migrants tend to be negatively selected in such a way that “it is more likely to be the uneducated or the disturbed who are forced to migrate” (p. 56). Such a notion contrasts with the positive selection that characterizes voluntary migrations (Lindstrom and Ramirez, 2010).

To the concept of negative selection in forced migrations Kunz (1973) added the notion of anticipatory movements. Although restricting his study to refugees, Kunz identified two stages of involuntary migrations: First, an anticipatory stage in which individuals leave their home country prepared and with a clear knowledge of destination, “under apprehension of future calamities” (p. 132). Secondly, he suggested an acute stage in which people flee in mass when the situation deteriorates to the point where they “find it intolerable to stay longer” and the “emphasis is on the escape” (p. 132).

Due to international concern regarding the increasing number of refugees and displaced persons in the world, whom by the beginning of the 1980s exceeded ten million (Aga, 1981), the United Nations Commission on Human Rights ordered a special report on the matter. The final document ratified that mass exodus may be caused by factors affecting any of the various spheres of human life, and specially highlighted the role of human rights violations, war, economic crises, and ecological disasters. Regarding “push factors,” Aga concluded that realities such as high population growth, food insecurity, hunger-induced rise in death rates, inflation and unemployment, “may bring large sectors of the population of the world's poorest countries to the threshold of economic distress” (Aga, p. 54).

Jenny (1984) proposed a broader definition encompassing voluntary migrations and distinguishing between refugee migrations and non-voluntary migrations (p. 388). In this typology, refugee migration matches the guidelines of the Refugee Convention, in terms of exposure to persecution, discrimination or physical threats. Non-voluntary migration, on the other hand, arises when desperate conditions (such as economic deprivation, malnutrition or

famine) make it impossible for people to remain in their home countries, forcing them to seek survival abroad in a move distinct from normal labor migration (p. 394).²

In his Refugee Warning Model, Clark (1989) posited three sets of factors determining the likelihood for refugee flows to happen: push factors (those problems which eventually may force people to leave); intervening factors (those circumstances which modify push factors and facilitate or restrain migration), and, triggering events: “those final critical occurrences that may convince significant numbers of people to leave” (p.17). Clark divided push factors between root causes (protracted structural problems affecting a society), and proximate events (the specific ways in which root causes cause new suffering). With his model, which has become known as “the four stage paradigm,” the author was among the first scholars to introduce the idea that refugee migration could be either facilitated or blocked. After him, the refugee literature has tended to suggest that forced migrations are not determined by root causes (which are considered to be of an economic nature), but are precipitated by proximate conditions, which are mainly political.

In opposition to the dichotomy between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' or forced displacements, Richmond (1993) proposed the continuum of “proactive” and “reactive” migration. The first term refers to those migrants seeking to maximize net advantage, including both material and symbolic rewards. The second, corresponds to those whose decision to move “may be made in a state of panic facing a crisis situation which leaves few alternatives but escape from intolerable threats” (Richmond, 1988: 17). Using a systems model encompassing predisposing factors, structural constraints, precipitating events, enabling circumstances and

² According to Jenny, in cases of unfulfilled ‘essential needs,’ where the physical integrity of persons is at stake, (be it in terms of well-founded fear of persecution, escaping from civil war and disturbances, from natural disasters, or fleeing famine and economic deprivation, departures are not of a voluntary nature, but imposed by existing economic circumstances.

systems feedback, Richmond claimed that migrations are not triggered by single factors, but caused by complex and multiple interaction between motivational factors and social structural determinants (p.21).

2.3. Violence and Forced Migrations

From the mid-1980s on, researchers started empirically to test the relationship between violence and forced displacement. Hakovirta (1986) analyzed the impact of armed conflicts and refugees in Africa and found a positive effect of civil war on refugee migration, and a modest-to-strong correlation between government repression and refugee exodus. Stanley (1987) and Montes (1988) evaluated the positive correlation of political violence in El Salvador with the increasing level of migration to the United States and apprehensions of those citizens at the US-Mexican border, respectively.

Using statistical analysis on population data for ten southern states and an inventory of lynching in the United States, Tolnay and Beck (1992) found a correlation between racial violence and black migration between 1910 and 1930. Fein (1993) and Jonassohn (1993) argued that most refugee migrations were caused by some type of genocide against a particular group. Gibney, Apodaca, and McCann (1994) found that the increasing number of refugees was associated with a general increase in violence and human rights violations in the world.

Based on Clark's Four Stage Paradigm Schmeidl (1997) undertook one of the first global studies on forced migrations (including data from 109 countries from 1971 to 1990). This author found that 1) institutional violence has weaker predictive power of refugee flows than measures of generalized violence; 2) civil wars with foreign military intervention produce substantial refugee populations and prolonged migration flows than civil wars without external intervention;

and 3) ethnic rebellion creates small stocks of refugees. In a further study, however, Apodaca (1998) found that, even though refugees appear to flee countries experiencing mid to high range of political terror, human rights violations proved to be a “not sufficient cause of refugee flight” (p. 88).

Similar to Schmeidl, Davenport, Moore and Poe (2003) used a dataset comprised of 129 countries from 1964 to 1989, to examine both push and pull factors using multivariate analysis. They concluded that escalating dissident behavior and that threats to security represent the most salient explanation for outward abrupt population movements, inasmuch they generate threatening environments. Likewise, they found that shifts toward democracy in authoritarian regimes are associated with forced migration because they produce changes in policies that result in more open borders that allow people to leave. Recent studies have focused in cases of state failure as a determinant factor in the occurrence of forced migration. Howard (2007) explored the way in which some features of political instability such as purges, strikes, and riots, increased the probability of state failure, and how failed states function as a predictor of forced migration, while failing states do not influence forced migration.

2.4. Environmental Forced Migrations

Amidst the international controversy regarding the real nature of refugees, Huyck and Bouvier (1983) recognized three types of refugees: political (including those escaping from wars, dictatorships and human right violations), environmental (those affected by natural disasters) and economic. Given the difficulty to lay down a clear dividing line between voluntary and forced migrants moved by economic reasons, the authors claimed that in order to qualify into the last category a person should be totally unable to locate any kind of employment in his or her own

country or to grow sufficient agricultural products to feed and house oneself and one's immediate family. "Starvation in this case becomes the only likely alternative to emigration," they state (p. 41).

A report by the United Nations Environment Program in 1985 defined Environmental Refugees as "those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life" (El-Hinnawi:4). In the late 1980s and early 1990s Jacobson (1989), Westing (1992), Myers (1993) Meyers and Kent (1995) started recognizing the validity of environmental refugees as an independent category of forced migrations, and advocated for the achievement of international environmental security as the means to address this phenomenon.

In *The State of The World's Refugees 1993: The Challenge of Protection*, UNHCR identified that, besides persecution, oppression and armed conflicts, forced migrations could also be caused by "political instability, drought, ethnic tensions, economic collapse and the deterioration of civil society" (p. 86). Drawing on these notions, Wood (1994) proposed a Provisional Model of Forced Migration encompassing three overlapping domains of pushing factors: 1) political instability, war and persecution; 2) life-threatening economic decline and ecological crisis, and 3) ethnic, religious and tribal conflicts (p. 616). While considering inappropriate the notion of environmental refugees, Woods coined the term "forced eomigration" to denote "a type of migration that is propelled by economic decline and environmental degradation" (p. 617).

Cardy (1994) listed three main factors causing environmental forced migrations: 1) Extreme events such as natural disasters or industrial accidents that create temporary

environmental disruption; 2) Planned, or unplanned, relocation for "development" purposes, and 3) inadequate resources to maintain life which can produce hardship, starvation or famine. In his view, only the last case is likely to produce migrations beyond the national frontiers and produce refugees (p. 3).

Other scholars have challenged the scope of the "environmental refugee" concept. Suhrke Visentin. (1991:74) suggest that the term should be reserved for "those individuals with least resources who must wait until (...) the situation is so bad that they are pushed out of their home regions." Perout (1995) proposed that those who are able to leave early in the crisis, when the environment has not reached a critical stage, should therefore not be given environmental refugee status as they are fleeing only a perceived future threat to their lives (p. 89).

Bates (2002) questioned El-Hinnawi's typology as generic, and proposed a different classification based on three categories of disruptions: disasters, expropriations, and deterioration (p. 469). Disaster refugees, in her model, are produced by unintended catastrophic events, which can have natural or technological origin. Expropriation refugees originate in a deliberate disruption which can be caused by economic development or warfare and render the environment unfit for habitation. Finally, deterioration refugees come from the gradual degradation of the environment until a point where human survival is not possible. For Bates, displacements triggered by the gradual deterioration of the environment resemble voluntary migrations more than the refugee condition (p. 475).

Other researchers, such as Homer-Dixon (1991), Kibread (1997), Lonergan (1998), or Black (2001), completely denied the validity of environmental refugees as a category. Homer-Dixon states that the term is "misleading," in as much "it implies that environmental disruption could be a clear, proximate cause of refugee flows" (p. 97). After analyzing the relationships

between insecurity, environmental change and population displacement, Kibread concluded that in many cases famines and the consequent movement of people is the result of armed conflicts rather than of environmental disasters (p. 20). Lonergan, on his part, posits that “it is extremely difficult to isolate the specific contribution of environmental change in many forms of population movement” (p. 11). Finally, Black argues that the conceptualization of “environmental refugees” as a primary cause of forced displacement is “unhelpful and unsound intellectually, and unnecessary in practical terms” (p. 2), given the abundance of typologies and the lack of agreement or understanding of what these categories might really mean.

In its 2018 report on climate migration, however, the World Bank projects that “without concrete climate and development action,” that by 2050 just over 143 million people – or around 2.8 percent of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America – “could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of climate change” (Rigaud et al., 2018: xix). This document, although recognizing environmental issues as a leading factor of forced displacements and the anticipatory nature of these movements (in contradiction to Suhrke & Visentin) fails, however, to address the international dimension of environmentally driven migrations.

2.5. Economic Forced Migrations

Even though since the early 1980s UNHCR identified economic underdevelopment as a fundamental cause of contemporary refugee flows (Zolberg et al, 1989: 259), empirical studies have dismissed the influence of economic conditions on refugee migration (Hakovirta, 1986; Clark, 1989; Gibney, et al. 1994; Schmeidl, 1995, 1997; Apodaca, 1998; Davenport et al. 2003). These studies, however, have intrinsic limitations: Hakovirta restricted his analysis to a

comparison of correlations, which limited his ability to rank the importance of causes and test their effects on refugee migration variables. Gibney et al. focused on the global level, rather than in national-level trends, and consequently could not distinguish between countries that produce forced migration and those that do not.

Schmeidl avoided previous flaws by focusing her analysis on countries that produced forced migration flows and others which did not. The author conducted a multivariate analysis to consider both pull and push factors. However, she selected as the dependent variable the stocks of refugees, a category granted only on account of political factors. Had she included people in refugee-like situations, for example, environmental and economic refugees, “the effect of economic factors on forced migration might have been stronger,” admits the author herself (p. 303). Apodaca also ignored internally displaced people, while Davenport et al. used GNP per capita as a proxy for a number of concepts that are expected to influence people’s decision to leave. “Perhaps this measure is not a good enough proxy,” concluded the authors (p. 43). Using as dependent variables the change in standard of living index and the Gini coefficient, Howard (2007) failed to achieve either statistical or substantive significance of deteriorating economic conditions on forced migration.

Case studies not based on statistical data analysis, however, have posited a link between authoritarian regimes, economic conditions and refugee flows. Lundahl (1979) found a relationship between poverty and forced migration in Haiti. Rumbaut’s study (1991) of Indochinese refugees living in the United States also supports the argument of economic insecurity contributing to forced migration. Amidst the debate on economic crisis as a triggering factor for forced migration, Myers and Kent (1995) –when claiming the existence of environmental refugees— highlighted the need to differentiate as clearly as possible, between

those who are essentially economic migrants and those who are basically environmental refugees. In his view, rather than for climate-weather related factors, “some people with moderate though tolerable circumstances at home feel drawn by opportunity for a better economic life elsewhere” (p. 17). Conversely, Weiner (1996) concluded that countries governed by “rapacious elites” may experience “severe deterioration of living standards, rising prices, a declining availability of essential goods, increases in crime, widespread unemployment, and a lack of opportunities for young people” (p. 25). All these factors can promote forced migration.

When studying forced migrants, Ager (1999) found that prior to refugee flight, households experience serious financial hardship and concluded that economic disruption “represents a well-founded threat to the well-being of an individual and plays a major role in the decision to flee” (p. 68). Other researchers, such as Moore, W.H. and Shellman, S.M. (2004) or Buzurukov and Lee (2016), have found empirical correlations between refugee flows and economic factors. Using Gross National Product (GNP) per capita as a proxy for income opportunity, Moore and Sherman concluded that higher GNPs reduce both the probability that a country will produce refugees and the number of them (p. 741). The analysis of a sample of 125 countries from 1969 to 2012 to gauge the determinants of refugee migration during and after the end of the Cold War, provided Buzurukov and Lee support for the hypothesis that poverty is an important factor influencing forced migration. The authors concluded that over the Cold War period, refugee migration was driven primarily by “genocide, civil and international wars. In contrast, after the post-Cold War period refugee migration is driven primarily by poverty, human rights violations, and violent/non-violent conflicts,” they state (p. 15).

However, when addressing the case of Zimbabwe, a country that emerged as a leading source of migrants in the post-2000 era, Chikanda (2017), clearly differentiates between

economic migrants and those escaping from violence. While labeling the former as voluntary and restricting the notion of forced migrants to the latter, the author highlights the extent to which economic migrant's asylum application strategies posit a challenge to refugee processing systems and "can potentially generate gaps in protection for genuine asylum seekers" (p. 19).

2.6. Human Dimension vs. State Dimension

While part of the literature has focused on the human dimension of forced migrations (that is, the reasons compelling people to resettle), another has dealt with it from the broader states perspective regarding international migrations. From this point of view, forced migrations are addressed in terms of how multilateral organisms and states face such movements and how states allow or prevent them to happen. In its Constitution, the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) states that international migration encompasses not only free flows of people but also "that of refugees, displaced persons and other individuals compelled to leave their homelands" (1989:9). Thus, a clear distinction in the analysis of migrations has arisen in the international arena between voluntary and forced movements of people, which are considered mutually exclusive categories.

Although different UN organisms (OIM, UNHCR, ILO) recognize that displacement can be caused by conditions that "implicitly or explicitly constitute violations of their economic, social and cultural rights, both individual and collective", current international law restricts the system of protection and assistance just to victims of violations of certain political rights contained in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees (ILO, 2001: 3). As a result, a significant part of the available literature restricts the understanding of "forced migrations" to the beneficiaries of the international system of protection, and conflates the use of

the term “forced migrants” with the notion of “refugees” (Buzurukov and Lee, 2016; Chikanda, 2017; Homer-Dixon, 1991; Huyck and Bouvier, 1983; Moore and Shellman, 2004).

In the case of Zimbabwe, scholars have averted the use of the term forced migrations. To circumvent “the conventional binaries - forced/voluntary, refugee/migrant, political/economic - used by states and international bureaucracies to define, categorize, manage and control migrants” (Hammar et al., 2010: 266), authors have turned to the concept of “displacement.” Although existing in the international arena and explicitly linked to the notion of “forced or obliged to flee,” (Deng, 1999: 484) this term is, however, restricted to internal movements within states and does not include those compelled due to economic constraints. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement drawn by the United Nations only advocate against compelled and arbitrary movements originated on racial, religious or ethnic discrimination; armed conflicts; large-scale development projects; disasters and collective punishment (UNHCR, 1998: 8).

From a state dimension, the restriction of forced migrations to the notion of refugees also encompasses unintended implications. As Van Hear et al. (2009) highlight, the asylum condition entails both a hierarchy of beneficiaries and a dependence on public policies in host countries. Regarding the first point, this author states that “the better endowed can buy a better quality of asylum” (p. 16). As a consequence, from a state dimension a forced migrant or refugee is a person facing conflict or persecution who is forced to move, and depending on his/her access to economic resources, can choose a more favorable destination. Regarding the second point, Van Hear poses that rather than the necessities of the asylum seekers, refugee protection for forced

migrants in the Global north is granted based on the labor market necessities of the host countries.³

With the growth of the international migrations (from 75 million persons in 1965 to 150 million in 2000)⁴ and the increase of refugee claims in developed countries, many governments restricted their asylum policies after the 1980s (UNGA, 2003:11). With other channels of legal migration virtually closed, the nature of international flows of people (and the understanding of forced migrations) is also complicated with the rise of illegal immigration. To the binary volition-motivations Doyle (2004) added the dimension of legal status. According to him, voluntary and economically driven migrants and involuntary displaced refugees encompass a category of authorized migrants, while the product of smuggling or trafficking in human beings has given rise to undocumented ones (p. 2). Such approach shifts the understanding of forced migrants from the original reasons causing people to move to the to the later characteristics of their migratory process when entering a host state

2.7. New Typologies of Forced Migration

Over time, voluntary movements have usually been conflated with economic motivations, while political factors have become synonymous of forced displacements. As a result, the debate regarding whether persons who leave their country of origin due to economic conditions are even refugees or simply economic migrants, remains open. While there is a consensus on a definition of voluntary migrations as “the movement of economically active people seeking to satisfy essential economic or social needs, with the intention of improving their living conditions in a

³ McDowell (1996) found that Tamils Refugees doubled in Switzerland throughout the 1980s during a period of liberal asylum policy, while there was demand in catering and hospitality sectors. However, with recession in the 1990s the atmosphere changed and a more restrictive regime emerged.

⁴ World Migration Report 2000, IOM, 2000.

country other than their country of origin or habitual residence” (Jenny, 1984: 390), consensus on the concept of forced migrations remains elusive.

At the 11th Bi-Annual Conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, Nassari (2009) restricted the concept of forced migrations to those encompassing at least one of three factors: “absolute compulsion, threat and coercion and actual harm” (p. 3). For its part, Rigaud et al. (2018) consider them as the relocation process of people in which an element of coercion exists, and “the decision to move may include some degree of personal agency or volition” (p. viii).

Without a consensual understanding of compelled displacement, some scholars argue that the distinction between forced and economic migration is becoming blurred (Castles, 2003: 17), while new definitions and categories arise to deal with the nature of similar movements. After 2000, the challenges posed by human international movements where asylum seekers were found alongside labor migrants gave rise to the concept of “mixed flows.” The IOM defined the term as “complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants” (IOM, 2004: 42), whose principal characteristics include their irregular nature, the multiplicity of factors driving them, and the fact that the vast majority of these migrants may have humanitarian needs (IOM, 2008:2).

In its 10-Point Plan of Action for Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration, the UNHCR (2007) highlighted the irregular nature of these movements, in the sense that they take place without the requisite documentation and frequently involve human smugglers and traffickers (p.1). Crush, Chikanda and Tawodzera (2012), criticize the restriction of the term to its “irregular” dimension inasmuch as it confines the understanding of such migratory flows to a state-centered approach (p.58). During the 2000s, the term Mixed Migration became closely

linked with the irregular movements of people mainly originated in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia) and the Great Lakes Area (Rwanda, Congo and Burundi), involving current refugees dissatisfied with the camps where they were confined in host countries; individuals with valid claims to refugee status; vulnerable people affected by poor governance and harsh economic circumstances; and others who just seek for better livelihoods, merge in single flows (Crisp and Kiragu, 2010:10).

Van Hear et al. (2009) pose that “mixed migration” refer to those cases in which combinations of choices and constraints simultaneously motivate and compel people to leave. In his view, people can move for a mixture of reasons (ranging from persecution and violence to lack of means of livelihood and search for opportunities), their motivations can change in the course of migration and people may find themselves in mix communities of travelers and settlers (p. 26). Based on the notion that human movements are the response to dire circumstances, the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University coined the term “crisis migration” to refer those movements triggered by humanitarian crises. According to Martin et al. (2014) few migrants are wholly voluntary or wholly forced, and almost all migrations involve a certain degree of compulsion and choice (pp. 5-6). These authors also state that crisis migrations produce “displacement” among those “compelled to move by events beyond their direct control” and “anticipatory movements” within those who forecast future threats to their lives, physical integrity, health or subsistence (p. 5). In their view, different kinds of crises produce different types of vulnerabilities and, as a result, the fulfillment of protection needs requires of individualized approaches. Although conceived as an independent category, the notion of crisis migration overlaps to some extent with that of mixed migration, which according to the IOM (2008) often come to public attention as emergencies (p. 3).

As an attempt to breaking down the political/economic dichotomy arising from forced and voluntary migrations and highlighting the fact that some people are motivated to move by existential stakes, Betts and Kaytaz (2009) posited the concept of “survival migration” for the analysis of massive migrations from Zimbabwe. This concept, according to the authors, refers to people “who flee their country of origin because of an existential threat and lack the possibility of a domestic remedy” (p. 5). Correlated with the notion of survival migration, Rigaud et al. included in the 2018 World Bank report on Internal Climate Migration, the concept of “distress migration” which encompasses those movements triggered when individuals “perceive that there are no options open to them to survive with dignity, except to migrate” (p.viii).

2.8. Forced Migration and International Protection

After the worldwide stock of migrants surpassed 244 million people in 2015, the United Nations launched in 2016 a two-year process to develop a global compact on Refugees and another for safe, orderly and regular Migration. This process was aimed to protect the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status, and reaffirm the sovereignty of states to determine their migration policy and to govern migration within their jurisdiction (UNGA, 2016: 9). Part of this challenge was addressed by the IOM (2016) through its Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, which includes non-binding provisions to granting humanitarian assistance to migrants coming from these environments.

As a complement to the UN efforts to develop a universal system for international migration, Columbia University drafted a Model of International Mobility Convention (MIMC), which expands the scope of protection granted to refugees to other “forced migrants.” This last category was defined as those people compelled to leave their counties “owing to serious threats

to life, physical integrity or freedom” or “the risk of suffering serious harm” (Doyle, 2017: 66). “Serious harm” according to Doyle and Borgnäs (2018), encompasses, cases of external threat to life that go beyond just State-based persecution, civil wars and generalized violence, such “life-threatening drought or floods,” or other situations “caused by climate change” (p. 6). Their definition, however, did not include economic reasons.

The unwillingness of the International community to expand the scope of the convention governing refugees (McNamara, 2007, Martin, 2016; Apleby, 2017) was ultimately ratified in the final Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration signed in Morocco in Dec. 2018. This document preserves the distinction between migrants and refugees and conflates this last term with forced migrations, while ratifying that refugees are the only entitled to the specific international protection as defined by international law (UNGA, 2018: 2). For its part, the Global compact on Refugees, which had not been signed yet by mid-2019, would not be legally binding, and would be operationalized in a voluntary base depending on national policies and states priorities.

As the review of the literature makes it evident, the proliferation of typologies and unsettled debates regarding the meanings and scope of multiple definitions complicate sociological analysis of forced migrations. Over time the notion of “forced migrations” has been conflated with that of “refugees” and as a result the study of non-voluntary movements has become restricted to its legal implications and the study of those cases in which individuals become subjects of foreign protection under the international law. While the task of exploring the factors that prompt abrupt population movements remains incomplete, the case of Venezuela offers an invaluable opportunity to better understand the process of forced migrations and expand the existent theory on this matter.

CHAPTER 3

THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS

In spite of having the largest oil reserves on earth, and having been one of the richest countries per capita in Latin America up to the mid-1980s, Venezuela started being impacted by one of the largest humanitarian crises in the western hemisphere after 2015. A mix of lower oil prices, wrong public policies, increasing crime rates, corruption and governmental mismanagement led to the progressive deterioration of the health care system, a chronic shortage of food and medicine, and massive emigration. In the midst of the economic collapse, the value of money depreciated at a dizzying pace while hyperinflation became unstoppable. As a response to the crisis, around 10% of the population left the country between 2015 and the beginning of 2019. The Norwegian Refugee Council included this process of accelerated depopulation among the 10 largest neglected displacement crises in the world. The Venezuelan crisis has multiple components: political, economic, human, and international within the regional context. The objective of this chapter is to describe the process that led to this massive exodus to better understand its nature, in every one of these dimensions.

3.1. The Political Crisis

After his election and ascent to power in 1999, Lieutenant-Colonel Hugo Chávez, started a political process known as the “Bolivarian Revolution.” Over nearly two decades in power, this political project gradually eroded the system of checks and balances secured in the Venezuelan constitution, packing the Supreme Court (Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, or TSJ) , the electoral authority, and other branches of the state with unconditional supporters (International Crisis

Group, 2018). The Wilson Center, a non-partisan policy forum based in Washington D.C, identifies three stages during this period, labeled Democracy under Heavy Strain, Electoral Enclave in Autocratic Rule, and Instability and Authoritarian Rule (MacCarthy, 2017). The main features of each stage are summarized below.

3.1.1. Democracy under Heavy Strain

Between 1999 and 2006 three patterns dominated Venezuelan politics, according to McCarthy: a) an institutional overhaul that entailed the drafting of a new constitution led by “the autocratic rule of the charismatic President Chávez”; b) open political conflict, including a coup that toppled Chavez for 48 hours in April 2002 but eventually failed, and a general strike launched by an alliance between the main national association of businessmen (Fedecámaras) and the largest workers union (Confederation of Workers of Venezuela, CTV) which lasted 62 days between December 2002 and January 2003; and c) a heated electoral competition encompassing six elections in six years, including a recall referendum on Chavez’s mandate in 2004 and the 2005 National Assembly vote in which the opposition abstained. According to McCarthy, these patterns yielded a “hybrid regime characterized by authoritarian as well as democratic elements,” because although the government’s actions put a heavy strain upon democracy, they did not yet entail a breakdown of the democratic and constitutional order (McCarthy 2017, p. 9).

3.1.2. Electoral Enclave in Autocratic Rule

Between 2006 and 2012, the opposition participated in all the electoral processes including the presidential vote of 2006. The next year, in 2007, Chávez suffered his first defeat

when he lost a referendum to reform 69 of the 350 articles of the Venezuelan Constitution.⁵ The proposal to build Bolivarian Socialism was defeated by a 1.4 percent margin, but Chávez partially implemented the reform by means of laws introduced and approved by the National Assembly (NA). In 2008, the Venezuelan Comptroller General published a list of 272 individuals disqualified from running for elected office,⁶ which was interpreted as an undue restriction on citizens' political rights. In February of 2009, Chávez won a new referendum to eliminate term limits for all governmental mandates (mayors, governors and president) and started appointing parallel authorities that directly competed with elected opposition governors. The next year, 2010, Chavez' popular support declined but the reforms of the rules to elect the National Assembly (NA) allowed the pro-government coalition to gain control of over 60% of NA in spite of having received only 48.1% of the vote.⁷ According to McCarthy, as a result of these events, between 2008 and 2009 the Chávez government had imperiled democracy and "Venezuela crossed a threshold into competitive authoritarian rule" in which elections remain but the democratic playing-field is rendered "highly skewed" (p. 12, 13).

3.1.3. Instability and Authoritarian Rule

After being reelected in early elections in October 2012, the death of Chávez (officially pronounced on March 5, 2013), weakened the "Bolivarian Movement." His political heir, Nicolás Maduro, narrowly won the April 14, 2013 election by a margin of 1.6 percent over the

⁵ Simón Romero (Dec 3, 2007). Venezuela Hands Narrow Defeat to Chávez Plan. *The New York Times*. Available <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/03/world/americas/03venezuela.html>.

⁶ Oposición venezolana protesta por inhabilitación de candidatos. *La Nación*, (Jun 7, 2008). Available at: <https://www.nacion.com/el-mundo/oposicion-venezolana-protesta-por-inhabilitacion-de-candidatos/A7L7HUEGBBBDTCBTZ4JK7LIHBA/story/>

⁷ Francisco Monaldi. et al (2010). Las Elecciones Legislativas de 2010 en Venezuela: Cuando dos más dos no son cuatro. *Temas de Coyuntura*: 62 (Dec 2010): pp. 37-77. Available at: <http://revistasenlinea.saber.ucab.edu.ve/temas/index.php/%20temasdecoyuntura/article/viewFile/1182/1060>

same candidate the late president had defeated by 10 points,⁸ five months before.⁹ In January 2014, the repression of student protests at the hands of the security forces impelled a segment of the opposition to call for direct action against the government. The initial activity of this movement, called “La Salida” (The Exit), was a mass mobilization on National Youth Day (February 12) that started peacefully but devolved into violence and ended with three dead from gun shots.¹⁰ The organizer of the protest, Leopoldo López, was detained and sentenced to 14 years of prison for “inciting violence.”¹¹ His imprisonment spurred a more intense nationwide cycle of protests marred by vandalism that left 43 dead, around 800 injured, and 3,414 detained, 62 of whom were still jailed ten months later.¹² Toward the end of 2014, opposition politician María Corina Machado was stripped of her seat in the National Assembly, accused of conspiring to assassinate president Maduro. The removal from office of Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma soon followed in February 2015, accused of plotting a coup backed by the United States. Both Machado and Ledezma claimed the charges against them were fabricated by the government.

In the context of increasing repression, declining popular support for the government, and economic crisis, the opposition coalition Mesa de la Unidad (MUD) secured control of two-thirds of the NA Legislature in the December 2015 elections.¹³ Nominally entitled, because of its qualified majority to impeach ministers, reform the Constitution and accuse the President, the

⁸ Chavez re-elected as Venezuelan president, defeating Capriles. CNN (Oct. 9, 2012). Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2012/10/08/world/americas/venezuela-elections/index.html>

⁹ Nicolás Maduro narrowly wins Venezuelan presidential election. (Apr. 14, 2013) *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/15/nicolas-maduro-wins-venezuelan-election>

¹⁰ Venezuela student protest ends in deadly violence. (Feb. 13, 2014) BBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26166094>

¹¹ Sibylla Brodzinsky (Sept. 10, 2015). Venezuela opposition leader Leopoldo López jailed for nearly 14 years. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/11/venezuela-opposition-leader-leopoldo-lopez-sentenced-to-14-years-in-jail>

¹² Tortura y cárceles sin cesar, balance 2014. (Jan. 9, 2015) Foro Penal Venezolano. Retrieved from: <https://foropenal.com/2015/01/09/tortura-y-carceles-sin-cesar-balance-2014/>

¹³ William Newman (Dec. 6, 2015). Venezuelan Opposition Claims a Rare Victory: A Legislative Majority. *The New York Times*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/07/world/americas/venezuela-elections.html>

powers of the new Parliament were nullified by the TSJ, which declared unconstitutional 11 of the 15 laws approved by the National Assembly in 2016.¹⁴ In October, the TSJ removed budgetary authority from the NA, granting itself the right to approve the national budget presented by the Executive.¹⁵ Two weeks later, the initiative of the NA to activate a recall referendum to revoke Maduro's mandate was overturned by Venezuela's election board, based on reports of presumed fraud in the process of collecting signatures.¹⁶

In May 2016, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, denounced the “alteration of the Constitutional order” and “democratic order” in Venezuela and called for a hemispheric summit to invoke Article 20 of the Inter American Democratic Charter (IADC).¹⁷ OAS decided on June 23rd to study the situation in Venezuela but not to activate the Democratic Charter,¹⁸ which would have implied the immediate convocation of the Permanent Council to undertake the necessary diplomatic initiatives to foster the restoration of democracy. In 2017, delegates of 14 American countries established in the Peruvian capital the Lima Group, a multilateral body aiming to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis in Venezuela. Due to the escalation of the political conflict, in December 2018 the

¹⁴ 11 leyes fueron declaradas inconstitucionales por el TSJ durante 2016. (Dec. 28, 2016) Globovision.com. Retrieved from: <http://globovision.com/article/11-leyes-fueron-declarada-inconstitucionales-por-el-tsj-durante-2016>

¹⁵ Elizabeth Malkin & William Casey (Oct. 12, 2016) Venezuela's Supreme Court Consolidates President Nicolás Maduro's Power. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/13/world/americas/venezuela-nicolas-maduro.html>

¹⁶ Andrew Cawthorne & Diego Ore (Oct. 21, 2016) Venezuela is on edge after a referendum to remove Nicolas Maduro was blocked. Reuters. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/venezuela-on-edge-after-referendum-to-remove-maduro-blocked-2016-10>

¹⁷ Michael Shifter (Jun. 17, 2016). The Diplomatic War to Topple Venezuela's Strongman. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/17/venezuela-maduro-almagro-oas-chavez/>

¹⁸ CNN. (Jun, 23, 2016) OEA decide estudiar situación de Venezuela pero no activa la Carta Democrática. Retrieved from: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2016/06/23/oea-decide-estudiar-situacion-de-venezuela-pero-no-activa-la-carta-democratica/>

Southern American trade bloc (Mercosur) voted to suspend Venezuela based on violations of human rights and trade rules.¹⁹

The political crisis had escalated since 2017, when on March 29, the TSJ, controlled by Maduro, took over the legislative powers of the National Assembly.²⁰ Four months later, the President's call for a Constituent Assembly resulted on July 30th, in the election of 545 representatives (all of them pro-government), who were endowed with supra-constitutional powers and authority over all existing institutions.²¹ Amidst a process ripe with irregularities, the newly elected legislators "soon proved an asset in the government's bid for control" (International Crisis Group, 2018).

In January 2018, the Constituent Assembly decided to move the presidential election, originally scheduled in the Constitution for December, to May.²² Prior to the announcement, some opposition leaders, including the coalition's candidate during the previous two elections, were disqualified and prevented from participating.²³ The day after the election, the Lima Group denounced Maduro's "illegitimate" re-election. In a collective statement, the multilateral organization announced that its country members would not recognize the legitimacy of the

¹⁹ BBC. (Dec. 2, 2016) Mercosur suspends Venezuela over trade and human rights. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-38181198>

²⁰ UPI. (March. 30, 2017) Venezuela high court to take over National Assembly duties. Retrieved from: <https://www.upi.com/Venezuela-high-court-to-take-over-National-Assembly-duties/6171490883553/>

²¹ Jennifer McCoy (Aug. 1, 2017) Venezuela's controversial new Constituent Assembly, explained. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/01/venezuelas-dubious-new-constituent-assembly-explained/?utm_term=.229b370740a7

²² Kirk Semple (Jan 24, 2018). Venezuela Calls for Early Elections, and Maduro Aims to Retain Control. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/world/americas/venezuela-election-maduro.html>.

²³ Infobae (Jan. 23, 2018). Elecciones en Venezuela: estos son los principales líderes de la oposición inhabilitados por el régimen de Nicolás Maduro. Retrieved from: <https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2018/01/23/estos-son-los-presidenciales-opositores-inhabilitados-por-el-regimen-de-nicolas-maduro/>

elections carried out in Venezuela, for “not complying with the international standards of a democratic, free, fair and transparent process.”²⁴

On January 10, 2019, when Maduro inaugurated his second Presidency, the Organization of American States (OAS) reached the threshold of 19 votes required to approve a resolution through which the Inter-American body did “not recognize the legitimacy of Nicolas Maduro's new term.”²⁵ Two weeks later, on January 23, the newly appointed National Assembly head, Juan Guaidó, proclaimed himself interim president of the nation and the U.S. government immediately recognized his mandate.²⁶ On February 4, nine European countries (France, Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and the Netherlands) recognized Guaidó as interim president after the expiry of an eight-day ultimatum for Maduro to call a new election.²⁷

3.2. The Economic Crisis

Following a decade of political instability, economic decline and social turmoil,²⁸ the arrival of Hugo Chávez to the Presidency coincided, after 2000, with an economic boom. In 2003 the price of petroleum climbed to \$25 per barrel, a value not seen since the early 1980s, and

²⁴ Amanda Conolly (May. 21, 2018) Canada, Lima Group members will not recognize result of contested Venezuelan election. Global News. Retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/4221992/canada-lima-group-venezuela-elections/>

²⁵ OAS (Jan. 21, 2019) OAS Permanent Council Agrees "to not recognize the legitimacy of Nicolas Maduro's new term." Retrieved from: http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-001/19

²⁶ Deutsche Welle (Jan. 23, 2019) Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido declares himself acting president. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/venezuelan-opposition-leader-juan-guaido-declares-himself-acting-president/a-47201512>

²⁷ Eliza Mackintosh (Feb. 4, 2019) European nations recognize Juan Guaido as Venezuela's interim president. CNN. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/04/americas/europe-guaido-venezuela-president-intl/index.html>

²⁸ In 1989, a popular uprising in Caracas left hundreds, and perhaps even thousands, dead and led to a national curfew that lasted several months. In 1992 there were two failed coup d'état, and the following year President Carlos Andres Perez, who 20 years earlier inaugurated the era of the oil boom, was impeached, tried and sentenced to prison.

before the end of the decade it rose above 100 dollars.²⁹ With rising revenues, the so-called Bolivarian Revolution embarked on a bold welfare policy that raised the number of pensioners from 200,000 to more than 2 million in a decade,³⁰ and implemented an expensive system of subsidies, strict price controls, and expropriations. The Observatory of Property Rights of Venezuela, a non-governmental organization (ONG) with a focus on business freedom, reported that between 2005 and 2011 the government undertook 1,167 expropriations of businesses in sectors such as food, agro-industry, tourism, oil and construction.³¹ Only 10% of those goods "rescued" by the State had received some payment by 2012, while the total amount of the nationalizations amounted to \$ 34 billion.³²

With the expectation of rising oil revenues, the "Socialism of the 21st century" continued to increase public spending, partly financed through an expansive monetary policy that multiplied the supply of money by 20 in a matter of 10 years.³³ While siphoning millions of dollars coming from the oil exports into funding the country's social programs and nationalizations, the government failed to reinvest adequately in the industry.³⁴ As a result, production fell from a record high of 3.5 million barrels per day in 1998 to 2.4 million in 2010³⁵

²⁹ International Energy Agency (IEA). US FOB Costs of Venezuela Crude Oil. Retrieved from: <https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=IVE0000004&f=A>

³⁰ *El Mundo*. (March 8, 2018). Registro de pensionados supera los 3,4 millones en todo el país. Retrieved from: <http://www.elmundo.com.ve/noticias/economia/politicas-publicas/registro-de-pensionados-supera-los-34-millones-en-todo-el-pais/>

³¹ Cedice. *Entre 2005 y 2011 se efectuaron 1.167 expropiaciones*. Retrieved from: <http://paisdepropietarios.org/propietariosve/cedice-entre-2005-y-2011-se-efectuaron-1-167-expropiaciones/>

³² América Economía. *Venezuela: diez empresas por semana expropió el gobierno en 2011*. Retrieved from: <https://www.americaeconomia.com/economia-mercados/finanzas/venezuela-diez-empresas-por-semana-expropio-el-gobierno-en-2011>

³³ Banco Central de Venezuela. Base Monetaria. Retrieved from: <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/base-monetaria>.

³⁴ Robert Rapier (May 7, 2017). How Venezuela Ruined Its Oil Industry. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2017/05/07/how-venezuela-ruined-its-oil-industry/#16930967399d>

³⁵ Sebastián Scrofina (2012) Los datos del petróleo venezolano. *Debates IESA*: 8, 2. April-June.

and by 2017, had plunged to 2 million barrels.³⁶ While the size of the state grew, the participation of the private sector in the economy contracted. In 2016, the National Council of Commerce and Services (Consecomercio) estimated that more than half of the businesses that existed in 1998 had closed.³⁷ In the automotive industry, from a historical maximum of 172,000 vehicles assembled in 2007, national production fell to less than 2,000 in 2017.³⁸ In its end-of-year message for 2018, the Industrial Confederation (Conindustria) indicated that less than 20% of the industrial sector remained active in Venezuela and more than one million jobs had been lost.³⁹

Years of state intervention, strict controls, price regulation, and expropriations decimated the economy. Despite the policy of subsidies, people began to feel the progressive loss of purchasing power and, as of 2012, shortages. In April 2013, the Central Bank reported that the shortage index reached 20.6% (four times over the limit of 5%, considered "normal").⁴⁰ Nine months later, when the Index was published for the last time, in January 2014, scarcity peaked at 28%. According to figures by Datanálisis pollsters, essential products were 60.7% scarce in Caracas in May, 2015.⁴¹ A survey conducted by the polling company in 2016 showed that shortages had displaced personal security as the main concern for Venezuelans.

³⁶ Opec. Venezuela facts and figures. Retrieved from: https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/171.htm

³⁷ CIEA. Consecomercio: se perdieron 500.000 empresas en una década. Retrieved from: <https://ciea.org.ve/consecomercio-se-perdieron-500-000-empresas-en-una-decada/>

³⁸ Víctor Salmerón (Feb. 18, 2018) El sector automotor refleja el empobrecimiento de Venezuela. *Diario Las Américas*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diariolasamericas.com/america-latina/el-sector-automotor-refleja-el-empobrecimiento-venezuela-n4143872>

³⁹ Conindustria (Dec 3, 2018) Mensaje de fin de año: Industria venezolana sumergida en la mayor y más violenta destrucción de su historia. Retrieved from: <http://www.conindustria.org/mensaje-de-fin-de-ano-industria-venezolana-sumergida-en-la-mayor-y-mas-violenta-destruccion-de-su-historia/>

⁴⁰ Anabella Abadi (2014). "¿Qué significa el récord de 28% de escasez?" *Prodavinci* (February, 12). Retrieved from: <http://historico.prodavinci.com/blogs/numeralia-que-significa-el-record-de-28-de-escasez-por-anabella-abadi-y-barbara-lira/>

⁴¹ Anabella Abadi (2015). "Economía 2015: Estimaciones y Especulaciones" (1 de diciembre). Retrieved from: <http://prodavinci.com/blogs/economia-2015-estimaciones-y-especulaciones-por-anabella-abadi/>

The problems, accelerated rapidly in 2014 when the price of crude oil plummeted and the economy entered into recession. That year the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined 3.9%, the oil barrel's price closed below 50 dollars,⁴² and the Central Bank announced that inflation had reached 63.6%.⁴³ According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), inflation climbed to 111.8% the following year, increased to 180% in 2016 and closed at 1,009% in 2017. During the same period, the World Bank recorded a 38% fall of the Venezuelan GDP.⁴⁴

To mitigate the loss of oil revenues, the government established a complementary currency exchange system based on controlled auctions. In spite of that scheme, the dollar exchange rate soared from 170 Bolivares (hereafter Bs.) per dollar to Bs. 3,345 in three years.⁴⁵ Based on such a depreciation of the local currency of above 2,000 percent, the Central Bank multiplied by 40 the monetary supply⁴⁶, and the government, with that constant cash flow, raised the minimum wage 16 times, from Bs. 8,097.48 to Bs. 456,507.44, a 57-fold increase, all of this in the same period (2015-2017).⁴⁷ Just in one year between July 2017 and July 2018, the minimum wage was raised by Executive decree eleven times, going up to Bs. 5,196,000.

Despite the nominal increase in wages, the purchasing power of Venezuelans fell sharply. By August 2015, the Center for Documentation and Analysis for Workers (CENDA), a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of labor issues, estimated that a worker with a monthly

⁴² AFP. (2014, Dec. 29) Petróleo Venezolano cae por debajo de los 50 dólares por barril. *El Heraldo*. <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/780963-216/petr%C3%B3leo-venezolano-cae-por-debajo-de-los-50-d%C3%B3lares-por-barril>

⁴³ Venezuela recession confirmed as Maduro attacks US 'oil war'. (2014, Dec. 31). *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-30638770>

⁴⁴ The GDP fell by -6.02% in 2015, -16.54 in 2016 and -14.94 in 2017, according to the World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/venezuela-rb>

⁴⁵ Histórico de Tasa SIMADI/DICOM año 2015 – 2018. SIMADI, Sistema Marginal de Divisas. <http://www.simadi.today/historico-tasa-simadi-dicom/>

⁴⁶ Base Monetaria. Banco Central de Venezuela. <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/base-monetaria>. The supply of bills and coins was expanded from B. 216.1 billion to 8.01 trillion.

⁴⁷ Histórico Salario Mínimo Venezuela. (2018, Nov. 13). *actualidad-24.com*. <https://www.actualidad-24.com/2017/11/historico-cestaticket-sueldo-minimo-Venezuela.html>

minimum wage could only afford one week's worth of essentials for a family of four.⁴⁸ Two years later, the CENDA wrote in its December 2017 report that the minimum wage barely covered 4.6% of family essentials.⁴⁹

During 2018 the economy deteriorated even faster. In the first nine months, the Central Bank increased the monetary supply from 8.1 trillion to 20.1 trillion Bolivares.⁵⁰ The exchange rate skyrocketed over 7,000% from Bs. 3,345 to Bs. 248,000 in the first eight months, before the government implemented a monetary reconversion that implied a 5,000% devaluation in August. With the new exchange rate, one dollar began being traded at 60 Bolivares at the official exchange rate, after eliminating five zeros in the currency.⁵¹

In July, 2018, before the reconversion, one month of minimum wage was not enough to buy one kilogram of meat or even a 30-egg box.⁵² In September, just days after the reconversion, the minimum wage was increased 3,000% to 1,980 new Bolivares,⁵³ but due to the rise in prices and the loss of the value of money, it was increased again by 127% in December to 4,500 new Bolivares⁵⁴ and another 400% in January, 2019, to reach 18,000 new Bolivares.⁵⁵ One year

⁴⁸ Informe CAT Agosto 2015. CENDA. Centro de Documentación y Análisis para los Trabajadores.

<http://cenda.org.ve/noticia.asp?id=107>

⁴⁹ Canasta Alimentaria. Noviembre 2017. CENDA. Centro de Documentación y Análisis para los Trabajadores.

<http://cenda.org.ve/noticia.asp?id=157>

⁵⁰ Base Monetaria. Banco Central de Venezuela. <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/base-monetaria>.

⁵¹ Brian Ellsworth (Jul. 25, 2018) Venezuela to remove five zeroes from ailing currency. Reuters. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-economy/venezuela-to-remove-five-zeroes-from-ailing-currency-idUSKBN1KF36V>

⁵² *La Republica*. (May. 1, 2018) Twitter: Nuevo salario mínimo en Venezuela no alcanza ni para comprar un cartón de huevos. Retrieved from: <https://larepublica.pe/mundo/1235320-venezuela-nuevo-salario-minimo-rinde-comprar-carton-huevos>

⁵³ Fabiola Zerpa (2018) Venezuela Raises Minimum Wage 3,000% and Lots of Workers Get Fired. Bloomberg, Sept 14. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-14/after-getting-3-000-wage-hike-workers-are-fired-in-venezuela>.

⁵⁴ Bloomberg (Nov 29, 2018) Venezuela Raises Monthly Minimum Wage for Sixth Time in 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-30/venezuela-raises-monthly-minimum-wage-for-sixth-time-in-2018>

⁵⁵ UPI. (Jan. 15, 2019) Maduro raises minimum wage in Venezuela to \$6 per month. Retrieved from: <https://www.upi.com/Maduro-raises-minimum-wage-in-Venezuela-to-6-per-month/9171547575404/>

earlier, in January of 2018, the minimum wage was Bs. 800.000 (equivalent to 8 new Bolivares), which means that just in 12 months there was a nominal increase of more than 200,000 percent.

According to the data available at the Venezuelan Central Bank (BCV), the money supply in Venezuela increased, from Bs. 104 billion to 408,016 trillion between 1999 and 2018.⁵⁶ This massive printing of money to face the public deficit is correlated with a huge rise in prices, of such a magnitude that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) compares the situation of Venezuela to that of Germany in 1923 or Zimbabwe in the late 2000s.⁵⁷ In July, the institution announced that by the end of 2018 inflation was expected to reach one million percent⁵⁸ and in October predicted 10 million percent inflation in 2019.⁵⁹

The loss of value of money is also reflected in the exchange markets. After the monetary reconversion that fixed the value of one U.S. dollar at Bs. 60, a system of state controlled auctions could not prevent the depreciation of the currency. At the end of 2018 the exchange rate had increased to 563 new Bolivares per dollar. One month later, in January of 2019 this value reached Bs. 1,234, by February, 2019 had peaked at Bs. 3,298 per dollar and by mid-August was officially traded at 14,447 new Bolivares.⁶⁰ Putting back the eight zeros that were removed from the Bolívar in the two monetary reconversions implemented in 2007 and 2018, the national currency devalued from Bs. 573 per U.S. dollar when Chavez took office in 1999, to Bs. 1.45 trillion per U.S. dollar in January 2019.

⁵⁶ BCV. Liquidez Monetaria. Retrieved from: <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/liquidez-monetaria>

⁵⁷ Alejandro Werner (2018, Jul. 23). Outlook for the Americas: A Tougher Recovery. IMF: <https://blogs.imf.org/2018/07/23/outlook-for-the-americas-a-tougher-recovery/>

⁵⁸ Reuters (Jul. 23, 2018) IMF projects Venezuela inflation will hit 1,000,000 percent in 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-economy/imf-projects-venezuela-inflation-will-hit-1000000-percent-in-2018-idUSKBN1KD2L9>

⁵⁹ Reuters (Oct. 9, 2018) IMF sees Venezuela inflation at 10 million percent in 2019. Retrieved from: <https://in.reuters.com/article/venezuela-economy/imf-sees-venezuela-inflation-at-10-million-percent-in-2019-idINKCN1MJ1YX>

⁶⁰ BCV. (2019) Tipo de Cambio de Referencial. Año 2019, Trimestre I. Retrieved from: <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/tipo-de-cambio>

3.3. The Social Crisis

The fall in oil revenues also affected the public budgets in all sectors, and as a result, access to basic health care declined precipitously in Venezuela. According to Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) data, the bed rate per thousand inhabitants fell almost 50% from 1.3 to 0.73 between 2007 and 2015, and 39% of the total available beds were inoperative, as well as 51% of the surgery rooms.⁶¹ Access to medicine had also become compromised with levels above 80% of shortages in 2018, according to the Venezuelan Pharmaceutical Federation.⁶² In the previous years, the country suffered a boom of endemic disease: in 2014 there was a rebound of dengue (with more than 75 thousand cases reported), and of malaria, which increased from around 130,000 cases in 2015, to 319,000 two years later.⁶³ Other diseases long ago eradicated (such as Chagas and diphtheria) also re-appeared.⁶⁴

After the absence of basic goods became endemic and the queues to acquire essential products turned into part of the urban geography, the loss of purchasing power further reduced access to essential goods, even when available. In 2016, UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) stated that undernourishment in Venezuela had increased from 10.5% of the population to 13% in the previous 10 years.⁶⁵ The entity also cited a report by Caritas, a humanitarian organization of the Catholic Church, according to which 15.5% of the

⁶¹ Alejandra Carrillo (2018). Sistema de salud en Venezuela: ¿un paciente sin remedio? *Cadernos Saúde Pública*: 34(3): p. 9. Retrieved from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csp/v34n3/1678-4464-csp-34-03-e00058517.pdf>

⁶² *El Universal* (Jul 15, 2018) Fefarven asegura que escasez de medicamentos en el país oscila entre 80% y 85%. Retrieved from: <http://www.eluniversal.com/politica/15032/fefarven-escasez-de-medicamentos-oscila-entre-80-y-85>.

⁶³ PAHO. (Jan. 18, 2018). Epidemiological Update. Increase of malaria in the Americas. Retrieved from: https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&category_slug=malaria-2205&alias=43440-30-january-2018-malaria-epidemiological-update-440&Itemid=270&lang=en

⁶⁴ Alejandra Carrillo (2018). Sistema de salud en Venezuela: ¿un paciente sin remedio? *Cadernos Saúde Pública*; 34(3): p. 12. Retrieved from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csp/v34n3/1678-4464-csp-34-03-e00058517.pdf>

⁶⁵ UNICEF (Jan. 26, 2018) *In Venezuela, prevalence of malnutrition among children grows as economic crisis deepens*. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/media/media_102501.html

children assessed by the institution had some level of malnourishment. In 2016, there was a 30% increase in the deaths of children under one year,⁶⁶ and according to UNICEF, the mortality rate for children under 4 weeks almost doubled from 1% to 1.8% between 2011 and 2017).⁶⁷

In February of 2018, a study conducted by three main Venezuelan universities (UCV, UCAB, and USB) concluded that 87% of households were below the poverty line due to the impact of the hyper-inflationary process.⁶⁸ Four years earlier, in 2014, only 23.6% of households were under that threshold.⁶⁹ The study also revealed that Venezuelans reported having lost an average of 11 kilograms (24 lbs.) in body weight during 2017.⁷⁰

To handle the health situation, in 2016 the National Assembly declared a state of humanitarian crisis and passed a special law that provided for international assistance and facilitated the importation of medical supplies and medicines to the country.⁷¹ That measure was vetoed by Maduro, and a request from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to accept humanitarian aid to alleviate the food shortage was also ignored that same year.⁷² In September of 2018 the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a

⁶⁶ Meredith Kohut & Isayen Herrera (Dec. 17, 2017) As Venezuela Collapses, Children Are Dying of Hunger. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/17/world/americas/venezuela-children-starving.html?module=inline>

⁶⁷ UNICEF (2018) Neonatal Mortality. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/neonatal-mortality/>.

⁶⁸ Luis Pedro España and María G Ponce (2018). Encuesta sobre Condiciones de Vida en Venezuela. Ucab, Lacso, IIES. <https://www.ucab.edu.ve/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/02/ENCOVI-2017-presentaci%C3%B3n-paradifundir-.pdf>

⁶⁹ ENCOVI 2017: 87% de los hogares venezolanos están en condición de pobreza. (2018, Feb. 21) (Provea) Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos. <https://www.derechos.org/ve/actualidad/encovi-2017-87-de-los-hogares-venezolanos-estan-en-condicion-de-pobreza>

⁷⁰ Vivian Sequera (2018, Feb. 21) *Venezuelans report big weight losses in 2017 as hunger hits*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-food/venezuelans-report-big-weight-losses-in-2017-as-hunger-hits-idUSKCN1G52HA>.

⁷¹ UPI (May 4, 2016) Venezuela OKs accepting foreign help for medicine shortage. Retrieved from: https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2016/05/04/Venezuela-OKs-accepting-foreign-help-for-medicine-shortage/5191462376401/.

⁷² *El País*. (Jul 16, 2016) Venezuela denuncia una "guerra económica" y rechaza ayuda de ONU. Retrieved from: <https://www.elpais.com.uy/mundo/venezuela-denuncia-guerra-economica-rechaza-ayuda-onu.html>.

resolution on the crisis in Venezuela and urged the Caracas government to accept humanitarian assistance.⁷³ Once again, Maduro rejected it.⁷⁴

Due to a mixture of factors including wage inequality, violation of labor rights, lack of inputs, and personal, and work environment insecurity, more than 26 thousand doctors and health care providers left the country in the previous 14 years, according to the Venezuelan Medical Federation (FMV).⁷⁵ By 2018, this talent drain had generated a 60% staff deficit in public and private health centers, and in some specialties such as anesthesiology and pediatrics, the ratio reached 90 per cent.⁷⁶

Violence and security had also worsened the crisis in Venezuela. After having a homicide rate of fewer than 20 murders per 100,000 inhabitants until 1998, Venezuela began to experience accelerated growth in crime and reached rates of violent deaths over 50 per 100,000 at the end of the following decade.⁷⁷ In 2016, the Public Prosecutor's Office reported the death of 21,752 people by homicide, a 70.1 points rate in the per-100,000 scale.⁷⁸ Some experts claim that between one third and a half of these murders would be related to organized crime (Tarre, 2015:7), one of whose manifestations are the mega-gangs (megabandas) – criminal groups

⁷³ France24. (Sept, 27, 2018). UN asks Venezuela to accept humanitarian aid. Retrieved from: <https://www.france24.com/en/20180927-un-asks-venezuela-accept-humanitarian-aid>

⁷⁴ CiudadCCS. (Sept. 27, 2018) Venezuela rechaza resolución de la ONU sobre ayuda humanitaria. Retrieved from: <http://ciudadccs.info/venezuela-rechaza-resolucion-la-onu-ayuda-humanitaria/>

⁷⁵ Oscar Morffes (Oct 30, 2018) 26 mil médicos se han ido en los últimos años. *El Universal*. Retrieved from: <http://www.eluniversal.com/politica/24477/26-mil-medicos-se-han-ido-en-los-ultimos-anos>

⁷⁶ ⁷⁶ Carrillo, A (2018). Sistema de salud en Venezuela: ¿un paciente sin remedio? *Cadernos Saúde Pública*: 34(3): p. 9. Retrieved from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csp/v34n3/1678-4464-csp-34-03-e00058517.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Ernesto Herrera (2015) Evolución de la criminalidad en Venezuela (1990-2015). Paz Activa. Retrieved from: <http://pazactiva.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Informe-Asamblea-Nacional-FINAL-Criminalidad-Ernesto-Herrera.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

⁷⁸ Ministerio Publico de Venezuela. (2017) Informe Anual de Gestión2016. Retrieved from: https://observatoriodeviolencia.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MP_InformeAnualGesti%C3%B3n_2016-1.pdf

dedicated to activities such as drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, smuggling, and money laundering.

According to International Crisis Group (2018), the social and economic crisis has created opportunities for three kinds of illegal activities: violent competition over smuggling routes; illegal mining, and trafficking of people and firearms.⁷⁹ The non-governmental organization states that shortage of goods linked with rising prices and high exchange rate differentials have created a flourishing field for smuggling of all kinds. In the so-called Mining Arc, in the southern state of Bolivar bordering Brazil, criminal groups known as Sindicatos (unions), controlled the extraction of gold and diamonds and charged the miners 30% of what they got.⁸⁰ As a result of the prevailing violence, the El Callao region became the most murderous municipality in the country, with a rate of 816 victims per 100,000 inhabitants.⁸¹ Finally, in 2017 the US government added Venezuela to a list of countries that fail to meet minimum standards to clamp down on human trafficking. According to the Department of State, “Venezuela is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor.”⁸²

By July 2018, amidst an environment of acute shortages of essential goods, citizens had to queue to buy bread, and even cash became scarce. Although a soft drink cost Bs. 500,000 in July, the banks (public and private) just allowed people to withdraw 2% of such amount (a maximum of Bs. 10,000 per day). As any other scarce product, money also became a

⁷⁹ International Crisis Group. (2018) *Containing the Shock Waves from Venezuela*. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela/65-containing-shock-waves-venezuela>.

⁸⁰ Insight Crime. (Feb. 23, 2018) *Masacres de mineros en Venezuela son resultado de la guerra por el oro entre militares y “pranes”*. Retrieved from: <https://es.insightcrime.org/noticias/analisis/masacres-de-mineros-en-venezuela-son-resultado-de-la-guerra-por-el-oro-entre-militares-y-pranes/>

⁸¹ Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia. (Jan. 5, 2018) *Informe OVV de Violencia 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://observatoriodeviolencia.org.ve/informe-ovv-de-violencia-2017/>

⁸² U.S. Department of State (2018) *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2018/282779.htm>

commodity. To get one million Bolivares in cash, people had to resort to a loan shark and pay four times that value through a banking wire.⁸³ To take a taxi, people had to call the driver and make an electronic transfer, and once the deposit was verified, the service could be provided. Due to the lack of auto parts, traffic in the cities fell by more than 50%, and public transportation was decimated. Just in Caracas, of 45,000 transport units available in 2012 for the capital region, less than 4,500 were operational, according to the guild of transportation workers.⁸⁴

The collapse of public services resulted in rising social tensions. In 2018, the Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict (OVCS) registered 12,715 protests.⁸⁵ Almost 90% of them were linked to claims of economic, social, and cultural rights: quality of public services, health, food, education, and respect for collective contracts. The protests had increased by 30% over 2017 and represented twice the number of events registered in 2016.

3.4. Massive Migration

The response of Venezuelans to the multiple crises affecting their country has been emigration. From having about 640 thousand citizens living abroad at the end of 2015,⁸⁶ Venezuela underwent a massive exodus of one million people between 2016 and 2017, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported.⁸⁷ According to the IMF, the collapse in economic activity, hyperinflation, increasing deterioration in the provision of public services,

⁸³ John Otis (Nov. 30, 2017) Cash crunch: how Venezuela inadvertently became a cashless economy. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/30/venezuela-cash-economy-nicolas-maduro>.

⁸⁴ Julio Materano (Jul 20, 2018) Venezolanos sortean la peor crisis de transporte de su historia. *Diario Las Américas*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diariolasamericas.com/americas-latina/venezolanos-sortean-la-peor-crisis-transporte-su-historia-n4158277>

⁸⁵ Observatorio Venezolano de Conflictividad Social (2018). *Conflictividad social en Venezuela 2018*. <https://www.observatoriodeconflictos.org.ve/tendencias-de-la-conflictividad/conflictividad-social-en-venezuela-2018>

⁸⁶ United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs *International migrant stock: The 2017 revision*. <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml>

⁸⁷ Migration Trends in the Americas. (2018, Apr.) International Organization for Migrations (OIM). http://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/National_Migration_Trends_Venezuela_in_the_Americas.pdf

and shortages of food at subsidized prices had resulted in this large migration flow.⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch (HRW) posits that severe shortages of medicine and medical supplies, as well as extremely high rates of violent crime were also key factors in people’s decision to leave the country (HRW, 2018). The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) adds that the economic and humanitarian crises, combined with rising political persecution, were the leading causes that “have forced many Venezuelans to flee” (O’Neil, 2018).

Just in 2016, the number of Venezuelans who left the country almost doubled the stock of migrants abroad to 1.2 million people, and one year later this figure was about to reach the 2 million mark.⁸⁹ As of December 2018, these were the destinations where Venezuelans had gone:

3.4.1. Colombia

With a common border of 2,200 km, Colombia has been the main recipient of this massive human flow. A study carried out by the Colombian foreign ministry and the IOM showed that until December 2016, two-thirds of those crossing the border to stay were Colombians who were living in Venezuela or people with dual Colombian-Venezuelan nationality.⁹⁰ As of January 2017, an average of 1,000 people started crossing the border every day. This amount, however, doubled in July on the eve of the election of the National Assembly and tripled at the end of 2017 (see table 1).⁹¹ During the whole year, almost 600,000 Venezuelans entered Colombia by land, through the border posts of immigration control and,

⁸⁸ Alejandro Werner (2018, Jul. 23). *Outlook for the Americas: A Tougher Recovery*. IMF:

<https://blogs.imf.org/2018/07/23/outlook-for-the-americas-a-tougher-recovery/>

⁸⁹ UNHCR (March, 2018). *Venezuela Situation. Responding to the need of people displaced from Venezuela*. (p. 5) Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63088>

⁹⁰ “Matriz de monitoreo de desplazamiento en la frontera colombo venezolana”, Colombian Foreign Ministry/International Organization for Migration, Jul 5 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/newsroom/news/oim-cancilleria-migracion-colombia-revelan-estudio-flujo-migratorio-frontera-colombo>

⁹¹ Migración Colombia.

according to International Crisis Group (2018), almost 90 percent of those entering Colombia were Venezuelans (p.12).

By February 2018, the number of Venezuelans crossing through the bi-national border reached almost 4,000 per day and by September, 866,100 people had entered Colombia by land. The city of Cucuta, Colombia, was by then the starting point of the diaspora. Beside the migration control points, seven international organizations (the Red Cross, IOM, UNHCR, the Norwegian Committee for Refugees, the White Helmets of Argentina, PAHO and the World Health Organization, WHO) had installed care posts offering services ranging from hydration, food and vaccines to free telephone services, childcare, temporary shelter and financial aid.

Table 1: People entering Colombia by land from Venezuela

Month	2017	2018
January	31.420	105.274
February	27.792	112.480
March	26.933	101.199
April	29.282	103.338
May	31.633	94.018
June	33.494	76.603
July	57.054	97.035
August	71.700	103.733
September	60.201	72.420
October	66.286	
November	76.637	
December	84.537	
Total	596.969	866.100

Source: Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations.

The emigration industry flourished some hundred meters beyond the control posts. Bus companies offered transportation to all South American capitals. For \$350 it was possible to buy a ticket to Santiago, Chile, including meals and lodging for the six days that the 4,280-mile journey takes. Many, however, could not even afford a bus ticket and had to walk the 124 miles to Bucaramanga, the next important city in Colombia.⁹² According to data by the Colombian government, by January 31, 2019, there were 1,174,743 Venezuelans in Colombia, 65% of whom stayed in a regular situation (i.e., had proper documentation), 15% were in the process of regularization and 20% remained in an irregular situation.⁹³

3.4.2. Ecuador

After Venezuelans started moving in large numbers southwards from Colombia, 102,000 migrants entered Ecuador in 2016.⁹⁴ Another 288,000 people crossed the Rumichaca border post the following year and there were more than 800,000 arrivals of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador up to October, 2018 (OIM, 2018b:53). According to Quito's government, from all the Venezuelans that came into the country, about three-quarters continued their journey towards Peru and beyond. A daily average of nearly 3,000 entries during the first six months of 2018, however, accelerated to more than 4,000 a day in the first week of August, when some 30,000 Venezuelans entered the country. Such an increase moved the Ecuadorian government to declare a state of emergency in late August.⁹⁵ By the end of 2018, the UNHCR estimated a total

⁹² Revista Semana. (Aug. 2018) Adiós Venezuela: La marcha de la infamia. Retrieved from: http://especiales.semana.com/adios_venezuela_la_marcha_de_la_infamia/

⁹³ UNHCR (Dec. 2018) Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Colombia. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67786>

⁹⁴ UNHCR (March, 2018) op. Cit. (p. 35)

⁹⁵ UN News. (Aug. 10, 2018) Venezuelan exodus to Ecuador reaches record levels: UN refugee agency steps up aid. Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1016812>

of 278,000 Venezuelan migrants remained in Ecuador, which represented around 17% of those who had entered the country after 2016.

3.4.3. Peru

According to figures from the National Superintendence of Migration, up to 2016, Venezuela did not figure among the 10 main sources of migratory movement towards Peru.⁹⁶ In 2015, there were less than 3,000 Venezuelans living in the Andean country, but by the end of 2018, almost 700,000 Venezuelans had settled in Peru according to the IOM (2018, 66). Throughout 2018, a daily average of 2,000 refugees and migrants entered the country through official entry points. By mid-year, this amount increased to more than 4,000 a day and reached a peak of 6,700 entries on the last day of October, when the deadline to apply for the Temporary Permit of Permanence (PTP, in Spanish) in Peru ended.⁹⁷ The OIM estimated that nearly 600,000 Venezuelans entered Peru in 2018 and by mid-2019 there were around 730,300 migrants. By the end of the year the organization forecasted a migrant population of 1,368,000 Venezuelans.

3.4.4. The Southern Cone

The IOM estimated that over 350,000 Venezuelans were living in the four countries of the so-called Southern Cone: Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay as of December of 2018, although most of them would be living in the first two nations. According to government figures,

⁹⁶ Peru. Superintendencia Nacional de Migraciones. Movimientos Migratorios de Ingreso y Salida de ciudadanos extranjeros según el país de nacionalidad, periodo 2016. Retrieved from:

<https://www.migraciones.gob.pe/index.php/estadisticas-extranjeros/>

⁹⁷ UNHCR. (Nov. 21, 2018) Regional Response: Situational update No. 2. Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. Retrieved from:

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67212>

Venezuelans in Chile became, for the first time, the largest immigrant community in the country, surpassing Peruvians, with a total of 187,892 in September 2018.⁹⁸

In Argentina, data from the National Migration office (DNM, in Spanish), shows that 99,435 Venezuelan citizens settled (temporarily or permanently) between 2016 and August 2018. During the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in September of 2018, President Mauricio Macri said that Argentina was already providing shelter to 130,000 Venezuelans.⁹⁹ Along with the permanent and temporary residents, between January and August 2018 the migratory balance (the difference between entries and exits) encompassed 54,112 more people, which represents a total population over 150,000 up to August.¹⁰⁰ By February, 2019, UNHCR and IOM estimated a total population over 400,000 Venezuelan in the South Cone (288,000 of them in Chile),¹⁰¹ and it was expected that the total number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the abovementioned countries would reach over 588,000 by the end of 2019.

3.4.5. Brazil

At the end of 2018 Brazil was on its way to become a major destination for Venezuelan migrants. According to UNHCR (2019), almost 200,000 Venezuelans entered Brazil between 2017 and 2018, and of this total, an estimated 98,437 remained in the country by January of 2019. Out of this population, almost 84,000 had applied for asylum while the remainder had

⁹⁸ Ahora Noticias. (Oct. 1, 2018) Venezolanos se convierten en la comunidad de inmigrantes más grande de Chile. Retrieved from: <https://www.ahoranoticias.cl/noticias/nacional/237427-venezolanos-se-convierten-en-la-comunidad-de-inmigrantes-mas-grande-de-chile.html>

⁹⁹ Argentina, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. (Sept. 25, 2018) Mauricio Macri ante la 73° Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas. Retrieved from: <https://cancilleria.gob.ar/es/destacados/mauricio-macri-ante-la-73deg-asamblea-general-de-naciones-unidas>

¹⁰⁰ Chequeando.com. (Oct 2, 2018) Macri: “La Argentina ya ha recibido 130 mil venezolanos”. Retrieved from: <https://chequeando.com/ultimas-noticias/macri-la-argentina-ya-ha-recibido-130-mil-venezolanos/>

¹⁰¹ UNHCR (Feb. 2019) América Latina y el Caribe, refugiados y migrantes de Venezuela - Enero 2019. Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/download/68070>

applied for temporary residency, as reported by the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V).¹⁰² In response to increasing Venezuelan arrivals the Brazilian government opened 13 temporary reception and transit sites in the bordering state of Roraima, with capacity to accommodate 6,513 people, and implemented a resettlement program through which 3,900 people voluntarily relocated in southeast cities such as Sao Paulo, Brasilia and Rio.

As of May of 2018, an average of between 400 and 500 Venezuelans crossed the border every day.¹⁰³ Such massive flow of people in need into the poorest Brazilian state was stoking tensions. In August, Brazilian protesters in the bordering city of Pacaraima forced some 1,200 migrants to go back to Venezuela, after a merchant was robbed.¹⁰⁴ The scale of the arrivals was also straining public resources and, according to O’Neil (2018), “desperate Venezuelans” already accounted for the majority of hospital visits along the border by early 2018. In December of that year, the UNHCR projected that there would be approximately 190,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Brazil by the end of 2019, including an estimated 86,500 new arrivals.

3.4.6. The Caribbean

From having a migrant population lower than 11,000 Venezuelans until 2015, five countries in the Caribbean (Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago) saw their stock of Venezuelan migrants reach an estimated 147,000 by September 2018 (OIM, 2018b: 78). The increasing number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela exerted pressure on the public assistance systems of these host countries. According to the Coordination

¹⁰² UNHCR (Jan. 1, 2019) UNHCR Brazil Response 2018. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67795>

¹⁰³ UNHCR. (Nov. 21, 2018) Op. ct. p: 27

¹⁰⁴ BBC (Agt. 21, 2018) Venezuela crisis: More migrants cross into Brazil despite attacks. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-45254368>

Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), the population of Venezuelans in these countries would grow to around 222,000 by the end of 2019, with irregular arrivals expected to continue and more than 177,500 people in need of humanitarian assistance and help (OIM: 2018b: 80).

3.4.7. Central America

Unlike the case of South America, Venezuelans moving to Central America cannot reach their destination by land. In spite of the additional challenges in terms of logistics, and migratory restrictions, the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela living in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama would have reached 163,000 people by the end of 2018 (OIM, 2018b: 91). In Mexico, authorities reported, in October 2018, the presence of around 40,000 Venezuelans.¹⁰⁵ According to UNHCR's data, at that time there were 94,000 Venezuelans in Panama, and 25,000 in Costa Rica.¹⁰⁶ Taking into account another 6,000 in Guatemala,¹⁰⁷ the stock of Venezuelan migrants in Central America totaled 170,000 people by the end of 2018. The IOM estimated that the number of Venezuelan migrants in the region would reach 190,000 at the end of 2019.

3.4.8. North America

According to U.S. Census data, the Venezuelan population in the United States grew from 184,000 people in 2010 to 216,000 in 2014. One year later, with the beginning of the

¹⁰⁵ El Nacional. (Oct 22, 2018) Han deportado a más de 1.599 venezolanos en aeropuertos de México en 2018. Retrieved from: http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/mundo/han-deportado-mas-1599-venezolanos-aeropuertos-mexico-2018_256806

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR (Oct. 31, 2018) Latin America and the Caribbean. Stocks of Venezuelan population in the region. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67311>

¹⁰⁷ UNHCR (Jan, 18, 2019) Facebook Data for Venezuelan Migration Distribution. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67682>

migratory crisis, the number of Venezuelan migrants in the country rose to 255,000 and reached 290,244 in 2016 (IOM, 2018b:13). By October 2018, the total population of Venezuelans living in the United States surpassed the 350,000, the Pew Research Center reported.¹⁰⁸ That figure included 72,000 requests for refugee status up to August, 2018.¹⁰⁹ In Canada, the IOM reported the presence of nearly 20,000 Venezuelans up to 2017, a 30% increase compared to 2016.¹¹⁰ As a whole, the total number of Venezuelans in North America increased from less than 300,000 at the end of 2015 to almost 400,000 at the end of 2018, more than a 30% increase in three years.

3.4.9. Europe

Similar to the case of North America, the Venezuelan population in Europe grew sharply since the beginning of the migratory crisis in the South American country. In 2015 there were 165,000 Venezuelans in Spain, 24,000 in Portugal and 48,000 in Italy (IOM, 2018a: 1) These figures did not change significantly for Italy and Portugal, but in the case of Spain, the stock of Venezuelan migrants increased to 208,000 by the end of 2017. One year later, in December of 2018, authorities reported that 274,000 Venezuelans were living in Spain.¹¹¹ In other parts of the continent, an estimated 22,000 Venezuela-born people were living legally in the United Kingdom at the end of 2017.¹¹² As a whole, there were 400,000 Venezuelans living in Europe at the end of 2018. Every one in five of them had arrived after the beginning of the migratory crisis.

¹⁰⁸ Tim Henderson (Oct. 2, 2018) Venezuelan Immigrants Get Trump Sympathy but Not Status. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/10/02/venezuelan-immigrants-get-trump-sympathy-but-not-status>

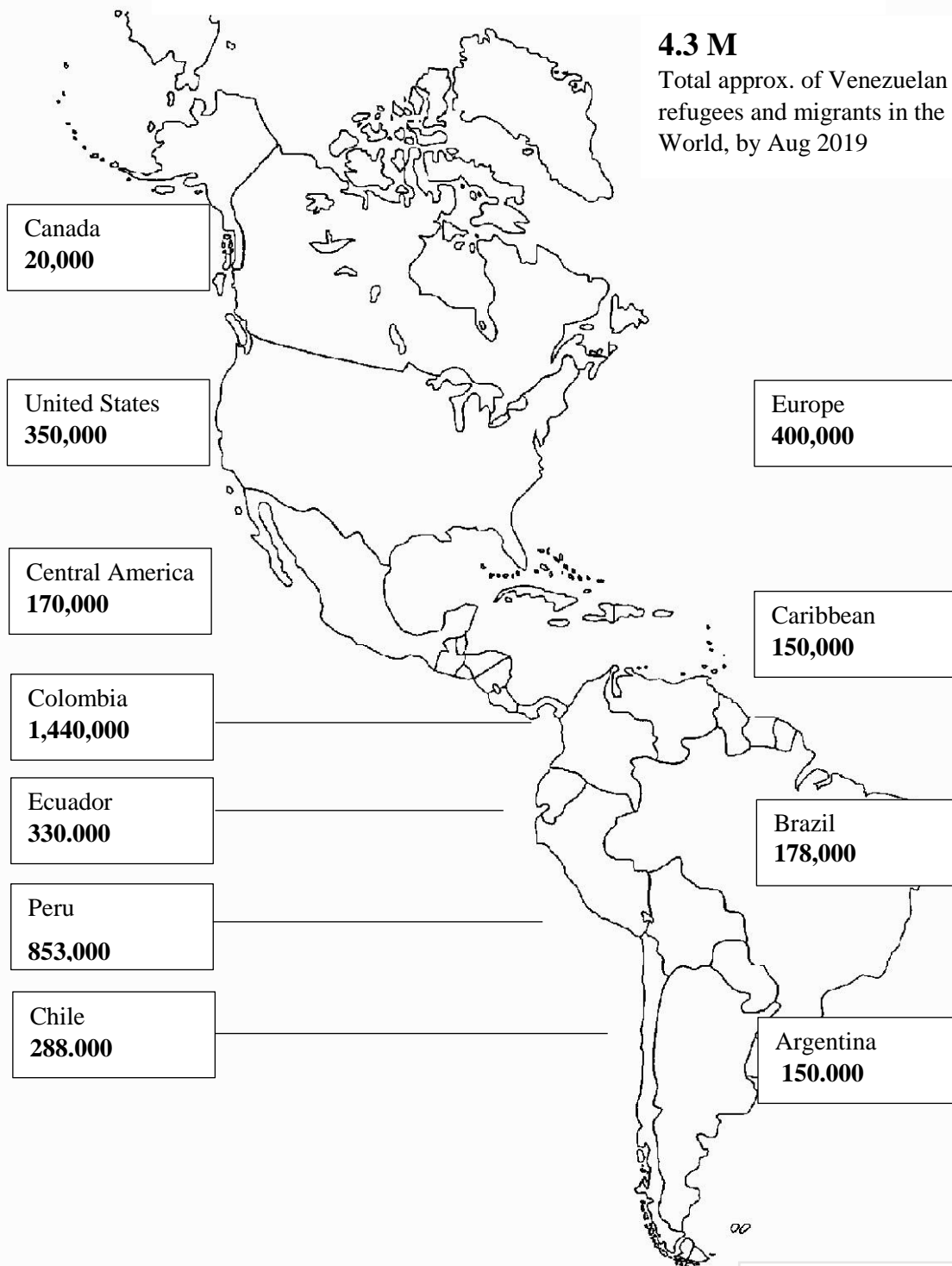
¹⁰⁹ UNHCR (Nov. 30, 2018) Refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V). Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/platform>

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.

¹¹¹ Olga Sanmartín (Dec. 14, 2018) La inmigración venezolana se dispara un 60% en un año. *El Mundo*. Retrieved from: <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2018/12/14/5c12c4d821efa0680e8b4625.html>

¹¹² David Ovalle (Aug. 2, 2018) Venezuelan refugees find safe haven in Scotland, along with gray weather, weird food. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved from: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/venezuela/article215843715.html>

Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the World



Source: UNHCR. IOM

3.5. International Response

From 640,000 migrants in 2015, the scale of the Venezuelan human flow reached 3 million around the world in November of 2018¹¹³ and peaked at 3.9 million by May 2019.¹¹⁴ According to estimates by the IOM and UNHCR, the total number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela worldwide would have reached 3.3 million at the end of December 2018 and was expected to increase up to 5.3 million by the end of 2019 (IOM, 2018b: 8). Such a massive movement has been possible because governments have allowed these people to enter into their territories. In spite of their structural and budgetary limitations, South American governments have kept open their frontiers to Venezuelan migrants and maintained, adapted or created legal instruments to allow them to stay and enjoy state protection. Up to January 2019, some countries had resorted to existing visa categories and current migration arrangements to guarantee regular legal status to arriving Venezuelans. In Argentina and Uruguay, Venezuelans could apply for a special visa for nationals of Mercosur countries, even though Venezuela had been excluded from the organization in December 2016. In Ecuador, Venezuelans can apply for the visa of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR, in Spanish) to stay. Other countries like Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru, adopted special rules to provide Venezuelans legal permits to stay.¹¹⁵ According to a report by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), as of December 2018, only one country, Panama, required a visa for Venezuelans to enter, while other three countries (Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador), did not even request a passport (Selee et al: 2019: 4).

¹¹³ IOM (Nov. 11, 2018) Number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela reaches three million. Retrieved from: <https://www.iom.int/news/number-refugees-and-migrants-venezuela-reaches-three-million-0>

¹¹⁴ UNHCR (May. 2019) Refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/platform>

¹¹⁵ In Colombia, the government started issuing a Special Stay Permit (PEP, in Spanish) for people to want to settle and a Border Mobility Card (TMF, in Spanish) to allow Venezuelans living near the bi-national border, to make brief trips and have short stays in Colombia.

In August 2018, Peru and Ecuador announced they would require Venezuelans to have visas in order to enter their territories. The measure, however, was eventually discarded. After April, 2018, authorities in Chile prohibited tourists of any nationality to adjust their status and requested Venezuelans to obtain a special visa from within Venezuela in order to stay for more than 90 days in Chile and apply for residence. A similar measure was adopted by Guatemala in March 2018.¹¹⁶ In spite of these setbacks, up to October 2018, more than 1 million Venezuelans had benefitted from various forms of legal status in the region,¹¹⁷ although hundreds of thousands remained in an irregular situation. Such a situation, HRW highlights, “severely undermines their ability to obtain a work permit, send their children to school, and access health care” (HRW, 2018).

Faced with the ongoing migration of Venezuelans, the UNHCR (2018) issued a Guidance Note on the Outflow of Venezuelans in March of 2018. Throughout this document, the organization called on receiving and/or already host states to: a) allow them access to their territories; b) continue to adopt appropriate and pragmatic protection-oriented responses, and c) provide guarantees of non-return for the holders of complementary forms of protection, stay arrangements, or labor visas.¹¹⁸ In April of 2018, the UN Secretary-General tasked UNHCR and IOM to lead and coordinate the response to the Venezuelan migratory crisis at the regional level. On May 28, 2018, both organizations established a Regional Inter-Agency Platform (encompassing 15 UN agencies and 9 ONG’s) to steer the response to the Venezuelan refugees

¹¹⁶ EFE (Mar. 19, 2018) Guatemala aprueba exigir "visa consultada" a los venezolanos que ingresen al país. Retrieved from: <https://www.efe.com/efe/america/politica/guatemala-aprueba-exigir-visa-consultada-a-los-venezolanos-que-ingresen-al-pais/20000035-3557776>

¹¹⁷ UNHCR (Oct. 31, 2018) Latin America and the Caribbean. Issued Residencies to Venezuelan Citizens. Regional Interagency Coordination Platform. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67310>

¹¹⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Guidance Note on the Outflow of Venezuelans, March 2018: p. 3. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a9ff3cc4.html> [accessed 16 November 2018]

and migrants. In August, the government of Ecuador called a regional meeting to address the issue of Venezuela. In the summit, held in Quito in early September, a declaration was signed in which the 11 participating countries pledged to continue to receive Venezuelan migrants, providing them with humanitarian assistance and access to mechanisms for regular stay.¹¹⁹ Although invited, Venezuelan authorities did not participate in the meeting. A day before its start, the Venezuelan Vice President described the exodus of her compatriots as a "normal migratory flow."¹²⁰

Also in September 2018, UNHCR and IOM announced the appointment of Guatemalan diplomat Eduardo Stein as Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region and the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform held its first meeting in Panama. In November, a second international summit, held in Quito, concluded with the signing of an Action Plan on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Nationals.¹²¹ The 13-point initiative emphasizes the establishment of regional mechanisms for information exchange; the facilitation of documentation recognition and the commitments to lower the cost of applications for regular status. UNHCR and IOM also launched the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), a \$734 million-program aimed to respond to the humanitarian needs of the refugees and migrants from Venezuela and to secure their social and economic inclusion in the communities that receive them.

¹¹⁹ Ecuador, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Sept. 4, 2018) Declaración de Quito sobre Movilidad Humana de ciudadanos venezolanos en la Región. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/declaracion-de-quito-sobre-movilidad-humana-de-ciudadanos-venezolanos-en-la-region/>

¹²⁰ Reuters. (Sep. 3, 2018) Venezuela says migration flows are 'normal' Retrieved from: <https://af.reuters.com/article/idAFKCN1LJ21Q>

¹²¹ Ecuador, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Nov 23, 2018) La II reunión internacional de Quito concluye con la firma del Plan de Acción sobre la movilidad humana de nacionalidad venezolanos en la región'. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/la-ii-reunion-internacional-de-quito-concluye-con-la-firma-del-plan-de-accion-sobre-la-movilidad-humana-de-nacionalidad-venezolanos-en-la-region/>

3.6. Venezuelan Refugees

Although the country is not at war, in 2017 Venezuela ranked fourth in the world among countries of origin of those applying for asylum. With 111,600 claims filed, Venezuela was only behind Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq (UNHCR, 2017:44). That figure represents an increase of more than 200% compared to the 34,000 registered requests in 2016. As of December 2017, the country accumulated 156,000 asylum applications around the world. In less than a year, however, that number exceeded the total of applications filed in the previous three years. According to the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, by the end of 2018 there were 464,229 asylum seekers from Venezuela all around the world.¹²² In only one year the number of claims filed surpassed 300,000 cases and doubled the accumulated figure of the previous four years.

The data corresponding to the United States encompass 82,000 Venezuelan asylum requests filed between 2015 and 2018. Given that the applications are made by family and not by individuals, it is estimated that in total they could cover some 200,000 people.¹²³ The number of Venezuelans seeking asylum kept growing during 2019 and by August 5, the UNHCR reported 601,341 asylum claims filed by Venezuelans all around the world. According to the organism, although not all Venezuelans had left their country for reasons typically attributed to refugees, it was becoming increasingly clear that a significant number of Venezuelans were indeed “in need of international protection.” (2018b: 3).

¹²² UNHCR (Dec. 31, 2018) Asylum-seekers from Venezuela 2014-18. Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/platform>.

¹²³ Tamoia Calzadilla and Jose Fernando Lopez (Oct. 28, 2018). *Venezolanos rompen record de solicitud de asilo en EE.UU. pero pocos lo obtienen*. Univision. Retrieved from: <https://www.univision.com/noticias/inmigracion/venezolanos-rompen-record-de-solicitud-de-asilo-en-eeuu-pero-pocos-lo-obtienen>

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING THE DIASPORA

This chapter is divided into two main sections that address the two main dimensions of the Venezuelan Diaspora. The first part deals with the different typologies of studies conducted in regards to this phenomenon, providing historical perspectives about its causes, and statistical information on the migrant communities, as well as qualitative profiles about these populations, and evaluations regarding the impact of massive resettlements in host countries. The second part encompasses an analysis of this migratory wave, based on the theories of non-voluntary migration. The goal of this second section is to evaluate the applicability of these models to better understand and make sense of the nature and patterns of this fast and massive outwards human flow.

4.1. The Study of the Venezuelan Diaspora

So far, the study of the Venezuelan Diaspora has been addressed through four types of studies: historical analyses of this phenomenon carried out by scholars, censuses of immigrant populations implemented by governments, surveys of travelers and migrants conducted by international organizations, NGOs, churches and academic institutions, and impact reports about sectorial implications. Historical analyses address the socio-political perspectives on the process of mass emigration in Venezuela from a theoretical standpoint, without drawing on first-hand encounters with migrants. Censuses, in contrast, provide information about the composition of whole migrant populations, in terms of socio-economic status (SES), reasons to emigrate and settling conditions.

Regarding surveys, the available studies conducted until early 2019 only included interviews of convenience samples of people selected by non-probabilistic methods. The results of these studies only provide information about the surveyed population, without allowing for valid statistical generalizations for entire migrant populations. For example, international organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR use two types of interviews: one to collect detailed information about the lives of people already settled in hosting countries ("Neighborhoods" category); another version ("Transit") collects data of people in transit who are interviewed while still traveling. In spite of their lack of external validity, those studies provide qualitative descriptions of the Venezuelan migrants and their variations over time and across countries. Finally, the impact studies encompass institutional reports by multilateral organizations, such as UNESCO or the World Bank, dealing with specific aspects, specially economic and social implications of the Venezuelan Diaspora.

4.1.1. Historical Analyses

In the mid-2000s scholars started analyzing the transformation of Venezuela from a net receptor country to a progressive population emitter country (De la Vega, 2005: 125). Guardia (2007), focused on the change of emigration from a sporadic phenomenon to a more continuous one. Some researchers dealt with the internal structure of these migratory patterns, which mainly comprised the middle strata of the population (De La Vega, 2003) and highly-qualified workers (Latinos Globales, 2008). Others addressed the driving forces behind emigration such as the lack of economic opportunities (Mateo and Ledezma, 2006) and concerns for personal safety (Ibarra and Rodríguez, 2010). Finally, Freitez (2011: 18), studied the increase in the number of

Venezuelan emigrants around the world during the first decade of the XXI century, from 378,000 to 521,000 between 2005 and 2010.¹²⁴

After the beginning of the massive emigration from Venezuela, Vargas (2018) focused on the nature of the diaspora as a response to the social and economic crisis. Unlike the previous phases of migration, which predominantly included highly qualified professionals, the author identified a new stage, which started after 2016 and comprises younger populations from lower socioeconomic strata, for whom the social and economic reasons predominate when making the decision to emigrate. During this stage, labeled as “emigration as a need,” the country added the reduction of its workforce to the loss of intellectual capital and knowledge assets. The author states that the “new Venezuelan emigrants seek minimum living conditions: access to food and complete medical care, which they do not find in Venezuela due to the scarcity of these items or the high cost of them” (Vargas, 2018: 111)

4.1.2. Census Studies

By January 2019, Colombia had undertaken the only census available about Venezuelans living in South America. In conducting the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMV)¹²⁵, in April 2018, the government counted 442,462 people who had applied for the Special Stay Permit (PEP, in Spanish). According to this census, 73.2% of individuals within the targeted population were adults (2.6% of them aged over 60), 50.3% were women,

¹²⁴ According to the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the stock of Venezuelan emigrants passed from 185,000 in 1990, to 242,000 in 1995 and 320,000 in 2000, an annual growing rate of around 5.5%.

¹²⁵ Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos en Colombia (RAMV) 2018. Informe Primer mes. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64101>. The registry was conducted between April 6 and May 5 of 2018

and 26.8% were children and adolescents under the age of 18. Out of the adults, 51.6% were single, 35.2% lived in non-marital cohabitation, and 14% were married.

The census also revealed a population of Venezuelans with relatively low levels of education. Among the migrants, 13.5% of adults had Bachelor's degrees, 8.5% were technicians, and only 0.5% had postgraduate degrees. The remaining 77.5% of the adults only had a high school education or lower.¹²⁶ The whole migrant population encompassed 253,575 family groups, 63.9% of them comprised of only one member, 16.1% two members, and 20% three or more. Of the total amount of families, 73.4% said they had household members who were still remaining in Venezuela, 58% claimed not to have Colombian relatives, and only 23.4% lived with their Colombian relatives.

The process of registration for the PEP also made it evident that most Venezuelan migrants had inadequate identification documents. When applying for migratory status regularization, 73.9% of Venezuelans used their national identity cards as identification documents; 14.5%, (most of them children) used their birth certificates, and only 7.4% used their passports. The remainder used another kind of ID. Regarding the living conditions of the migrants in Colombia, 36.7% of the families reported having run out of food in the past three months, 25.7% of the adults claimed to be unemployed and 72.1% of the children and adolescents were not attending school.

¹²⁶ Such a profile of the Venezuelan population settled in Colombia contrasts with the reports of educational attainment of Venezuelans in their own country. By 2016, according to World Bank and UNESCO data, 25% of the people aged 25 or older reported to have at least a Bachelor's or equivalent degree. For more information see: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.CUAT.BA.ZS?locations=VE>

A further report of the RAMV¹²⁷ published in November 2018 showed an increase of the Venezuelan population to 1,032,016 individuals from May to September 30. Out of this total, 57.2% of the migrants remained legally in Colombia using appropriate documentation, 23.3% were in the process of regularization, and 21.1% stayed in the country with an irregular migratory status. The report also revealed a change in the spatial distribution of Venezuelans in Colombia from the regions closest to the bi-national border to the areas of greatest economic development. In May 2018, almost two in three Venezuelan migrants (63.6%) lived in the bordering areas on the Colombian side and the northern Caribbean coastal departments. By September, the proportion of the migrant population living in that area had fallen to 46.8%, while the amount of migrants in the central area of the capital, Bogota had more than doubled, from 12.43% to 27.4%.

4.1.3. Surveys of Venezuelan Migrants

4.1.3.1. Colombia

Until January 2019, the largest survey of Venezuelans living abroad had been carried out in Colombia by the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Universities Católica of Táchira in Venezuela and Simón Bolívar, in Cúcuta, Colombia.¹²⁸ Within a convenience sample of 14,578 adults, the survey also explored the underlying psychosocial reasons behind the decision to leave

¹²⁷ Todo lo que quiere saber sobre la migración venezolana y no se lo han contado. Available at: <http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/index.php/es/prensa/infografias/infografias-2018/8693-migracion-venezolana>

¹²⁸ Bermúdez et al. (2018) Informe sobre la movilidad humana venezolana. Realidades y perspectivas de quienes emigran [9 de abril al 6 de mayo de 2018] San Cristóbal: Venezuela: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados (SJR). Venezuela. Available at <https://cpalsocial.org/documentos/570.pdf>. The study was conducted between April 9 and May 6, 2018 in two Border Control Points (at Ureña and Villa del Rosario).

Venezuela. Among multiple dimensions, 83.6% of the interviewees argued that they had emigrated looking for safer living conditions; 72.3% mentioned personal insecurity as the main driver, 70.8% were in despair for the situation in the country, 63.1% said they were escaping from hunger, 62.9% reported they had emigrated due to the high levels of day-to-day stress, 58.8%, talked of the uncertainty about the future, and 56.3% mentioned the lack of medicine for medical treatments. Another 31.2% stated that they had been forced to move from their original place of residence before emigrating.

In addition, Venezuelan migrants mentioned economic reasons as triggering factors moving them to leave. Among these reasons, 82% of those surveyed said that they had left the country in search of new and better job opportunities; 70% stated the goal of helping a relative financially; 58% mentioned that they did not see a prosperous future in Venezuela; while 44.9% mentioned not having enough money to pay the rent; finally, 39.4% posited that they could not maintain their quality of life. In its analysis of the data, the study indicates that those who emigrated were struggling with life, hunger, illness and mental health and that as a result, emigration was “a necessity for most Venezuelans” (Bermúdez et al., 2018: 16).

4.1.3.2. Ecuador

By the beginning of 2019, the Working Group on Refugee and Migrant Persons (GTRM, in Spanish), had produced several reports about the Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador, through the IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)¹²⁹ and UNHCR’s Protection Monitoring system.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system set off by the IOM to track and monitor the displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or in route.

¹³⁰ Protection monitoring system is a matrix set off by the UNHCR to collect, verify, and analyze

Round 2,¹³¹ released on November 2018, identified a migrant population comprised of slightly more men (55%), and mostly young people (88% aged between 18 and 40 years old), with high levels of occupation back in Venezuela: 76.1% had work before leaving the country. The survey also identified Ecuador as a transit stage for most of the migrants. Only 30% of those interviewed when entering the country said that they planned to remain in Ecuador, while 57% stated that their final destination was Peru.

The Protection Monitoring¹³² implemented by UNHCR in Rumichaca in November 2018, also shed light on the hardship of the Venezuelan migrants arriving in Ecuador. The study revealed that among those entering through the northern border with Colombia, 42.3% reported to have walked for long distances at some point during their trip, 37.2% to have hitchhiked, and 11.7% had to work along the way. The survey also highlighted the precariousness of the migrants before departing Venezuela. According to the data, around one in four interviewees (27.6%) had financed their trip through donations, or resorted to family support (26.6%). The study also showed a high proportion of migrants traveling with inappropriate documentation, with six out of ten adults (63.4%) having no passports, identifying themselves just with their national identity cards. Among the children, 53.3% used their birth certificate as identification document, 24.4% used their national ID and only 21.5 % had a passport.

In relation to the risks associated with returning to Venezuela, 74.5% mentioned not being able to “guarantee[ing] the subsistence” of their families as their main fear; 68.2%

information on Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) in order to identify human rights violations and protection risks encountered them and other affected populations.

¹³¹ Ecuador. Grupo de Trabajo sobre Personas Refugiadas y Migrantes (GTRM). Reporte Respuesta Operacional #1 (hasta noviembre 2018). Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67461>. Encompassing 1,953 surveys, the study was conducted between August and September of 2018 in three Bordering Control Posts (BCP), at Rumichaca, Huaquillas and San Miguel and three cities (Quito, Manta and Guayaquil).

¹³² The Protection Monitoring carried out by UNHCR took place at Rumichaca from November 12 to 16, 2018 and included interviews with 990 people. Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67460>.

expressed concerns about the "lack of food"; 23.4% mentioned "imminent health risk" and 12.1% noted fear of "persecution, abuse, or discrimination." Another 6% of the sample said that they would face no problems. As part of the GTRM, the World Food Program (WFP) reported that 57% of Venezuelan households who had recently arrived in Ecuador failed to cover basic needs and were in a situation of poverty or extreme poverty, and UNICEF estimated that 70% of Venezuelan children in Ecuador were out of school.

4.1.3.3. Peru

The five rounds of the DTM implemented in Peru by the IOM up to April 2019 make evident the changes within Venezuelan migrant populations over time. Ended in January 2018, Round 2¹³³ yielded a migrant profile mostly male (63%), younger than 30 years (56%), and with tertiary education (58%), holding either Bachelor's (38%) or technical degrees (20%). According to the OIM, 72% of those in transit to other countries were single, compared with 58.3% of the population already settled in the Peruvian capital, Lima. Unlike the cases of Colombia and Ecuador, 97% of the Venezuelans surveyed at the Border Control Points (BCPs) had entered the country with their passport.

Among the reasons stated for leaving Venezuela, 57.9% of the migrants surveyed mentioned "economic reasons". Another 10.9% indicated that it was due to unemployment, followed by 9.8%, who reported that the main causes were social insecurity or violence. An additional 8.3% talked about the lack of food and medicine. These data suggest that Peru is more of a destination for "economic" migrants than Colombia or Ecuador, even though economic and

¹³³ The Flow Monitoring of Venezuelan Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) – IOM Peru Round 2 surveyed 2,760 interviewees between December 2017 and January 2018 in the migratory control points in Tumbes (at the border with Ecuador), Santa Rosa in Tacna (at the border with Chile), and, four additional flow monitoring points in Metropolitan Lima. The data are available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66859>

labor situations before leaving Venezuela were similar for all these migrants in the three host countries. Among the travelers interviewed at the BCPs in Tacna and Tumbes, 79% reported that they had a job in Venezuela, while 13.5% stated that they were unemployed and 7% were students. However, according to the data, 46% of the interviewees mentioned that they had migrated internally in Venezuela before moving abroad.

A further survey (Round 4)¹³⁴ captured a change in the demographic conditions of Venezuelan migrants compared to Round 2. Although men remained the majority, the gap between them and women decreased from 19 percent points in January to only six by September 2018 (53% males vs. 47% females). Likewise, the proportion of people over 40 years rose from one out of ten to one in six (11% vs.16%). The rate of people reporting being single or married fell from a 3:1 ratio to a virtual tie between both groups, with a slight majority of married (49%) over single (46%). Regarding job status before leaving Venezuela, self-reports about employment decreased 15 percent points to 64%, while those on unemployment doubled to 26%.

Round 4 also yielded two different socioeconomic profiles of Venezuelan migrants: one for those entering Peru from Ecuador, and another for those leaving the country through the Southern border with Chile. Among the former, the levels of tertiary education (including technical degrees) and use of passport as means of identification fell almost by half (to 32% and 51%, respectively), while more than half of the interviewees (53%) reported to have traveled with their family group, and only 24% said they were moving alone. Regarding the latter, the patterns of university education remained still high (52%), as well as the use of a passport when

¹³⁴ IOM. Monitoreo de la población venezolana en Perú. DTM Ronda 4 (Nov. 2018). Available at: https://migration.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM_R4_OIMPERU_VFF.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=4890. The study, implemented between September and October 2018 in the northern Migratory Control Post (MCP) at Tumbes (bordering Ecuador) and the southern MCP at Tacna (bordering Chile) encompassed 2,148 people interviewed (1,645 in Tumbes and 503 in Tacna).

entering Chile (91%). Likewise, the proportion of people traveling alone (48%) doubled the levels of those entering Peru through the northern border, while a lower percentage of people of migrants (41%) stated to be traveling with their family groups.

The data also show a deterioration of the travel conditions over time, as people move further. Among those entering Peru from the north, 78% said they had needed at most two weeks travelling to the bi-national border with Ecuador. To reach the southern border with Chile, however, four out of ten (44%) stated they had spent more than three months. The study also revealed that 45% of the people interviewed when entering Peru at Tumbes indicated not having had regular access to food in the previous months, vs. 18% of those who made the same claim in Tacna, at the border with Chile. In both places, more than one in five (22%) reported having received some type of institutional support during the trip, specifically food rations and health care, by international agencies, the Peruvian government, or NGOs.

In a new survey (Round 5), the educational level reported by Venezuelan migrants entering Peru from Ecuador had fallen to 19.6% of people holding technical or university degrees (one third less than the number yielded by Round 4). Among those leaving the country through the Southern border with Chile, the educational attainment had fallen one fifth, from 51% of those who stated to have finished tertiary education to just four in ten. Regarding the use of passports as a means of identification, it decreased to 23.1% and 63.6% respectively. Finally, the vulnerability had grown to 68.5% among those coming from Ecuador, who stated being starving or not having enough access to food. Among those leaving the country to Chile, 23.2% said that.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ IOM. Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana en el Perú – DTM Ronda 5 Abril 2019. Available at: https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM_MIGRACIONVENEZUELA_R5_2019.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=5636

4.1.3.4. Chile

In Chile, Round 1 of the DTM,¹³⁶ conducted in July 2018, focused on Venezuelans settled in that country. The study identified a migrant population comprised of 53% men, 80% young adults aged between 18 and 39, 69% employed people, and 63% professionals. Although data revealed a devaluation of Venezuelans' educational credentials (with half of that workforce located in the commercial and service sector), according to the study the average salary of those workers exceeded the Chilean minimum wage at the time, by 25%. Likewise, 91.4% of interviewees said to have a paid job in Venezuela before emigrating, and unlike the cases of Colombia or Ecuador, 13% of respondents in Chile reported to have received an offer to work even before leaving their country. Within the sample, 49% said they had arrived in Chile alone, and 40% reported to have moved with their families.

Conducted in October 2018, Round 2¹³⁷ focused on Venezuelan adults arriving in Chile through the Santiago International Airport and the bordering town of Chacalluta, next to Peru. The study yielded a general migrant profile of mainly young (79% ranging between 18 and 39), and single people (69%), who were mostly traveling alone (61%). Their remaining demographic characteristics, however, varied depending on their port of entry and means of transportation. Among those arriving by plane, 57.4% reported to have university education, and another 11% said they had technical degrees. Within those entering by land from Peru, the proportion of

¹³⁶ IOM. Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana: Chile Ronda 1 Julio 2018. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66852>. The study was carried out between July 18 and July 31, 2018 and encompassed 462 Venezuelan adults living in Chile, who were selected through an intentional non-probabilistic sample.

¹³⁷ IOM. Monitoreo de flujo de la población venezolana 2da. Ronda. Matriz de Seguimiento de Desplazamiento (DTM) OIM Chile. Dec. 2018. Available at: <https://migration.iom.int/reports/chile-%E2%80%94-monitoreo-de-flujo-de-poblaci%C3%B3n-venezolana-2-noviembre-2018>. The study, conducted from October 22 to 26, 2018, included 252 Venezuelan adults (51% females and 49% males), who were interviewed when entering Chile through the border with Peru at Chacalluta and the Arturo Merino airport in Santiago.

professionals was almost 20 points lower (38%) while the segment of technicians nearly doubled (21%).

Compared to the 91.4% of interviewees in Round 1 who said to have paid work back in Venezuela, Round 2 registered a 10-point decrease in this dimension, with 81% of respondents saying they had some remunerated activity in Venezuela. Contrary to 13% of those surveyed in Round 1 who stated having received an offer to work in Chile before leaving Venezuela, in Round 2 only three months later, barely 6% indicated that they had received similar offers. In terms of the nature and conditions of the trips, almost four out of ten interviewees surveyed at the Santiago Airport in Round 2 were arriving with their families (39.4%), while only 22.4% of those entering by land through the Peruvian border at Chacalluta met the same condition. Although traveling by plane, 74.6% of those Venezuelan migrants entering through the International Airport had spent more than three days to arrive in Chile.

4.1.3.5. Argentina

Round 1 of the Displacement Monitoring Matrix (DTM),¹³⁸ implemented in Argentina in July 2018, yielded a profile of Venezuelan migrants mainly comprised of males (55%), single people (58%), young adults in the prime working age (37% of them ranging between 26 and 35 years old), and highly educated (60% with bachelor's degrees and 12% of them holding postgraduate studies). Within the sample, 58% stated that they were traveling alone, while only one out of three (33.9%) were moving with their families. Regarding previous employment

¹³⁸ OIM. Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana argentina. Ronda 1 Julio 2018. Available at: <http://argentina.iom.int/co/sites/default/files/publicaciones/DTM%20FINAL%20FINAL%20.pdf>. Encompassing 395 Venezuelan migrants when arriving in Argentina, the study was carried out simultaneously between July 10 and 16 of 2018, in the international airports Minister Juan Pistarini and Jorge Newbery of Buenos Aires; and the International Bridge Tancredo Neves (Province of Misiones), on the border with Brazil.

conditions, 79% stated to have a remunerated job in Venezuela before leaving, and only (7%) said they had been unemployed. Similar to the migrant profile observed in Chile, 15% of the people consulted claimed to have received a job offer to work in Argentina, even before leaving Venezuela.

Carried out three months later, at the end of 2018, Round 2 of the DTM¹³⁹ yielded a similar profile in terms of gender, age, education, marital status, and working conditions before emigrating. Paralleling the results of Round 1, 16% of the people consulted in Round 2 said they had received a job offer to work in Argentina. The study, however, showed a five-point reduction among the people who said to be traveling alone (53%), while the proportion of those moving with their families increased to 37%. There was also a change in the patterns of transportation, with 47% of interviewees saying that they had traveled by air and land to get to Argentina, compared to 43% who had only flew and 10% who had only traveled by land

4.1.3.6. Brazil

Round 1 of the DTM¹⁴⁰ conducted in Brazil in early 2018, identified a Venezuelan migrant population mostly male (58%), young (with eight out of 10 ranging between ages 25 and 49), with only a basic education (with 64% having secondary level or lower, and 26% holding a Bachelor's degrees), and equally divided between singles and married people. During this round,

¹³⁹ OIM. (2018) Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana argentina. Ronda 2 Nov. 2018. Available at: <https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/DTM-Ronda-2-OK-FINAL-4-02.pdf>. The study included 325 surveys of Venezuelans who entered Argentina between October 28 and November 11, 2018, through four points: the international airport "Minister Juan Pizarini in Ezeiza, and the International Bridges "Tancredo Neves" (Province of Misiones), on the border with Brazil, and Horacio Guzman on the border with Bolivia, and the Cristo Redentor Bordering Cross with Chile.

¹⁴⁰ OIM (2018). DTM Brasil – N°1 Monitoramento do Fluxo Migratório Venezuelano. Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66849>. The study, encompassing 3.516 interviews, was carried out in the cities of Boa Vista and Pacaraima, in the northern state of Roraima, bordering with Venezuela, between January 25 and March 8 of 2018.

four out of ten interviewees (39.4%) said they were traveling with their family groups, and 52% had another country as their final destination. With regards to the reasons to emigrate, 67% argued that they had left Venezuela because of economic and work reasons and 22% cited the lack of access to food and medical services. When asked about what would happen if they returned to Venezuela, 42% mentioned that they would suffer from hunger; 32%, that they would face unemployment; and 19% stated that they would likely not face any problem. Out of the whole sample, 57% claimed to be unemployed in Brazil, and among the employed, only 18% had formal jobs and 83% received less than minimum wage. According to the survey, 37% of interviewees were eating fewer than three meals a day.

Round 2 of the DTM,¹⁴¹ conducted three months later, yielded a similar profile of the migrants in terms of gender distribution (56.3% men); marital status (54.8% single) and education (70% had high school degrees or lower). Unlike in Round 1, however, more interviewees were traveling with their families (45%), and almost twice (90%) of those interviewed in their neighborhoods said they intended to stay in Brazil. The study also found the lowest proportion of Venezuelans using passports (23.9%) to identify themselves abroad, and the highest levels of unemployment before leaving their country (35%) among immigrants interviewed. The survey also revealed the lowest levels of income for Venezuelans previous to emigration, with 73% of them reporting less than the minimum wage back in their country, and only 4.4% saying they earn more than twice the minimum wage. The migrant population that settled in Brazil also reported the highest levels of unemployment in South America at 45%.

¹⁴¹ BRASIL – N°2 Monitoreo de flujo migratorio venezolano. Available at http://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/DTM/OIM_Brasil_DTM_N2-SP_VF.PDF. Encompassing 3.785 surveys, the study was carried out between May and June, 2018, at the transit post in Boa Vista and Venezuelan settlements in Pacaraima.

Another 60% stated that they had no access to filtered water, while 63.5% of the children were reported as not attending school.

4.1.3.7. Trinidad and Tobago

A study conducted by UNHCR among Venezuelan in Trinidad y Tobago¹⁴² from September to November 2018 yielded a profile of migrants comprised of slightly more men (54%), and mostly young people (with nine out of 10 ranging between ages 18 and 47). Although the majority of interviewees were single (75%) almost half of the sample (47%) had children. Regarding education attainment, the survey showed that 58% of respondents had completed at most high (50%) elementary (6%) or had no education (3%). Among the rest of the sample, 24% reported to have a college education, 9% stated they held technical degrees, and only 7% had post-university education. Regarding work status in Trinidad and Tobago, the survey showed that almost three quarters (71%) of the interviewees were not working at the time of the interviews. Of those who responded that they were working (25%), only one in five had permanent full-time jobs. When trying to find out where did the migrants come from the survey identified that seven out of ten respondents came from five states: Anzoategui, Bolivar, Monagas, Delta Amacuro, and Sucre located in the East of Venezuela, and near Trinidad and Tobago. The last three of these states have international borders with the islands, which makes evident a strong relationship between proximity and the choice of a destination among vulnerable Venezuelan migrant populations.

¹⁴² UNHCR (2019) Protection Monitoring Report. Venezuelan asylum-seekers and refugees. Trinidad and Tobago. September-November 2018. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/69569>

4.1.3.8. Guyana

In Guyana, where 36 thousand Venezuelans were living by March 2019, Round 2 of the DTM¹⁴³ identified a new profile of migrants. Unlike other countries, in this study 60% of the interviewees were women. Although most of the persons were young (58%) between 18 and 30 years of age, another 38% were aged between 31 and 60, and an additional 4% were older than 60 years. The profile of these migrants was also different regarding their civil statuses. In contrast to the rest of South America, in Guyana, a slight majority of Venezuelan migrants (50%) were married or lived in free unions, while single people (47%) were the minority. Likewise, In Round 2, approximately 57% of the interviewees traveled with their families.

In terms of educational attainment, across two rounds of the DTM conducted in October and November of 2018, the majority reported possessing at most secondary education (35%). In contrast, only 9% said they had completed university (again, the lowest level in Latin America), while one-third of the people interviewed (29 %) reported having no formal education. Their migratory statuses also showed that 50% of the people stayed on an irregular base, while 10% said they had a tourist visa and only 1% had a work visa. The 39% remained under “other status.” Because the DTM rounds were conducted in two different regions it yielded two different profiles in terms of labor situation for Venezuelans in their country of origin. In the capital, Georgetown, and its surroundings, 60% stated to have a job back in Venezuela and only 9% said they were unemployed. In the area bordering with Venezuela 50% of the people interviewed in stated that they were unemployed before departing, 41% said that worked

¹⁴³ OIM (2018). Displacement Tracking Matrix: Guyana (Oct 2018): Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/69567>. The study, encompassing 1,495 interviews, was carried out in the Regions 1 (bordering with Venezuela) and 2 (including the capital, Georgetown and its surroundings, between September 19 and October 1 of 2018).

independently, and only 6% argued to have a paid job. As the data show, the migrants arriving in Guyana were among the most vulnerable populations fleeing Venezuela.

4.1.3.9. General Trends

Profiles of Venezuelans reported by the IOM and UNHCR depict earlier waves of migrants mostly comprised of single, young males, with relative high levels of education and employment situations before departing. In a study published by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Freier and Parent (2018) posit that the movement of Venezuelans traveling alone is declining, while more and more migrants are leaving the country with their families every day. The authors also state that even though the majority of emigrants belong to the middle or higher socio-economic class, increasingly sectors of the lower strata are joining the migratory wave. Freier and Parent state, in fact, that 12% of those fleeing the country are “among the poorest in Venezuelan society.”

According to the MPI study, those in precarious situations migrate to the nearest places, while those with higher SES tend to go farther and seek better destinations. Consequently, educational attainment among Venezuelan migrants tends to be lower in neighboring countries and higher in farther destinations, since those with more financial means usually have better education and may cover the cost of longer trips. SES profiles also intertwine with economic and labor patterns in the host countries when deciding where to go. Thus, countries such as Argentina, Chile, or Brazil (in its central and southern zones) early turned into more attractive destinations for highly educated migrants and qualified professionals than Peru or Ecuador. Conversely, those last countries, along with Colombia, became more appealing settlements for

low skilled operators and informal workers due to the prevalence of less regulated markets and more informal economies.

Over time however, the profile of migrants is changing and less well-to-do travelers are going further as their early preferred destinations become saturated. Within the changes in socioeconomic characteristics of the Venezuelan migrants and their destinations, Freier and Parent also highlight the “ethnic diversification” resulting from the growing displacement of indigenous populations to Colombia and Brazil. Finally, when addressing the debate on whether or not the Venezuelan travelers should be considered economic migrants or refugees, the authors state that due to the severity of the crisis, “Venezuelans have to emigrate in order to survive.”

4.1.4. Impact Reports

An additional category of studies encompasses economic analyses carried out to determine the social, sectorial and economic impacts of Venezuelan migrants in their host countries. Up to 2019, there were very few analyses on these migrant’s vulnerabilities. One of them, conducted by UNICEF¹⁴⁴ estimated that 460,000 migrant children were in need of assistance in Colombia, Brazil, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, Peru and Panama as a consequence of the crisis in Venezuela. Another study conducted at the request of the Colombian government by the World Bank¹⁴⁵ calculated the potential positive impact Venezuelan immigration would bring to the economy, in addition to the costs to adapt public infrastructure to

¹⁴⁴ UNICEF (Nov. 2018) Migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean Situation Report No. 3. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/4901/file>

¹⁴⁵ World Bank (2018). *Migración desde Venezuela a Colombia. Impactos y estrategias de respuesta en el corto y mediano plazo*. Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30651/131472SP.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

receive the massive wave of migrants.¹⁴⁶ When assessing the nature of Venezuelan migration to Colombia, the World Bank report stated that although most people were leaving the country for economic reasons, that movement shared key characteristics with refugee crises that had occurred in other countries. According to the document, these include “a very rapid arrival of people (traditional economic migration tends to be slower) and a relatively high proportion of people in conditions of socio-economic vulnerability.” (WB, 2018: 13)

4.2. The Venezuelan Diaspora and Forced Migrations

In the absence of wars, systematic human rights violations or environmental disasters, economic collapse is the driving force behind displacement in Venezuela. Although not all movement corresponds to forced migration, the difference between the migration patterns until 2015 and after that year should be understood as a reaction to drastic disruptions to normal life. That makes these movements different from voluntary migrations. Among the several categories devised by scholars to analyze forced migrations, the ongoing massive human flow of migrants out of Venezuela could be seen, at varying degrees, through the lens of Kunz’s Anticipatory and Acute Movements; Jenny’s Non-voluntary Migrations; Richmond’s Reactive Migrations, Betts’ Survival Migrations, and IOM’s Forced Migrations.

¹⁴⁶ The institution determined that the incorporation of 0.5 million people in the working age (over a total migration of 819,672 people) would have an economic growth acceleration of 0.2 percentage points. According to the models of the WB, a further incorporation of 1 million people to the labor force, would generate a growth of 0,5% of the GDP, while the addition of 1,5 million would produce a growth of almost 1 point of the GDP, thanks to the expansion of consumption, and the increase in production which would result, in turn, in the creation of formal employment, a drop in the unemployment rate and the generation of indirect taxes.

4.2.1. Anticipatory and Acute Movements

Although designed for the analysis of forced movements as defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, Kunz' Kinetic Model of anticipatory and acute movements can be, at least partially applied to the case of Venezuela. According to the author, in refugee situations, some people leave their home country prepared while others have to do it suddenly and unprepared, depending on how an impending threat is perceived, and the degree of its potential danger. In his view, those who move before things get worse can be mistaken for voluntary migrants. In both scenarios, however, the forced-migrant condition arises from "the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations" (1973: 130). The OIM and UNHCR's reports show that until 2019 most Venezuelan migrants were not moving in response to positive motivations, but rather, reacting to overwhelming constraints.

Regarding the anticipatory movements, the Kinetic Model states that some people seek to migrate for fear of future calamities, when facing war or political persecution. In the case of Venezuela, evidence seems to confirm that people react in a similar way under situations of economic collapse. According to Kunz, those who move in anticipation usually are the "educated, alert and well-to-do" (1973: 132), a set of characteristics that matches the profile of earlier Venezuelan migrants reported by the IOM and UNHCR. Young, single and mostly highly educated Venezuelans started the first migratory wave, as a response to decreasing purchasing power, disappearing employment opportunities, growing inflation and increasing levels of personal insecurity. Such a movement could be considered as having an anticipatory nature. For them, the "pull" factors played a smaller role than the "push" factors, and the decision of leaving the country was basically made in order to avoid worse consequences.

Based on the categories defined by Vargas (2018), the outflow of people after 2016 may be understood as an acute movement. Once hyperinflation began and the economy collapsed, the new flow of migrants included more vulnerable populations like the 63.1% of those surveyed in Colombia who said they were escaping from hunger (Bermúdez et al., 2018), the 74.5% of interviewees in Ecuador who mentioned not being able to guarantee the subsistence of their families (UNHCR, 2018), or the 32% of respondents in Brazil who stated that they would face unemployment if they returned to Venezuela (IOM, 2018). For these individuals, the decision to emigrate was made when the situation deteriorated to the point where people found it intolerable to stay any longer. At this point the push motive becomes overwhelming and “the emphasis is on the escape,” according to Kunz.

4.2.2. Non-Voluntary Migration

The reasons causing people to leave and uproot their lives can be multifaceted and complex, according to Jenny (1984), whose concept of “non-voluntary migration” applies to the analysis of the Venezuelan diaspora. In his view, although economic deprivation, malnutrition, famine and other acute constraints do not expose individuals to persecution or physical violence, such situations ultimately can make life unbearable for people. Jenny’s notion of non-voluntary migration is based on a) the existence of a state of generalized deprivation which, b) inflicts “severe human suffering”, c) as a result of state acts or failure to act. The consequences of these acts or failures to act d) violate “basic human rights,” e) make it impossible for individuals to remain in their country, and f) lead to their departure (1984: 394).

That is the case of Venezuela, where the failure of the state in the management of the economy, resulted in recession, scarcity, loss of value of the local currency, and hyperinflation,

among other maladies. At different points in time, it became impossible for people to stay in their country, like the 70.8% of those Venezuelans interviewed in Colombia who stated to have emigrated in despair for the prevailing internal situation (Bermúdez et al., 2018), the 68.2% of those surveyed in Ecuador who expressed concerns about the lack of food in Venezuela (UNHCR, 2018), or the 42% of respondents in Brazil who mentioned that they would suffer from hunger if they returned (IOM, 2018). All of these elements forced Venezuelans into non-voluntary migration. Although economic in origin, the case of Venezuela must not be conflated with ordinary work migrations, according to Jenny's theory. For a portion of these migrants, the most significant reason to leave was the impossibility of guaranteeing their survival in their country, rather than the goal of merely improving their standard of living. Because of their hardship, that 12 percent of those Venezuelan migrants identified by Freier and Parent (2018) on their study about this diaspora, who were "among the poorest" in society, could be included in the category of non-voluntary migrants.

4.2.3. Reactive Migration

The *proactive-reactive* migration model proposed by Richmond can also be applied to the study of the Venezuelan Diaspora. Richmond's theory deals with individual's agency under refugee situations which emerge, in his view, when social institutions disintegrate or weaken to the point where the provision of services to meet basic needs becomes compromised (1988: 17). Under such conditions people's behavior is determined by structural constraints, which leave them with few alternatives other than to escape from intolerable threats (1994: 55). Based on individual's position in society and the nature of their coping mechanisms, migration operates as a "continuum," in which people act according to their varying degrees of freedom. At one end of

this continuum are those proactive migrants who rationally seek to maximize their potentialities. At the other, could be found those reactive migrants with constrained degrees of freedom who react in panic. Between these two extremes, Richmond proposes a third situation in which both, voluntary and non-voluntary migrants respond to a “diffuse anxiety generated by the failure of the social system” (Richmond, 1988: 17).

That is the case of Venezuela, where both middle-class or well-to-do citizens with high levels of education and low income people with low levels of schooling started reacting in the same way to extreme stress situations. Faced with scarcity of food and medicine, unemployment, electricity supply failures, personal insecurity, political instability, loss of purchasing power, impoverishment, and hyperinflation, among other constraints, growing numbers of Venezuelans began to find in a reactive kind of emigration an adaptive solution to the crisis, according to Richmond’s theory. Evidence of this adaptive process can be found in the 31.2% of people reported in Colombia (Bermúdez et al, 2018) who had been forced to move from their original place of residence before emigrating, or the 46% of interviewees cited by the IOM in Peru who mentioned to have migrated internally in Venezuela before moving abroad. Only the exhaustion of what Clark (1989) calls coping strategies, moved these people to seek more stable living conditions abroad. Once the viability of the system that internally met people’s essential needs failed, they were left with no many options different than to emigrate.

4.2.4. The Refugee Warning Model

Clark’s Refugee Warning Model —also known as Four Stage Paradigm (1989) — and Richmond’s System Model (1988) of reactive migration can also be applied in order to analyze the Venezuelan Diaspora. The former model was designed to analyze forced migrations of

people fleeing from violence and political persecution as defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention. The latter, in contrast, addresses the adaptive responses to crises produced by causes other than war, such as famine, and economic collapse (Richmond, 1993:11). Both models, however, share a similar structure and overlap because both deal with massive movements of people beyond their national frontiers.

Clark's Refugee Warning Model encompasses three components: "Push factors" (those circumstances that eventually may force people to leave their country); "Intervening Factors" (those elements that modify the push factors) and "Triggering Events" (those final and critical occurrences that may have convinced significant numbers of people to leave). Regarding Push Factors, which match what Richmond calls "Predisposing Factors," structural poverty and economic inequality may be considered as root causes of the migration. Public policies implemented by the Bolivarian government are another root cause of economic imbalances (inflation, devaluation, scarcity) that increased the suffering of people. The fall of international oil prices along with the reduction of public funds and the loss of purchasing power after 2015, constitute what Clark calls a "Proximate Event."

Inasmuch as scarcity and hyperinflation started affecting more sectors in Venezuela, the scope of individuals affected by governmental public policies widened, and a growing segment of people started considering emigration as a solution. With regards to "Intervening Factors," the lack of barriers in other South American countries played a relevant role in the Venezuelan diaspora, because neighboring countries kept their borders open for Venezuelan migrants. Cultural homogeneity could also be considered another intervening factor inasmuch as more than 90% of the migrants went to Colombia and beyond into the Spanish speaking regional community, while less than 10% went to bordering Brazil.

Within the “Triggering Events” (also called “Precipitating Events” by Richmond), three moments have prompted the migratory wave. Although Clark defines triggering events as those occurrences that destroy the capacity of a population to survive under the prevailing conditions, in the case of Venezuela the disruption of the normal functioning of the system has been gradual and the events triggering the emigration levels have been punctual episodes of political nature: first, there was the overturn of the National Assembly’s initiative to activate a recall referendum to revoke Maduro’s mandate, in Nov of 2016. The loss of this last electoral alternative to democratically promote a political change, caused the rise of emigration from a few hundred to over a thousand people per day. The following year, the election of the Constituent Assembly in July, 2017, triggered a new acceleration of Venezuelan exits, increasing the daily outflow to two thousand. Third, the beginning of hyperinflation in November of that year boosted the figures of emigration beyond three thousand per day.

4.2.5. Survival Migration

The case of Venezuela can also be studied through the notion of “survival migration.” Proposed by Betts and Kaytaz (2009), this term defines those people who leave their country of origin because of an existential threat and the lack of possibilities for a domestic remedy (2009:8). Their concept encompasses three components: a) the fact of fleeing one’s country of origin; b) escaping from looming and outstanding perils, and c) the absence of foreseeable solutions. As in the case of Zimbabwe, the country for which the term Survival Migration was coined, in Venezuela three million left the country between 2015 and early 2019 as a result of the desperate situation within its borders. Because of a failure of the state expressed in unemployment, absence of food and medicine, insecurity, loss of purchase power, or the inability

to cover basic needs, emigration became the only available survival strategy for many Venezuelans to face the collapse of their livelihoods.

Some scholars, such as Crush et al. (2012) take issue with this concept of Survival Migration, arguing that the idea of emigration as the only option for survival contradicts the fact that, for example, in the case of Zimbabwe the vast majority of the population did not leave to escape from the extreme conditions prevailing between 2005 and 2010 (p. 5). However, others like Clark (1989), highlight that in most refugee situations the internationally forced migrants are a minority within a whole population undergoing similar existential threats. The remaining challenge, notwithstanding, is to define the threshold of what an ‘existential threat’ is.

4.2.6. Mixed Migration

Consistent with approaches of UNHCR, IOM and other multilateral institutions, the nature of the Venezuelan Diaspora matches the concept of “mixed migrations.” That term entails a “complex population movement including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants” (IOM, 2004: 42), whose principal characteristics include the differentiated kind of movement among those who move legally and illegally, the multiplicity of factors driving them to depart, and the fact that the vast majority of these migrants may have humanitarian needs (IOM, 2008:2). Regarding the Venezuelan Diaspora, the movement of people includes both migrants with regular status and others that have entered in the host countries illegally, as well as those who entered legally but remained on an irregular basis, after expiration of the permission to stay originally granted. The factors driving them to leave the country range from insecurity, lack of medicine, insufficient earnings to meet their needs, hunger, search for jobs, uncertainty about the future, and the high levels of day-to-day stress.

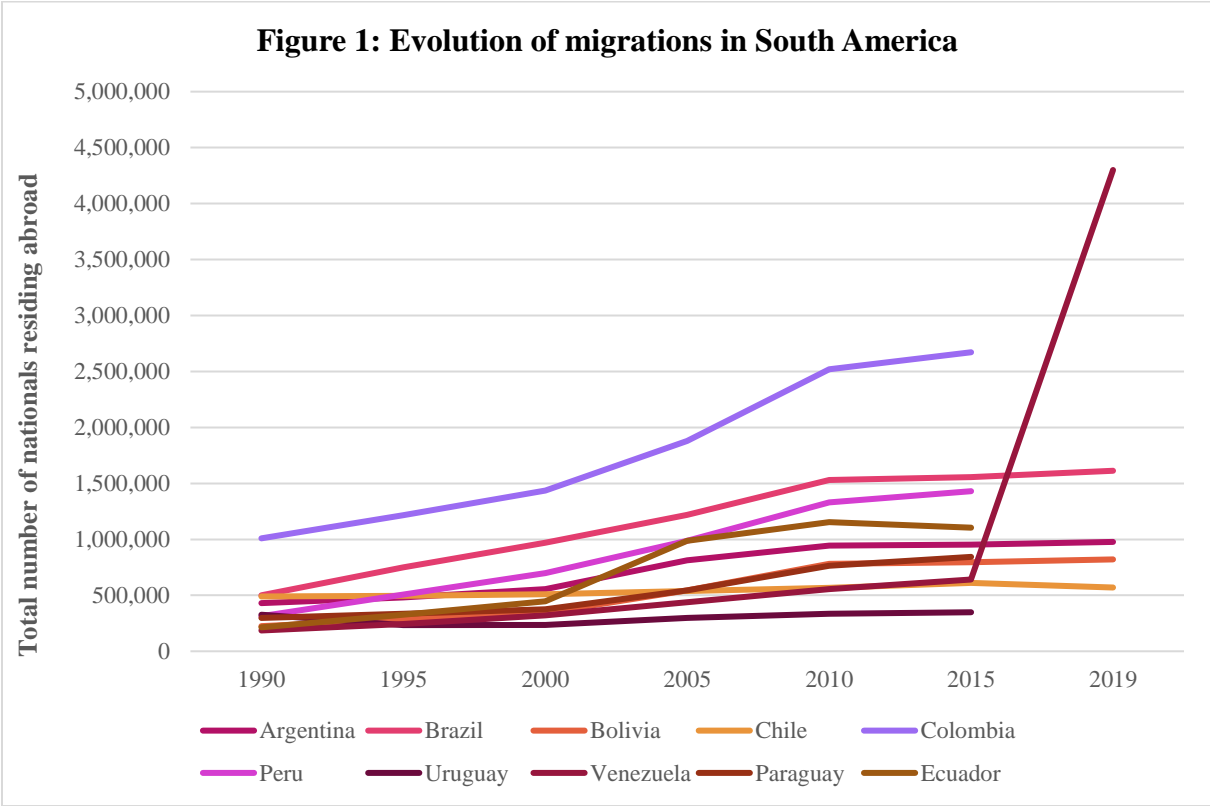
As reported in the studies conducted by UNHCR and the IOM all around America (especially in the central and south sections of the continent), significant parts of the Venezuelan migratory movements face conditions of vulnerability and require humanitarian assistance: People have had to walk significant parts of their trips to reach their destinations, with no access to essential public services, health or education, facing limitations to acquire food, and adequate housing, among other issues. More than 400,000 asylum claims filed by Venezuelan migrants in 16 American countries by January 2019, attest to the existence of a segment of people in search of international protection. This vulnerable population, however, is moving along with economic migrants whose motivations to emigrate are not easy to pin down. Stating that the Venezuelan migrants encompass refugees and asylum seekers necessary entails that one part of that mixed flows comprise forced migrants. But, if the country is not at war and there are no widespread situations of human rights violations and threats to life, factors producing forced migrations may go beyond absolute compulsion, physical threat, coercion and actual harm, as Nassari (2009) states. Necessarily, there are phenomena other than violence that cause forced migration.

4.2.7. Forced Migration

Although some part of the academic literature tends to restrict the concept of Forced Migration only to refugee situations, the corpus of theory developed by UNHCR, IOM and other multilateral institutions makes no difference in the scope of the term. In its *Glossary on Migration*, the IOM defines Forced Migration as “a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes” (2004:25). Beyond threats to life, this definition also includes livelihood and natural events. In its report *Groundswell, Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*, the World

Bank added to that definition the “lack of volition concerning the decision to move, though in reality motives may be mixed, and the decision to move may include some degree of personal agency or volition” (2018:viii). In this way, the terminology of forced migrations encompasses situations not only restricted to violence and different to absolute absence of freedom.

Multilateral institutions have also highlighted new elements to take into account when analyzing forced migrations. In its assessment of the potential impact that Venezuelan migration could have for Colombia, the World Bank states that even though most people were leaving the country for economic reasons, that movement shared key characteristics with refugee crises. According to the document, this included “a very rapid arrival of people (traditional economic migration tends to be slower) and a relatively high proportion of people in conditions of socio-economic vulnerability” (WB, 2018: 13).



a) Data from 1990 to 2015: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population.
 b) Data for Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile in 2017: Expansion.com/ Datosmacro.com
 c) Data for Venezuela 2019: IOM.

When analyzed historically, the emigration of Venezuelans grew at an annual rate of 6.6% between 2005 and 2010 (Freitez, 2011: 18), from 378,000 to 521,000 Venezuelans living abroad. That rate remained the same until 2015, when the stock of emigrants around the world reached more than 640,000 (UN, 2017). After 2015, however, the emigration rate skyrocketed (see Figure 1).

Although Venezuela does not endure war or massive political persecution, the scale of its diaspora is comparable to those of countries undergoing such calamities. An analysis of 13 massive displacements occurred after 1959 exemplify the way in which forced migrations work and how threatening events trigger massive displacements. Even though not exhaustive, this list (see Table 1) is presented for illustration purposes since it includes examples of abrupt and large-scale migrations prompted by different triggers, such as revolutions, civil wars, political persecution, invasion, famine, ethnic persecutions, and economic crises.

In Cuba, after experiencing an emigration rate of around 5,000 people per year between 1950 and 1959 (Aja, 2001), the triumph of the revolution produced a sudden and massive flow that resulted in the emigration of 248,000 citizens in four years (Castellanos, 1980). With an average of 62,000 migrants per year, which stopped in 1962 as a result of the flights suspension due to the missiles crisis, this level of human movement represented a 3.7% of the Cuban population at the time. Similar is the case of Vietnam, a country that, after the triumph of the Vietcong, suffered an exodus of almost 800,000 people between 1975 and 1979 (Miller, 2015), including the Hoa Chinese minority in the north (Zhou and Bankston 2000) and the Boat People refugees (Wolf & Lowman, 1990). With regard to invasion, the cases of Cambodia (Ross, 1987) and Afghanistan (Marchand et al., 2014) exemplify how external violence caused the emigration of up to 9.13% of the population in three years and 30% in a decade, respectively.

(Table 1) 13 Massive Displacements Occurred after 1959

Year	Country	Pop.	Migrants	M./year	Ratio	Reason	Destination
59/62	Cuba	6.7	0.248	0.062	3.70%	Revolution	USA
75/79	Vietnam	48.7	0.78	0.156	1.61%	Ideology/War	Thai/USA
79/81	Cambodia	6.9	0.63	0.21	9.13%	Invasion/	Thailand
80/89	Afghanistan	13.2	4.1	0.4	31.60%	Invasion	Pak/Iran
1980	Cuba	9.8	0.125	0.125	1.27%	Ideology	USA
1984	Ethiopia	39.5	0.700	0.700	1.79%	Famine/drought	Sudan/Eritrea
1993	Burundi	5.7	0.700	0.700	12.28%	Political violence	Rwanda/Tanz.
1994	Rwanda	6.0	1.250	20.83	20.83%	Genocide	CDR
98/99	Kosovo	1.9	0.600	0.600	31.57%	Ethnic cleansing	Albania, Mont.
07/08	Zimbabwe	13.3	0.512	0.256	3.85%	Economy/Repress.	South Africa
13/18	Syria	19.8	5.679	0.879	36.44%	Civil war	Turkey
2018	Myanmar	52.9	0.727	0.727	1.23%	Ethnic/Religious	Bangladesh
16/18	Venezuela	31.2	2.5	0.833	8.01%	Economic crisis	Col/Peru

Population numbers in millions. Source World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

While drought and famine were the compelling factors forcing 700,000 people in Ethiopia to leave the country in just six months of 1984 (Vestal, 1985), in Cuba, ideological disconformity and repression caused a migration of 125,000 (1,27% of the population), in just six months in 1980 (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985). In Burundi, the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected president in October, 1993, produced a chain of revenge killings among ethnic groups that swept the countryside and forced 700,000 Hutus to flee to Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire to escape reprisals (Wilkinson, 1997). Six months later, in April 1994, the shooting down of the airplane carrying Rwandan president, Juvénal Habyarimana, and Burundian president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, triggered the genocide of between 500,000 and one million Rwandans and the forced displacement of another 1.2 million (UNHCR, 1997).

In 1998, Serbian attacks during the Kosovo War (1998-99) produced around 600,000 refugees who moved south to neighboring Albania and Macedonia (Migration News, 1999). In Syria, the outbreak of civil war in 2011 resulted in the forced migration of more than 5.0 million civilians between 2013 and 2018,¹⁴⁷ or 37% of the country's population. More recently, in Myanmar, ethnic and religious persecution has produced the displacement of 727,000 Rohingya, a Muslim minority, who were forced to migrate to Bangladesh between September 2017 and August 2018.

Finally, the cases of Zimbabwe and Venezuela exemplify the impact of economic collapse in the production of large-scale human movements. In the case of the African country, however, political repression also played a role (Crush & Tevera 2010), although rocketing inflation and unemployment rates above 80% left the population with restricted options for survival. Venezuela is the first case clearly showing the impact of economic disruption in the production of massive migrations. As the analysis of the migration trend makes it evident, all forms of compulsive displacement triggered by political, environmental or even economic factors share certain common traits in terms of massive proportions and abrupt beginnings.

With an migratory flow of three million migrants between 2015 and early 2019 (representing almost 10% of the population), the Venezuelan diaspora is only surpassed in magnitude by the cases of Afghanistan and Syria, in terms of the total amount of people displaced and the percentage of citizens forcefully moved. Therefore, in terms of magnitude of the human movement, the speed of this flow and proportions of people in need of protection, the Venezuelan diaspora should be considered a case of forced migration.

¹⁴⁷ UNHCR (2018). Syria Regional Refugee Response. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>. According to UNHCR two million Syrians fled in 2013; 1.5 million in 2014, one million in 2015, another million in 2016-2017, and one more million in 2018.

CHAPTER 5

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MOBILITY

This last chapter is organized in two sections which focus on the patterns of emigration for Venezuela within the Latin American context during the period 2005-2017, and the profile of prospective Venezuelan migrants before the beginning of their Diaspora. The first part is intended to identify the characteristics of migration in the region, so as to better understand the nature of the changes undergone in the case of Venezuela. Using data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), run by Vanderbilt University, this analysis deals with the fluctuations in the intention to move abroad expressed by people over time, the variations in the stocks of citizens living outside their respective countries, and the relationships between both processes.

The second segment is centered in changes on the profile of prospective Venezuelan migrants before the beginning of their diaspora. Using LAPOP data, this section tries to show the gradual socio-demographic transformation of prospective migrants and the trend towards the surge of a negative selection pattern in the composition of these potential migrants. Finally, it will present the results of a non-probabilistic survey conducted in the summer of 2018, which provides qualitative information regarding the characteristics of current Venezuelan migrants at that time.

5.1. Emigration Patterns in Latin America (2005–2017)

In one of the earliest measures about migratory attitudes in the region, the Americas Barometer 2006-2007 found that Venezuelan adults had the lowest intentions (13.1%) to live or

work abroad in the following three years, among 14 Latin American countries surveyed in those years.¹⁴⁸ That value was slightly below the percentages reported in Panama (13.9%), Chile (13.9%), Uruguay (14.9%), Guatemala (15.0%), Mexico (15.9%), and Costa Rica (16.7%). At the other end, the proportion of Venezuelans expressing their intention to emigrate was far below the levels registered in countries such as Honduras (24.4%), El Salvador (28.9%), Dominican Republic (35.9%), Paraguay (36.5%), Peru (41.2%), or Haiti (64.9%), the leading nation in terms of migratory intentions in America (see Table 1).

Table 1
Intention to Emigrate as a Percentage of the National Adult Populations

Country	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
Mexico	14.4%	15.9%	13.8%	15.9%	9.4%	13.8%	18.0%
Guatemala	21.3%	15.0%	17.9%	20.3%	14.4%	17.6%	27.2%**
El Salvador	28.9%	28.7%	25.3%	24.6%	23.5%	28.5%	36.3%
Honduras	19.3%	24.4%	21.2%	15.2%	11.4%	31.8%	40.6%
Nicaragua	26.9%	20.2%	33.2%	27.1%	20.1%	23.1%	30.6%
Costa Rica	12.9%	16.7%	16.1%	11.5%	10.1%	10.1%	16.8%
Panama	14.9%	13.9%	12.9%	14.8%	6.0%	13.1%	19.3%**
Colombia	25.4%	--	26.0%	19.3%	20.6%	20.6%	28.9%
Ecuador	--	--	23.7%	17.7%	18.9%	--	30.4%
Bolivia	--	--	27.2%	21.9%	21.2%	20.0%	31.6%**
Peru	--	41.2%	40.1%	27.2%	23.1%	22.8%	36.4%**
Paraguay	--	36.5%	29.9%	25.9%	21.8%	23.9%	26.8%
Chile	--	13.9%	12.8%	7.4%	7.8%	8.1%	18.0%**
Uruguay	--	14.6%*	15.1%	11.2%	7.4%	7.9%	15.7%**
Brazil	--	--	9.1%	10.9%	8.4%	14.2%	24.2%**
Venezuela	--	13.1%*	10.2%	9.6%	6.8%	12.0%	35.4%
Argentina	--	--	13.0%	16.9%	9.5%	9.8%	18.4%
Dom. Rep	--	35.9%	24.3%	30.2%	31.9%	29.0%	42.1%
Haiti	--	64.9%	61.5%	59.9%	58.1%	61.1%	66.1%**

* Data for 2007 **Data for 2017

Source: Americas Barometer. LAPOP

¹⁴⁸ The Americas Barometer 2006-2007 did not include values for Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador, in 2006.

After the initial measure of 2007, the percentage of people in Venezuela expressing their intention to emigrate decreased to 10.2% in the following year, fell to 9.6% in 2010 and reached a minimum of 6.8% two years later. Such a trend paralleled the economic recovery experienced in Venezuela at that time, when the price of crude oil, which represents 90% of national exports, rose from US\$64.1 to US\$ 101.15 per barrel.¹⁴⁹ Similar trends were reported, to a greater or lesser extent, in the rest of American countries surveyed by LAPOP. From Mexico to Argentina, the reduction in people's intentions to emigrate matched the commodities boom that benefited developing countries up to 2014, driven by the rising demand from emerging markets such as the BRIC countries, particularly China. In Mexico, the proportion of people stating that they wanted to live or work abroad in the following three years fell almost 40%, from about one in six by 2006 (15.9%) to barely one in ten (9.4%) in 2012. In Argentina, the proportion decreased from 13% in 2008 to 9.5%, and in Peru such a value fell almost by half to 23.1% in six years.

Once the commodities boom ended around 2013, the levels of prospective emigrants started to grow again. In countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, the intention to leave the country increased around one half (from 20.6% to 28.9%; from 10.1% to 16.8%; and from 29% to 42.1%, respectively) between 2014 and 2016. In other nations like Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico or Uruguay, the will to emigrate statistically doubled by 2016 from 2012 levels. The most extreme cases were those of Honduras, Panama, and Brazil, where the proportion of people expressing their desire to move abroad tripled in just four years. Venezuela was no exception. When the system started to fail in 2014, the intention of emigrating in the near future expressed by citizens almost doubled the value obtained in 2012, and reached

¹⁴⁹ EIA. Petroleum and other liquids. U.S. FOB Cost of Venezuela Crude Oil.
<https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=IVE0000004&f=A>

12% in 2014. Two years later, in 2016, the percentage of people stating that they intended to leave the country almost tripled and skyrocketed to 35.4%, four times the number of 2012.

These numbers suggest the existence of a relationship between migratory intentions and economic cycles, with lower levels of prospective migration in times of boom and higher levels of intended departures in times of bust. However, in spite of some cases of radical increments in their levels of prospective migration, none of the Latin American countries, including Venezuela, had undergone a substantial change in their populations living abroad by 2016, according to data by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs.¹⁵⁰

Scholars like Carling and Schewel (2017) underscore the dual nature of migration as a process encompassing, both, the aspiration to leave and the ability to do it. In their words, the relationship between these two elements involves a kind of interaction scooping “aspirations as a form of agency and ability, as a matter of (...) constraints and opportunities,” which goes beyond mere individualism and structural determinism (p. 958). In its 2015 report on global Diasporas, the OCDE found among the main factors determining people's desires to emigrate, a negative correlation with labor market outcomes and job opportunities in their own countries, as well as a positive correlation with respect to education, income, professional levels, and the existence of networks of co-nationals at the desire place of destination (OECD, 2015: 47). Notwithstanding, when analyzing the relationship between migratory intentions and action, Docquier, Peri and Ruysen (2014) found that in turning likelihood into action, the main predictors were “having a college education and the growth perspectives in the receiving country” (p. 84).¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ United Nations. (2017) Department of Economic and Social Affairs. International migrant stock: The 2017 revision. Available at:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>

¹⁵¹ Doquier, Peri and Ruysen used survey and census data for 138 origin countries and 30 major destinations between 2000 and 2010,

Turning to actual emigration rather than intentions in Latin America, Table 2 shows that between 2005 and 2010, one third of the countries surveyed by LAPOP (Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Bolivia Peru and Paraguay) experienced increases over 30% in their migrant citizenries. For the whole region, however, the stocks of nationals abroad grew an average of 23% during this period, which entails an annual growth rate of 4.2%. For comparison purposes, the column “Prospective Migrants” in Table 2 includes the percentage of people surveyed by LAPOP (expressed in absolute numbers) who said in 2006/2007 that they wanted to emigrate during the following three years.

Table 2

Change in Stocks of Nationals Abroad 2005-2010 and Ratios of Intention/Departure

Country	Stock 2005	Stock 2010	Tot. Change	% of change	Prosp. Mig.	I/D ratio
Mexico	10,816,544	12,413,085	1,596,541	14.76%	17,247,084	9.25%
Guatemala	736,531	924,525	187,994	25.52%	1,964,404	9.57%
El Salvador	1,118,900	1,337,703	218,803	19.55%	1,730,311	12.64%
Honduras	449,102	587,662	138,560	30.85%	1,799,116	7.70%
Nicaragua	436,584	610,957	174,373	39.94%	1,086,624	16.04%
Costa Rica	118,544	136,721	18,177	15.33%	709,389	2.56%
Panama	131,870	139,835	7,965	6.04%	462,934	1.72%
Colombia	1,880,422	2,518,915	638,493	33.95%	--	--
Ecuador	988,017	1,153,899	165,882	16.78%	--	--
Bolivia	544,436	781,490	237,054	43.54%	--	--
Peru	986,198	1,329,786	343,588	34.83%	11,375,488	3.02%
Paraguay	544,868	764,182	219,314	40.25%	2,115,355	10.36%
Chile	539,059	565,682	26,623	4.93%	2,244,441	1.18%
Uruguay	297,320	335,034	37,714	12.68%	485,539	7.76%
Brazil	1,218,233	1,531,491	313,258	25.71%	--	--
Venezuela	437,280	556,641	119,361	27.29%	3,508,725	3.40%
Argentina	813,610	943,685	130,075	15.98%	--	--
Dom. Rep	1,023,893	1,187,731	163,838	16%	--	--
Haiti	971,633	1,119,612	147,979	15.22%	5,995,180	2.46%
				23%	21.41%	6.74%

Sources: United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs Americas Barometer. LAPOP

When contrasted these numbers with the total change of stocks of nationals abroad from 2005 to 2010, the values yield an intention/departure ratio of just 6.7% average for the 14 countries, for which there are available data. Except for the cases of Nicaragua (16.04), El Salvador (12.64%), and Paraguay (10.36%), the relationship between intention to emigrate and effective departures was lower than 10% during this period for the rest of Latin American countries.

For the period 2010-2015, which matches a cycle of early economic recovery and later decline, the stocks of nationals abroad barely increased 7% average for the whole Latin American region, according to UN's Population Department data. In this span of time none of the countries experienced changes in their stocks of nationals abroad over 20%, with the highest values over 10% corresponding to Honduras (19%), Dominican Republic (18%), Guatemala (17%), Venezuela (15%) and El Salvador (13%), the LAPOP reported. The rest of the American Spanish-speaking nations (plus Brazil and Haiti) recorded increases in their stocks of citizen migrants lower than 10% (see Table 3). There was even the case of Ecuador, which had a decrease in the amount of its citizens living abroad (-4%). Again, for explanatory purposes, the column "Prospective Migrants" in Table 3 includes the percentage of people surveyed by LAPOP (expressed in absolute numbers) who said in 2010 that they wanted to emigrate during the following three years. If considering the net change in the stocks of nationals abroad between 2010 and 2015 as a reflection of the will to leave the respective countries expressed in 2010, the ratio of effective emigration would be lower (3.1%). For the whole region, the stocks of nationals abroad grew an average of 11.2% during this span of time.

Table 3**Change in Stocks of Nationals Abroad 2010-2015 and Ratios of Intention/Departure**

Country	Stock 2010	Stock 2015	Difference	% of Diff	Prosp. Mig	I/D Ratio
Mexico	12,413,085	12,546,537	133,452	1.07%	18,653,711	0.71%
Guatemala	924,525	1,080,720	156,195	16.89%	2,969,974	5.25%
El Salvador	1,337,703	1,509,676	171,973	12.85%	1,516,497	11.34%
Honduras	587,662	700,074	112,412	19.13%	1,245,606	9.02%
Nicaragua	610,957	645,309	34,352	5.62%	1,554,922	2.20%
Costa Rica	136,721	138,822	2,101	1.53%	522,707	0.40%
Panama	139,835	144,881	5,046	3.60%	539,196	0.93%
Colombia	2,518,915	2,671,696	152,781	6.06%	8,862,192	1.7%
Ecuador	1,153,899	1,105,180	-48,719	-4.22%	2,643,440	-1.84%
Bolivia	781,490	795,729	14,239	1.82%	420,094	3.38%
Peru	1,329,786	1,430,187	100,401	7.55%	8,088,639	1.24%
Paraguay	764,182	843,512	79,330	10.38%	1,608,358	4.93%
Chile	565,682	611,004	45,322	8.01%	1,257,508	3.60%
Uruguay	335,034	348,569	13,535	4.03%	377,934	3.58%
Brazil	1,531,491	1,557,293	25,802	1.68%	21,450,793	0.12%
Venezuela	556,641	640,686	84,045	15.09%	2,786,691	3.01%
Argentina	943,685	952,965	9,280	0.98%	6,966,837	0.13%
Dom. Rep.	1,187,731	1,402,779	215,048	18.10%	2,989,191	7.19%
Haiti	1,119,612	1,244,867	125,255	11.19%	5,989,770	2.09%
			11.18%	6.53%	15.97%	3.10%

Sources: United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>
Americas Barometer. LAPOP

LAPOP data reflect the sharp differences between intention to migrate and actual departures in Latin America, which is consistent with the two-steps approaches on migration. From the point of view of aspirations, Carling and Schewel (2017) explain such dichotomy as the outcome of three factors: the challenge of measuring a very vague and complex phenomenon through simple questions, the context and “transient nature” of such aspirations, and their interplay with “experiential temporalities” (p. 949, 950, 952). Regarding actual migration, these authors underscore the relationship between capabilities (e.g., financial resources), varying degrees of freedom (like the presence or lack of legal restriction to move), and action. As a

result, not everyone who states his/her desire to migrate really wants to leave, and not all of those who remain necessarily want to stay. Regardless the differences in terms of intention and actual migration, data suggest a constant relation between these elements, with more departures in times of higher motivation, and less exits in periods of lower prospective mobility. The changes in potential migration and the reductions in effective human outflows could be attributed to economic factors, which do not suffice by themselves to turn desire into action. In absolute numbers, the stocks of nationals living abroad grew on average 30.2% for the 19 Latin American countries (included Haiti) between 2005 and 2017 (see table 4).

Table 4

Change in Stocks of Nationals Abroad 2005-2017 as Percentage of the Total Populations

Country	Pop 2005	Stock 2005	% Pop 2005	Pop 2017	Stock 2017	% Pop 17	% Stock change
Mexico	108,472,228	10,816,544	9.97%	129,163,272	12,964,882	10.04%	19.86%
Guatemala	13,096,028	736,531	5.62%	16,913,503	1,117,355	6.60%	51.70%
El Salvador	6,028,961	1,118,900	18.56%	6,377,853	1,559,924	24.46%	39.42%
Honduras	7,373,430	449,102	6.09%	9,265,067	722,430	7.80%	60.86%
Nicaragua	5,379,328	436,584	8.12%	6,217,581	658,203	7.02%	50.76%
Costa Rica	4,247,841	118,544	2.79%	4,905,769	143,465	2.92%	21.02%
Panama	3,330,465	131,870	3.96%	4,098,587	149,220	3.64%	13.15%
Colombia	43,285,634	1,880,422	4.34%	49,065,615	2,736,230	5.58%	45.51%
Ecuador	13,735,233	988,017	7.19%	16,624,858	1,131,427	6.81%	14.51%
Bolivia	9,125,409	544,436	5.97%	11,051,600	820,722	7.43%	50.75%
Peru	27,610,410	986,198	3.57%	32,165,485	1,475,532	4.59%	49.62%
Paraguay	5,795,494	544,868	9.40%	6,811,297	873,410	12.82%	60.30%
Chile	16,147,064	539,059	3.34%	18,054,726	631,832	3.50%	17.21%
Uruguay	3,325,612	297,320	8.94%	3,456,750	358,723	10.37%	20.65%
Brazil	186,917,361	1,218,233	0.65%	209,288,278	1,612,860	0.77%	32.39%
Venezuela	26,784,161	437,280	1.63%	31,977,065	657,439	2.05%	50.35%
Argentina	39,145,488	813,610	2.08%	44,271,041	977,209	2.20%	20.11%
Dom. Rep.	9,237,566	1,023,893	11.08%	10,766,998	1,443,030	13.40%	40.94%
Haiti	9,263,404	971,633	10.49%	10,981,229	1,281,394	11.67%	31.88%
Total	538,301,117	24,053,044	6.51%	621,456,574	31,315,287	7.56%	36.36%

Sources: Americas Barometer. LAPOP/ United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp>

The most acute increases were those of Honduras (60.7%), Paraguay (60.3%), Guatemala (51.7%), Bolivia (50.8%), Colombia (45.5%), and the Dominican Republic (40.9%). In the case of Honduras, the stock of migrants abroad passed from 449 thousand in 2005 to 722 thousand in 2017. In Colombia, this number rose from 1.8 million to 2.7 million during the same period. Those changes, however, were countered with the natural growth of the population. Table 4 includes two columns regarding the stocks of Latin Americans living abroad their own countries, expressed as percentage of the respective populations in 2005 and 2017, and a last column, containing the proportion of the variation in the stocks. As a result, we can see how Honduras and Colombia, in spite of increasing their stocks of nationals living abroad both over 60% and 45% between 2005 and 2012, needed 12 years to move from a 6.09% and 4.3% to 7.8% and 5.6% of their citizens living beyond their frontiers. Similar are the cases of the remaining American nations, from Mexico downwards, for which migration has been a gradual and slow process.

In spite of levels over 20% of the adult citizenry in 11 countries of the region, expressing at some point between 2006 and 2016 their desire to emigrate in the near future, only one Latin American nation, El Salvador, had more than one fifth of its population (24.46%) outside its frontiers by 2017 (see table 4). Far behind El Salvador, was the Dominican Republic, with a 13.40% of its population living abroad, and the average of the whole region was of barely 7.56%. In the case of Venezuela, between 2005 and 2015 the country barely increased its stock of migrants living abroad from 437,000 to around 650,000. In 10 years, such a growth only represented a change from 1.6 to 2.1 as a percentage of its population living beyond its borders. Up to then, the country followed similar migratory patterns with the rest of Latin America, characterized by slow pace and gradual change.

After that point, however, Venezuela differed from the rest. Unlike the rest of the region, the country added to the external decline of its exports, the internal collapse of its economy. As a result, between 2016 and 2017 Venezuela underwent a massive exodus of one million people, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM)¹⁵² Such a migratory flow more than doubled the stock of its citizens abroad to 5.1% of the country's population in just two years. In the next 15 months, the number of Venezuelans living beyond their national's borders more than doubled again to reach 3.7 million by April 2019,¹⁵³ which represents 11.6% of the population. If the projections of the IOM and UNHCR were met, Venezuela would end 2019 with 16.6% of its population living outside its borders. Such percentage represents a seven-fold increase vis-à-vis 2015.

A comparison between the stock of Venezuelan migrants by April 2019, and the intention to emigrate expressed in 2016, would yield an intention-action migratory ratio of 33.2%. This value is five times the average ratio obtained for the whole Latin American region for the 2005-2010 period, and 10 times the value corresponding to the 2010-2015 time-span. If we consider the IOM and UNHCR migratory projections for the whole 2019, the intention-action ratio would reach 47.5%. Data suggest that emigration rates tend to increase when people face additional hardship. However, the exponential growth of emigration in the case of Venezuela after 2016 also shows that this is a different phenomenon.

¹⁵² Migration Trends in the Americas. (2018, Apr.) International Organization for Migrations (OIM). Available at: http://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/National_Migration_Trends_Venezuela_in_the_Americas.pdf

¹⁵³ UNHCR (March, 2019) Latin America and the Caribbean, Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/68961>

5.2. The Changing Profile of the Venezuelan Migrant

In its study *The Political Culture of Democracy in Venezuela, 2007*, the LAPOP Americas Barometer 2006-2007 yielded a profile of would-be migrants in Venezuela mostly comprised of young people aged under 35 years (80%), salaried workers (73%) either in the private or the public sector, with at most secondary education (64%), and with no children at all (45%). Over the years this profile has gradually changed. Even though young people still represented by 2016 the majority of those who intended to emigrate, their proportion within the prospective population fell 25% from eight in ten to just six out of every ten. Conversely, the percentage of people over 45 years who thought to leave almost tripled from a barely 6.4% to 19.4%. Regarding people aged between 36 and 45 years willing to leave the country, their percentage remained stabled and moved slightly from 15.4% to 18.4%.

Similar trend is found in terms of occupation. Within a prospective migrant population mostly comprised of salaried employees (73%), the new waves of respondents in subsequent LAPOP surveys started to include fewer people with stable jobs and more individuals with precarious labor conditions. By 2008, the percentage of respondents with formal jobs who expressed their will to move abroad had decreased to 58.1% and six years later, in 2014 they just represented 50.8% of those willing to leave Venezuela. In the last LAPOP Venezuela survey conducted in 2016, the proportion of salaried employees within the potential migrant universe fell an additional 20% and represented slightly more than four out of every ten (43.8%). Conversely, the amount of informal or self-employed workers, as a percentage of the people expressing their intention to live abroad, almost doubled in moving from one in four (25.2%) to almost five out of ten (47.6%)

Regarding family structure, even though individuals with no children still represent the main subset of respondents within the bi-annual LAPOP surveys, their weight had fallen within the samples from 45.2% in 2007 to barely one-third (34.9%) in 2016. This trend is inversely proportional to the growth of prospective migrants with two or more children, whose weight within the respondent populations rose by almost half, from 31.4% in 2007 to 45% in 2016. Specifically, the percentage of those would-be migrants with two children experienced an almost twofold increase, moving from around one in eight (12.8%) to two out of ten (20.6%) in the same period. These changes in the profile of respondents seem to show a declining selectivity in the composition of would-be migrants. The exponential increments in the will to depart also suggest a change in their motivations. From a mostly young, salaried employed and without children prospective migrant prevalent in 2006, their profile chiefly comprised 10 year later a self-employed or unpaid worker, with children and older. If the first profile depicted a would-be migrant without family obligations, and more successful in the local labor market whose intention to depart could express the desire to improve his/her personal situation, the second one showed a struggling parent who seemed to find in emigration a potential solution to negative factors in the country.

There is only one area in which the declining selectivity in the composition of potential migrant did not change in the LAPOP surveys: education. In 10 years, the proportion of prospective migrants with at most secondary education in 2007, remained mostly the same and only decreased three points from 64% in 2007 to 61% in 2016. Likewise, the proportion of potential migrants with higher education moved from 36% to 39%. There are however, some relevant changes within this last category: First, there was an acute reduction in the proportion of people with university or technical education among prospective migrants, from 13.3% in 2007

to 3.8% ten years later. Second, the proportion of people with technical or college education grew more than half from 13.8% and 9.0% to 20.4% and 16.6% respectively. The first case suggests the progressive exhaustion of an anticipatory movement among the more educated. The second one seems to show the gradual incorporation of new segments with still high, but decreasing levels of education, who could be depleting their coping strategies to deal with the crisis.

Without additional information regarding the profile of the current migratory flow, beyond the OIM's Displacement tracking matrixes or UNHCR Protection Monitoring, I now turn to the results of my own survey. As part of this study, I interviewed Venezuelan migrants in four South American countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile). Due to budgetary and time restrictions, as well as to the lack of information to construct a sampling frame, the sample is non-probabilistic. The survey was conducted between June 20th and July 10 of 2018 and included 75 individuals who were interviewed as follows: Twenty-one interviews were carried out in Colombia in Bogota, and at the Border Control in Cucuta. An additional 17 interviews were conducted in Ecuador, in Quito and the Border Control Point at Rumichaca. Another 21 interviews were undertaken in Peru, in Lima and the Border Control Point at Tumbes. The last 16 interviews were conducted in Santiago, Chile.

Because of its non-probabilistic nature, the results of this survey cannot be generalized beyond the universe of its sample. Its data, however, provides qualitative information regarding the profiles of the Venezuelan migrants who were moving around South America by 2018. In general, the average migrant according to the survey was mainly male (60% of all migrants), employed (80%), younger than 35 (80%), with some kind of tertiary education (64%), be it a technical (16%) or a bachelor degree (32%). Regarding other demographic aspects, the sample

was more evenly divided among single (54.5%) and married individuals (45.5%); and between migrants without children (54.7%), and parents (45.3%). It is worth mentioning that, even though the majority had no children, the average for the whole sample was of 1.58 children, with an average of 3.49 children when only parents are considered.

In terms of reasons to choose a destination, the sample was evenly split among those who had family connections (30.6%) those who stated to have networks (30.6%), and those who stated they wanted to take advantage of economic opportunities (30.6%). An additional 8% of interviewees (all of them in Colombia), mentioned proximity as the main reason to select their current host country. In spite of the high profiles in terms of education, many interviewees expressed the harshness of the conditions faced daily: a man in Colombia stated that he had had to wait one year for the issuance of his passport. Another one reported having had to work one month in Bogota to keep going southward, while a third one in Chile said that even for a professional it was not easy to enter the labor market. Likewise, the fact that one third of the migrant population had only secondary education revealed that not only people with high academic credentials were moving abroad. Finally, the fact that almost half of this migration flow is composed of entire families suggests that the case of Venezuela is one of migration as a family survival strategy, in contrast to the traditional case of individual migration of selected family members as a risk diversification strategy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Before 2015, the characteristics of Venezuelan migrations followed, on the whole, the same patterns of the rest of Latin America. During the 12 years between 2005 and 2017, the countries of the region increased their stocks of nationals living abroad by 36.4% on average. That figure represents an annual growth pace of 2.6%, which is consistent with the patterns traditionally attributed to economic voluntary migrations. A wide corpus of research (Browning and Feindt 1969; Jones 1995, 1998; Petersen 1961; Popkin 1999) has identified three phases of economic or voluntary migrations, encompassing the first stage of pioneers; a second period of takeoff, and a third one of late adopters. At the mature stage, according to Lindstrom and Ramirez (2010), the flow of migrants stabilize, stops growing and eventually declines as everyone in the community with a strong desire to migrate has left.

In the case Venezuela, the amount of citizens living abroad barely grew from 1.6% to 2.1% of the total population in 10 years. That percentage represents less than one-third of the 6.7% of the Latin American citizens who, on average lived beyond their national frontiers by 2017. After that point, however, this trend abruptly changed. Just in 2016, the number of Venezuelans living outside their country grew as much as it had done in the previous decade and tripled up to 1.8 million people at the end of 2017. In the next 15 months, such number doubled again to reach 3.7 million by April 2019. Such a migratory flow multiplied by five the size of its citizenry abroad as a share of the country's population—up to 11.6% in little more than three years.

The changes make it clear that the movements operating after 2015 constitute a different migratory phenomenon. If the first kind of mobility in Latin America is considered as free and of an economically driven nature, the second necessarily entails, for Venezuela, some kind of mobility other than voluntary migration.

Unlike the rest of the region, Venezuela underwent a dramatic collapse of its socio-political and economic system, which produced varying levels of human suffering and anxieties. Thus, the difference between the migration patterns for Venezuela until 2015 and after that year must be understood as a reaction to drastic disruptions to normal life. The analysis of the reasons behind people's decisions to leave Venezuela suggests that rather than the positive motivation to search for improvements of their personal situations, growing segments of the population were reacting to negative environments and finding in migration an adaptive response to the failure of the system. As such, this kind of movement differs from voluntary migrations.

Likewise, the changes in the profiles of Venezuelan migrants reported by the IOM and UNHCR from mostly single, young males, with relative high levels of education and employment situations before departing towards an older average migrant with lower levels of education, more precarious job conditions in his country and more family obligations, contradict the typical patterns of economic migrations. Lindstrom and Ramirez (2010) argue that voluntary migrants are "rarely a random cross-section of origin populations," but rather, individuals selected for "a number of characteristics that set them apart from their non-migrant peers" (p. 53). The variations in the composition of Venezuelan migration, on the contrary, confirm the principle of negative selection, stated by Lee (1966), according to which, the "uneducated" and "disturbed" are the more likely to be forced to migrate when responding to negative factors at the place of origin (p. 56).

Based on these considerations, the case of Venezuela can be considered one of non-voluntary migration. Such as Jenny's theory states, the prevailing state of deprivation resulting from the failure of the socio-economic system in Venezuela started inflicting "severe human suffering" in people, making it impossible for individuals to remain in their country, and leading them to departure.

The massive process of emigration in Venezuela can also be understood as a case of reactive migrations. As Richmond's theory postulates, the progressive weakening of institutions in Venezuela left growing sectors of the population with few alternatives other than to escape from intolerable threats and unbearable constraints.

Based on Betts and Kaytaz (2009), the Venezuelan Diaspora also entails a case of Survival migration, to the extent that people started leaving the country to escape from despair situations, due to the absence of foreseeable solutions. The case of Venezuela also matches the notion of crisis migration, in which a population at risk and in need of protection finds in emigration the ultimate solution to its problems and thus, it is forced to move away.

The nature of the exodus from Venezuela also entails a case of mixed migration as defined by the IOM. This complex human movement encompasses dissimilar populations (asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants), who share characteristics such as being moving both legally and illegally between borders, departing due to a multiplicity of factors and presenting in many cases conditions of socio-economic vulnerability.

Finally, with more than 400 thousand asylum claims filed all around the world, the case of Venezuela also matches the concept of Forced Migration as defined by the IOM inasmuch as the migratory movement started in 2015 entails elements of coercion resulting from threats to life

and livelihood. This last element encompasses man-made causes other than violence and political persecution.

In the absence of wars, systematic human rights violations or environmental disasters, economic collapse is the driving force behind displacement in Venezuela. That means that people may be forced to migrate to escape from threatening conditions caused by factors going beyond violence and persecution. Hyperinflation, acute scarcity and deprivation, more than a push factor of voluntary migrations may be the leading cause compelling people to leave. In this way, the Venezuelan Diaspora makes it clear that economic collapse may constitute a triggering factor causing forced migration.

Consequently, I suggest that along with politically and environmentally driven forced migrations, there is an independent category of economic forced migrations. Unlike voluntary economic migrants who proactively leave as part of a family strategy to diversify risk and maximize opportunities (Massey et al, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2014), forced economic migrants reactively depart to escape extreme disruptions that alter the normal course of life and pose a threat to integrity. The latter is not the case for individuals living amidst moderately hard but tolerable economic circumstances, who are drawn by the opportunity for a better life abroad (Myers, 1995: 17). Rather, it is one of larger groups trying to protect themselves from potential and real harm through relocation.

The endeavor to link economic factors and forced migrations begs the question of where to place the threshold beyond which human movements stop being voluntary and turn compelled. The line between voluntary and forced migrations should be placed at the point where economic disruption stops being a push factor and becomes a constraint that interrupts, in the words of Fairchild, “the course of ordinarily tolerable existence,” (1925: 9). But unlike voluntary

migrations (which constitute the sum of individual decisions), involuntary ones transcend the level of isolated individual's circumstances. They are imposed on people by the social context. They are the result of generalized disruption originated in widespread turmoil.

The case of Venezuela suggests the need to revise the concepts and definitions regarding forced migrations. Although researchers have built over time a wide corpus of theory on forced migrations there is still a need to clarify the term. The proliferation of typologies and unsettled debates regarding the meanings and scope of multiple definitions complicate sociological analysis of forced migrations. It is not clear if the notions of anticipatory and acute movements; non-voluntary, reactive or crisis migration, refer to independent and different phenomena, or if they could be understood as part of one single process of forced migrations. Regardless of their differences, these concepts overlap to some extent with each other, and revolve around the notion of deteriorating conditions that produce harm on people and make life unbearable, to the point that people find in emigration a solution due to the absence of locally available remedies to their problems.

Likewise, If harm on people may originate from factors other than physical coercion (including environmental deterioration, sudden disasters, or economic collapse, among others), then individuals may be forced to move in order to escape from threatening conditions caused by factors going beyond violence and persecution. That being the case, forced migration must no longer be equated with refugee status. In spite of representing the major cause of compelled displacements, refugees should be understood as just one category of forced migrants among multiple typologies and manifestations of this phenomenon. As a result of this confusion, much research has been devoted to study the causes that make people subjects of international protection, rather than employing a broader approach to study the factors that produce all sorts of

forced migrations. As stated earlier, even though all refugees are forced migrants, not all migrants are refugees.

In the analysis of forced and voluntary migrations two additional differences have to be taken into account, concerning the timing (those “triggering events” highlighted by Clark), and scale of the processes. In contrast to the gradual and cumulative process of voluntary migrations, which may extend for very long periods of time, forced migrations tend to be abrupt and vast. They imply sudden displacements of very large numbers of people, which start at specific and identifiable points of time, due to specific and identifiable triggers. In the case of Venezuela, a mixture of political and economic circumstances propelled the levels of departure. After years of dramatic decline in all relevant aspects of wellbeing, the overturn of the initiative to activate a recall referendum against Maduro, the spurious election of a 100% pro-governmental Constituent Assembly and the outbreak of hyperinflation, set off the process of massive emigration, from some daily hundred to over more than three thousand per day. After losing the last opportunity to democratically promote a political change, and facing the total collapse of the socio-economic system, hordes of people found in emigration the best alternative to survive.

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