The securitization of the Brazilian border in the face of the Venezuelan migration crisis: analysis of the border ordering process from the perspective of Operations Controle and Acolhida

La securitización de la frontera brasileña ante la crisis migratoria venezolana: análisis del proceso de ordenamiento fronterizo desde la perspectiva de las Operaciones "Controle" y "Acolhida"

Abstract: This article investigates the dual role played by the Brazilian Armed Forces in the Brazilian Government's responses to the increase in the migratory flow on the border of the state of Roraima as a result of the Venezuelan political crisis, the operations Controle and Acolhida. Based on the theory of the Copenhagen School, the relationship between the operations regarding the ordering of the border, a structuring axis common to both initiatives, is discussed. We put the national response to the test, supported by structured participant observation made by the authors who were each inserted in one of the operations. The central issue addressed, specifically, asks whether Venezuelan migration is being securitized through the operations Controle e Acolhida,, and what is the influence of each in this process. As a result, we carried out a theoretical confrontation with the main concepts of the Copenhagen School and discussed the securitization process, highlighting the impacts on the perception of security projected at national and international level, questioning the (im)balance between the proposed objectives for each of the operations and its results in the security and humanitarian fields.

Keywords: Brazilian Army; Migration; Operation Acolhida; Operation Controle; Securitization.

Resumen: Este artículo investiga el papel dual de las Fuerzas Armadas brasileñas en las respuestas del Gobierno brasileño al aumento del flujo migratorio en la frontera del estado de Roraima como resultado de la crisis política venezolana, a saber, las Operaciones "Controle" y "Acolhida". A partir de la teoría de la Escuela de Copenhague, se discute la relación entre las operaciones en torno al ordenamiento de la frontera, eje estructurador común a ambas iniciativas. Pusimos a prueba la respuesta nacional, respaldada por la observación participante estructurada, realizada por los autores, cada uno de los cuales se insertó en una de las operaciones. El tema central abordado, específicamente, se pregunta si la migración venezolana se está securitizando a través de las operaciones de "Acolhida" y "Controle" y cuál es la influencia de cada una en este proceso. Como resultado, realizamos un enfrentamiento teórico con los principales conceptos de la Escuela de Copenhague y discutimos el proceso de securitización, destacando los impactos en la percepción de seguridad proyectados a nivel nacional e internacional, cuestionando el (des) equilibrio entre los objetivos propuestos para cada una de las operaciones y sus resultados en los campos de la seguridad y el humanitario.

Palabras-clave: Ejército Brasileño; Migración; Operación "Acolhida"; Operación "Controle"; Securitización.

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1 Introduction

Migration crises and their effects are one of the greatest challenges experienced by countries in the search for balance between feelings of humanity and nationality. The coexistence between the feeling of national belonging and the prospect of international support for border countries are at the center of political discussions that go beyond the locations where crises occur, the social perception of the affected areas, and the actors who participate in the process. They become, without a doubt, issues that orbit in political alignments, in international relations between countries and international organizations, and, above all, in the perception of the society that receives and is received.

In every major ongoing migration crisis, such as the Syrian war, or the case of South Sudan, or the Venezuelan issue addressed in this article, certain points drive the national and international discussion. Among them, the securitization process as a way to leverage resources; the media discourse acting as a formulator of social perception; the economic dispute in the post-insertion balancing process of these communities, and the respect for cultural differences during the integration of people in vulnerable situations.

Despite the vast international literature on migration, understanding the uniqueness of each of the humanitarian crises leads us to the need to investigate in greater depth the dynamics of the processes adopted by Brazil in relation to the Venezuelan migratory flow. This process needs to be thought from the perspective of complexity as a framework for analyzing the object of study, considering that the existing articulations have a temporary, changeable, chaotic character, that exhibit non-trivial and self-organized behaviors; whose response depends on the ability to adapt via learning or evolution, requiring a high integration of knowledge and competencies.

Thus, understanding the nature of the Venezuelan crisis is one of the fundamental factors to think about the analysis proposed by this article, since the essence of the event itself can demonstrate nuances intrinsic to Brazil's response, but particularly the articulations created in this context. The Venezuelan crisis has been going on for more than 16 years, the last five of which have attracted international attention due to the migratory impacts on the border countries and the weakening of the country's government.

Corruption, suspicion of electoral fraud, increasing reports of human rights violations, evidence of political persecution, and increased state repression have led to the coexistence of two governments one under the leadership of Nicolás Maduro, supported on the international stage by China, Russia, and Cuba; and, the other under the auspices of Juan Guaidó, president of Venezuela's National Assembly, self-declared president, supported by the United States, Brazil, and Colombia. It is worth noting that the division of countries in relation to international support reflects the natural quest for geopolitical insertion of their presences in South America. Brazil and Colombia, for geographical reasons, naturally mirror security issues in relati—on to the migration issue, becoming protagonist actors in the reception of Venezuelans, and consequently, in the opposition to the current regime of the country, to which they attribute the responsibility for the migration crisis. When it comes to China, Russia, and the United States, the strong economic issue surrounding their relationship with one of the richest countries in South America cannot be ruled out.

Added to political instability, the country lives under severe economic crisis that accumulates superinflation to the tune of 10.000%; shrinking Gross Domestic Product in the order of -18.9% in 2018, -20.2% in 2019, and -26.8% in 2020 (WORLD BANK, 2018; TRADING ECONOMICS, 2021); reduced employability; severe shortages of basic necessities; frequent interruptions in the supply of critical inputs such as drinking water, electricity, and fuel; a collapsed health system, aggravated in recent years by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with much of its population in a situation of social fragility analogous to slavery.

This scenario led to the exodus movement of about 5.4 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela, of which 4.6 million migrated to the Latin American and Caribbean region itself, including about 1 million in an irregular situation (R4V, 2021). In Brazil, between January 2017 and August 2021, 159,451 active residence registrations for Venezuelans were granted, 67,165 applications for recognition of refugee status were submitted, and 48,082 Venezuelans were recognized as refugees (BRASIL, 2021a). These numbers make this migratory movement the largest humanitarian crisis in Latin America, leading to the adoption of a response to the management of the Venezuelan migratory crisis by the Brazilian State, the International Humanitarian Support Organizations (IHSO) and the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) strongly marked by the multiplicity of efforts, collaborative action and a broad and integrated approach.

Decrees 9,285 (BRASIL, 2018a) and 9,286 (BRASIL, 2018b) recognized the situation of vulnerability arising from migratory flow to the State of Roraima, caused by the humanitarian crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and began the structuring of the main joint management body of the crisis, defining the composition, powers and operating rules of the Federal Committee (MIGON; GRIGOLI, 2019). As a result of the aforementioned decrees, the Ministry of Defense published Ministerial Directives No. 03/2018 (BRASIL, 2018c) and No. 04/2018 (BRASIL, 2018d) establishing parameters and responsibilities for the execution of the operations Acolhida and Controle, respectively (OLIVEIRA, 2018).

2 Methodology

In epistemological terms, this research is inserted in the confrontation between the strategic-realist and the constructivist paradigms, since the Copenhagen School approach is in an intermediate position in the debate on security studies; whereas for constructivists, the proposal to divide the security agenda into thematic sectors is equivalent to the objectification (or naturalization) of the chosen sectors and, consequently, to an interference in the social construction of security (ERIKSSON, 1999).

Thus, this work deals with the dynamics expressed within the context of the construction of the perception about the migration issue, especially about the issue of border ordering and the discourse that involves the facts linked to Operation Control and Operation Acolhida, seeking to raise a perspective of how certain agents involved, directly or indirectly, work in the construction, or not, of the securitization discourse that permeates the responses to major cross-border events such as the Venezuelan migration crisis.

Methodologically, this research used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research allows for the construction of a holistic picture of the situation and the investigation of an issue in depth (BUI, 2014). The methods used were essential to elucidate and deepen the understanding of the operations that the Brazilian State develops in parallel, as well as to identify how the discourse of securitization that is projected onto them. Through the case study, the specific situation is analyzed so that, through induction, patterns can be found and a conclusion can be built. A single case study was prioritized due to the peculiarity of the humanitarian response adopted by Brazil in terms of the unprecedented articulation between the private and public sectors, as pointed out by Yin (2018).

Two data generation techniques were used, documentary research and structured participant observation. For the former, the primary sources used were Humanitarian Logistics Task Force (FT Log Hum) documents such as manuals, protocols, memos, directives, and reports, as well as documents from the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade (1st Bda Inf Sl) collected by the authors. The secondary sources were books by authors in the field of International Security, Migration and Securitization studies, as well as articles from academic journals focusing on the dynamics addressed, when possible, directed to the situation of the Venezuelan crisis. The publications used were preferably recent publications in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, published from 2018, the date of the worsening crisis in Venezuela and the creation of FT Log Hum, to the present day.

On the other hand, the present case study was conducted with the aid of structured observation by the authors of the article. Both occurred in 2020; one of them in Boa Vista - Roraima, involving the direct participation of the researcher at the site of the investigated event (ABIB; HOPPEN; HAYASHI JÚNIOR, 2013), exercising the function of operations officer of the 1st Bda Inf Sl, Large Unit responsible for the development of actions related to Operation Control, and the second exercised by the other author as military coordinator of the Regional Center 11, belonging to FT Log Hum, on which falls the actions of Operation Acolhida. It is emphasized here that this technique was used not only to generate data, as is often the case, but also to support its interpretation. In this sense, the professional status and position of the authors favored the discussion of the data and also contributed to the interpretation of the results about the phenomenon (ANGROSINO, 2009).

In this way, this article investigates whether the border ordering process can be considered a securitized movement; analyzing the performance of the Brazilian Army as an actor in two operations, one of a humanitarian nature (Operation Acolhida) and another of a security nature (Operation Controle). That said, the guiding question of this article will be the following: "Is there securitization of the Venezuelan migration crisis through the response adopted by the Brazilian government?"

Finally, in addition to the introduction and these methodological considerations, this article is divided into four sections. What follows is a literature review focused on the main concepts of the securitization process addressed by the Copenhagen School, which will aid in the entire theoretical discussion of this paper. The fourth and fifth sections discuss border ordering from the perspective of Operation Control and Operation Acolhida. The sixth section summarizes the conclusions obtained by confronting the perspectives presented as the securitization process is discussed in the context studied.

3 The Copenhagen School and the Securitization of Migration

The extensive literature produced in the context of defining the concept of securitization goes through seminal authors who have worked on a new and comprehensive approach to security studies, including in this context societal security. Based on this conceptual perception, the discussion was broadened to think about its impacts on migration, its effects on the impacted regions, and the migration policies adopted. Aware that this process takes specific forms within each regional context, several authors have studied and worked on the nuances of the migratory phenomenon that Brazil is experiencing due to the Venezuelan crisis, discussing its securitization or not and, especially, thinking about the impacts on vulnerable people and the receiving society (CERÁVOLO, 2020). The following chart presents the main works and their authors that helped in the conceptual review, allowing the expansion and deepening of the analyses that guided this article.

Chart 1 – Theoretical approach and its main authors

Discussed topics	Authors
Addresses the pure concepts and contributions of the Copenhagen School to International Security Studies	Wendt (1992) Buzan, Wæver e Wilde (1998) Tanno (2003) Rudzit (2006) Peoples e Vaughan-Williams (2010) Wæver, Estrada e de Matos (2015) Silva e Pereira (2019)
Address the debate on the securitization of migration processes, whether forced or voluntary	Huysmans(2000) Póvoa Neto (2007) Bracante e Reis (2009) Bourbeau (2011) Fassin (2011) Patrício (2011) Oliveira (2014)
Addresses the Brazilian migratory process with a focus on Venezuela and its effects on Brazil	Aragón (2009) Franklin (2012) Paiva e Leite (2014) Simões (2017) Franchi (2019, 2020) Jubilut e Silva (2020) Silva e Albuquerque (2021)

Source: Prepared by the authors in an expansion of Cerávolo (2020).

For the purposes of this approach, we will work on the main concepts that have a direct impact on migration, regardless of the understanding that the theories of the Copenhagen School have been changing and its basic concepts are no longer the ones initially coined. Thus, for the purposes of this analysis we will understand the term security, securitization and security complex as presented by Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998, p. 23, emphasis added):

Security is the movement that treats politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a particular kind of politics, or as something that transcends it. **Securitization** can then be seen as an extreme version of politicization. [...] Security is thus a self-referred practice because it is in the context of this practice that it becomes a security issue – not necessarily because there is a real existential threat, but because it is presented as a threat.

To understand the securitization process one must understand three operational categories essential to the securitization process, they are: (1) referent objects; (2) securitizing agent and the (3) functional actors; these interact for success to occur in the securitization process of an issue, which depend on the analysis of the securitization discourses and the audience reception; the identification of the securitizing agent, justifying the reasons why this agent is responsible for the securitization movement; and the analysis of the emergency measures adopted to deal with the existential threats and their respective legitimation by the audience (SILVA; PEREIRA, 2019).

Once these processes and categories are understood, it is necessary to understand that the reading of the securitization process in the literature is divergent and there are two reasons for this. The first is that both the yes and the no may be accompanied by historical and empirical justifications or philosophical arguments understood as morally superior (BRANCANTE; REIS, 2009). The second concerns the limits between Politicization and Securitization, although Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) differentiate politicization from securitization of an issue by stating that the second process offers extraordinary tools (beyond politics and often the legal order) to solve the problem, understanding the line to think and apply these conditions is extremely complex, since there is a tenuous difference between the concepts as they are addressed

When analyzing the process of securitization of migration, we need to consider two essential points in this debate that divide the authors. The first refers to the issue of societal security that Buzan, Waever, and Wilde (1998, p. 8) define as "respect for the sustainability, within acceptable conditions of evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and customs," which would place the issue of migration as a conflict between the receiving nation constituted by the elements presented in the definition and the migrants, under the view that migration itself could constitute a threat to that nation.

On the other hand, authors critical to the concept of societal security point out that the securitization process is only valid in the discussion of immigration if it is strictly aimed at fighting terrorism and organized crime, it should only exist if it is to efficiently eliminate transnational

criminality, and not simply antagonize culturally different individuals, as Bigo (2001) points out, securitization does not affect survival, but rather intolerance toward differences; that social and historical changes are perceived as a threat or, in other words, that a structural phenomenon is transformed into an adversary.

In this context, it is fundamental to understand that any phenomenon can evolve from the condition of non-politicized to securitized, passing through the situation of politicized (BUZAN; WAEVER; WILDE, 1998). Perhaps the biggest question of analysis lies between the politicized and the securitized, since its boundaries are blurred and depend on the depth with which one questions the variables of the theory. Chart 2 briefly presents the main characteristics to define these states, and consequently to think about the movement of the Venezuelan migratory issue in Brazil.

Chart 2 – Evolution of the securitization process by the Copenhagen School

	Non-Politicized	Politicized	Securitized
Presence of the State	The State does not get involved in the debate, or even in actions that demand its leadership in the solution process.	The State is present in the public debate as an essential actor in the process.	The State is a protagonist since it takes actions outside normal political procedures.
Public Policy	No public policies are adopted or even changed to address the issue.	The State adopts specific public policies to address the issue, not the generic policies that already exist	The State adopts emergency public policies that go beyond the existing ones
Existential threat The phenomenon is considered to be within normality and does not bring any perceived threat to the continuity of the State or Society.		The phenomenon presents implications for the State and for Society's perception of it.	The phenomenon is considered an existential threat to the continuity of Society or the State.

Source: Developed by the authors based on Buzan; Waever; Wilde (1998) and Buzan; Hansen (2009).

4 Border Ordering: Operation Controle Perspective

Operation Controle was authorized by Ministerial Directive No. 04/2018, February 28, 2018, of the Ministry of Defense, to complement the humanitarian actions of Operation Acolhida, in the state of Roraima. The Brazilian Army has been ordered to intensify surveillance on the border line between Brazil and Venezuela, specifically in the Roraima city of Pacaraima, the twin city of Santa Elena de Uairén, located in Venezuelan territory. In addition, the highways, especially the BR-174, which connects this border region to the city of Boa Vista, the state capital, would be more strictly monitored. All with the purpose of curbing cross-border crimes and supporting the control of migrants both entering and exiting Brazil, in coordination and cooperation with the Public Security Agencies.

The border between the Brazilian city of Pacaraima and the Venezuelan city of Santa Elena de Uairén is characterized by being a dry and permeable border, that is, without the presence of natural or artificial obstacles that hinder the access of illegal immigrants. The demarcation between the countries is identified by the presence of concrete markers along the border line, as shown in Figure 1. Thus, due to ease of access and border permeability, the flow of illegal Venezuelan immigrants, vulnerable or otherwise, was accentuated in early 2018.



Figure 1 – Border landmarks in Pacaraima, on the border between Brazil and Venezuela

Source: Photo by Vanderson Mota de Almeida (2021).

The main crossing points for illegal Venezuelan immigrants are located along a three kilometer stretch of the border in the urban core of Pacaraima, which runs from the BV-8 mark to the place known as "Miangue", as shown in figure 2. Often, Venezuelan smugglers lead immigrants to cross the border through alternative routes that circumvent legal entry into Brazil. These routes are also used by Venezuelans who enter the country to make small purchases in local commerce and return to Venezuela, practicing the crime of smuggling.

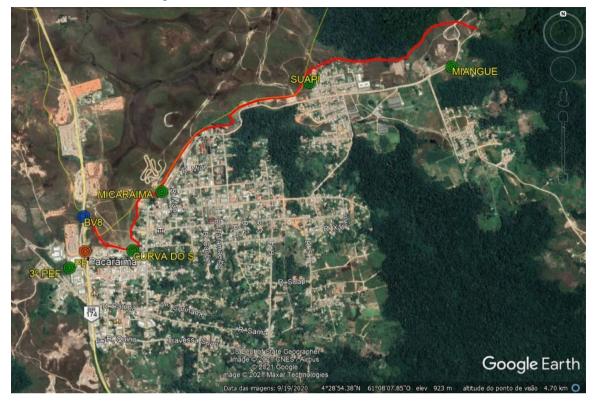


Figure 2 – Border in the PACARAIMA urban nucleus

Source: Adapted by the authors from Google Earth (2021).

According to IBGE data, Pacaraima had a population of 12,000 in 2018. The municipality lacked the infrastructure to accommodate the growing influx of migrants. "[...] in March 2018, 9,486 Venezuelans entered Brazil through the city of Pacaraima, an average of 316 migrants daily. In June of that same year, these numbers reached 16,200 monthly migrants coming from Venezuela [...]" (ALMEIDA, 2020, p. 68). In addition, the violence and crime rates have increased considerably, generating in the population a feeling of insecurity and even revolt against the immigrants. Thus, some residents of Pacaraima "opted to pay for private police patrols, in order to maintain a sense of security in their homes and commercial establishments" (MOREIRA, 2021, p. 30).

Given this scenario, the Amazon Military Command through the Controle Operational Plan, of April 25, 2018, assigned the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade, based in Boa Vista, to intensify actions to guard the border line with Venezuela, in order to curb cross-border crimes and prevent the illegal entry of Venezuelan immigrants to Brazil through clandestine routes that bypassed the Federal Police checkpoints, ensuring that access to the country was carried out only through the Border Post of BR -174, the only legal access through the municipality of Pacaraima. In addition, Roadblock and Control Posts have been deployed on BR-174, in the axis between Pacaraima and Boa Vista, to control the migratory flow and the traffic of foreign vehicles.



Figure 3 – Border Line surveillance during Operation Controle

Source: Photo by Vanderson Mota de Almeida (2021).

It must be considered that part of the immigrants entered legally, because they were looking for a new opportunity to live in the country. To do so, they tried to legalize their migration status with the Federal Police, and when they didn't have a place to wait for this regularization, they either settled in spontaneous occupations, either in Pacaraima or in Boa Vista, or stayed, voluntarily, in Operation Acolhida shelters. There was also pendular migration, that is, Venezuelans who, illegally or legally, entered Pacaraima to buy basic necessities such as food, medicine, and clothing, and returned to Venezuela.

In this context, daily, as already presented, Pacaraima received a considerable flow of immigrants that needed to be organized, in a joint work between Operation Controle, Operation Acolhida, and Public Security Organs (PSO) present in the municipality. Because of these numbers, the actions of Operation Controle to control the legal or illegal entry of immigrants was fundamental for Operation Acolhida to provide an adequate and humanitarian service to those who voluntarily sought the sheltering and internalization services, contributing to the ordering of the border and the reduction of social tensions between Brazilians and Venezuelans in the city of Pacaraima.

However, fighting cross-border crimes was the main action of Operation Controle. To this end, the troops of the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade carried out patrols on foot and motorized, as well as establishing roadblock and control posts along the border line and in the urban center of Pacaraima. The goal was to combat drug and weapons trafficking, which might occur from Venezuela, as well

as to curb small robberies and thefts in local businesses, both by Brazilians and by Venezuelans in vulnerable situations who were looking for their basic needs.

In addition, the military presence in this border strip, performing surveillance actions, made it difficult for criminal organizations, either Brazilian or Venezuelan, to expand in this region by co-opting vulnerable immigrants for organized crime, aiming to control the drug and weapons trafficking corridor on the border between Brazil and Venezuela (OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR et al., 2021).

One of the main points for the greater effectiveness of Operation Controle is the cooperation between the Brazilian Army and the agencies located in Pacaraima, such as the Federal Police, the Federal Highway Police, the Military Police of the State of Roraima, the Public Security Task Force, the Civil Police, and the Internal Revenue Service. In this sense, the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade promoted coordination meetings with all the agencies involved to encourage joint planning with the advice of these agencies.

In March 2020, the federal government restricted the entry of Venezuelan immigrants in Brazil due to the spread of the coronavirus in the country, through Ordinance No. 120 of March 17, 2020, from the Presidency of the Republic/Civil House (BRASIL, 2020, n.p.), which provided "on the exceptional and temporary restriction on the entry of foreigners from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela into the country, as recommended by the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency – Anvisa. During the course of 2020, further ordinances were enacted to repeal existing ones and extend the restrictions imposed.

With the closing of the border, the legal flow of immigrants practically ceased to exist. However, the Venezuelans have increased their attempts to enter Brazil through clandestine routes, mainly through the urban center of Pacaraima, either alone, with their families, or with the support of smugglers who charge money to help them cross the border, illegally, through places with easy access. Given this situation, the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade readjusted the execution of actions and doubled the military personnel in Pacaraima, reinforcing the blockade posts and patrols on the border line, making it difficult for Venezuelan immigrants to enter illegally.

However, through the process 1001365-82.2021.4.01.4200, of March 21, 2021¹, the Federal Court ordered the Union to "[...] refrain from adopting any acts of deportation, repatriation or other compulsory measure of exit of immigrants in situation of reception (hypervulnerable) by the Humanitarian Task Force (Operation Acolhida) in Roraima [...]", which impacted the actions of the Federal Police, making deportations unfeasible. And also that "[...] refrain from carrying out ostensive patrols, checkpoints or documentary controls aimed at intimidating and preventing access of migrants to health care and social services, public and private, available in the Municipality of Pacaraima [...]", the latter with little effect because the patrols and roadblocks were not intended to intimidate or prevent access of vulnerable migrants to the national territory, but rather to bar entry by illegal routes, channeling the entry of migrants through illegal routes, channeling the movement to the landmark of the BV-8, the only legal access for entry into Brazil, in the municipality of Pacaraima.

¹ Case available at: http://www.mpf.mp.br/am/sala-de-imprensa/docs/decisao-liminar-impedimento-a-deportacao-de-migrantes. Accessed on: Dec. 5, 2021..

On June 23, 2021, the federal government decreed Ordinance No. 655 (BRASIL, 2021b), which provides for the exceptional and temporary restriction on the entry into the country of foreigners of any nationality, as recommended by the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency, due to COVID-19. However, there was flexibility to receive foreigners for humanitarian reasons and the authorization to regularize immigrants who entered the country after March 18, 2020, when the border was closed.

With this, the flow of Venezuelan immigrants has increased towards the city of Pacaraima, requiring, once again, a greater intensification of the actions of Operation Controle in the municipality, such as the reinforcement of the existing staff, of approximately one hundred soldiers; the occupation of new checkpoints on the border line, especially in the urban center; the carrying out of foot patrols on trails and paths that allow the illegal entry of Venezuelans; and greater coordination between the actions of the Brazilian Army with the Public Security Agencies.

5 Border Ordering: Perspective on Operation Acolhida

Border ordering is one of the basic tasks of Operation Acolhida, in addition to shelter and internalization. This activity is important because it organizes and controls the flow of vulnerable migrants who enter the country in search of a new life opportunity, whether as refugees or as applicants for temporary residency. The execution of Operation Acolhida was authorized through Ministerial Directive No. 03/2018, under the coordination of the Ministry of Defense, with the employment of personnel and logistical means of the Armed Forces to support and cooperate with public agencies in the development of humanitarian activities in the State of Roraima (ALMEIDA, 2020).

In Pacaraima, FT Log Hum set up support structures to ensure the reception, identification, health surveillance, migration regularization and screening of immigrants, because the existing infrastructure in the municipality, whether from federal, state or municipal agencies, was not sufficient to meet the daily demand of Venezuelans who entered through this border region (ALMEIDA, 2020).

In this sense, the area of the 3rd Special Border Platoon, of the Brazilian Army was used to deploy the following facilities for the reception of vulnerable migrants in Pacaraima: a Support Base, a Reception and Identification Post, a Screening Post, an Advanced Service Post, an Indigenous Shelter, and Accommodation, which functioned with the cooperation of organs and agencies responsible for the migration issue, highlighting the Federal Police, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the International Organization for Migration (ALMEIDA 2020).

At the Support Base, currently called the Pacaraima Base, is located the FAdvanced Command Post of the Operation Acolhida, which is commanded by a Colonel of the Brazilian Army. This is where the coordination of humanitarian actions and the organization of the border with the other institutions present are carried out. In addition, the base has lodgings for the military that make up the FT Log Hum contingent and a canteen that provides food not only for the military, but also for the civilian agents that take part in Operation Acolhida.

The Reception and Identification Post is headed by a senior FT Log Hum officer. There, vulnerable migrants are received and identified for the beginning of the migration regularization, shelter, and internalization processes, the last two of which are carried out for voluntary migrants. As for migratory regularization, the first step is for the vulnerable migrant to choose to apply for refuge or temporary residence. After identification, the migrant must present his or her proof of vaccination. If not, they are referred to the immunization group to receive the triple viral vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella. Then, the vulnerable migrant is forwarded to the Sorting Station (ALMEIDA 2020).

The Screening and Identification Post is also headed by a senior FT Log Hum officer. In the post, initially, the vulnerable migrant does his or her registration with IOM, in case of request for temporary residence, or with UNHCR, in case of refugee request. After that, he obtains the following documents: the protocol for refugee or temporary residence request, made by the Federal Police; the Individual Taxpayer Registry, made by the Internal Revenue Service; and the Single Health System card, made by the Municipal Health Secretariat of Pacaraima (ALMEIDA 2020).

The Advanced Care Post, on the other hand, is formed by a health team from FT Log Hum. The site is a modular hospital structure composed of a triage room, pharmacy, nursing and outpatient facilities to serve migrants in cases of medical emergency, isolation and vaccination (ALMEIDA 2020).

As for sheltering in Pacaraima, the BV-8 housing is intended on a temporary basis for vulnerable migrants, whether men, women, or families, all non-indigenous, who are waiting for vacancies in shelters located in Boa Vista. Regarding the Janokoida shelter, this is for Venezuelan migrants of the Warao indigenous ethnicity. Both shelters are managed by FT Log Hum in cooperation with International and Non-Governmental Organizations such as IOM, UNHCR and the International Humanitarian Fraternity (ALMEIDA, 2020).

Due to the flexibilization of the entry in the country for vulnerable migrants, according to the Portaria nº 655, from the Staff of the Presidency of the Republic, from June 23rd 2021, as already exposed in this article, Operation Acolhida started to regularize 300 vulnerable immigrants, on average, daily. The limitation of this number took into consideration in addition to the capacity of the BV-8 housing, the availability of rapid tests and vaccines against COVID-19. "This number is in line with the maximum service capacity provided by the available means" (MIGRANTS..., 2021, n.p.).

It is worth mentioning that, on a daily basis, Operation Acolhida accommodates in the BV-8 accommodation about 400 migrants who are irregular and without a place to sleep, besides the 1300 already regularized migrants who are waiting for vacancies in Boa Vista's shelters. All this in order to reduce the number of Venezuelans roaming the streets of Pacaraima at night.

Finally, Operation Acolhida has assisted 1,666,413 Venezuelans at the Interiorization and Screening Post in Pacaraima by September 22, 2021, as shown in Figure 4. This border ordering process carried out by Operation Acolhida and complemented by Operation Controle made it possible to receive vulnerable Venezuelan immigrants fleeing the humanitarian crisis in their country, contributing to the process of welcoming and internalizing immigrants to other regions of Brazil.

Figure 4 – Service at the Initial Sorting Station (PACARAIMA)

Assistance at the Identification and Control Station (Pacaraima)

Agency		Activity	Qnt
UNHCR		Early Enrollment (a)	75.549
		Final Enrollment (a)	105.029
IOM		Early and Final Enrollment (a)	103.451
		Asylum – Venezuelan (a)	50.183
		Temporary Residence Visa – Venezuelan (a)	75.567
		Visa appointment (a)	98.294
Federal Police		Asylum Renewal (a)	3.355
		Documents duplicate (a)	767
		National Migration Registry Card (a)	7.883
Internal Revenue Service	2	Individual Taxpayer's Register (a)	110.087
		Ministério da Cidadania (a)	
		ICRC – (Restory Family Links) (c)	
		Brazillian Red Cross (c)	
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE		UNFPA (a)	64.826
	UNICEE	Protection (a)	47.647
	UNICEF	Super Panas Program (d)	9.536
VACCINES		DOSES (Applied to 263.380 people) (b)	610.505
Total number of assistances performed at the Identification and Control Post: 1.60			1.666.413

Accumulated data: (a) Since JUN 18; (b) Since OUT 18; (c) Since FEV 20; (d) Since FEV 21.

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Source: FT Log Hum (2021).2-

6Analysis of the Securitization Process

When talking about theory and practice, countless times it is necessary to return to the conceptual bases of the theoretical body of practice so that, when confronting it with reality, it is possible to separate what is an impression, what is an external influence, and what is the researcher's previous conviction. In this context, the topic addressed by this article presents numerous possibilities to deviate from scientific analysis and be marked by one of these pitfalls.

As for the impression, it is more than notorious when observing the ongoing research in various scenarios that the mere presence of AF, regardless of the context in which it is employed, leads to the mobilization of part of the scientific community in the sense of attaching a securitizing discourse to the phenomenon, building from there the connections that were previously non-existent. In other words, securitization occurs in part through the perception of those who analyze and express an opinion, without it finding a basis in theory or, more importantly, in dialogue with the real fact.

With regard to external influence, once again, the researcher needs to escape from the discourse constructed by the media, by institutions external to the process, by countries of the regional environment interested in the result of the process, and other agents whose securitization,

² Figure (slide 20) from the institutional lecture given by Division General Sérgio Schwingel, Commander of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force and Operational Coordinator of Operation Acolhida, to the Student Officers of the Army Command and Staff School (ECEME), on September 24, 2021.

or not, may generate benefits in the short or medium term, because in the long run it is not possible to sustain this discourse in view of the bases necessary for its continuity. This assertion does not mean that the actors functional to the analyzed event should be disregarded, on the contrary, it is about understanding who effectively has this role in the phenomenon.

Finally, with regard to the previous convincing of the researcher, even though this is not an exclusive point of securitization analysis, but because this research is methodologically marked by participant observation, it is fundamental to return to the basic concepts of the theory to confront the collection and the impressions gathered, without allowing the process of convincing to supplant the theoretical application in the case studied

With these limitations and nuances, we tried to materialize what the main theoreticians of the Copenhagen School present as a basis for thinking about the process of securitization, confronting it with the operations in progress to see if it is possible to talk about the securitization of the Venezuelan migratory process in Brazil. Chart 3 presents the confrontation between the operational categories and the essential variables of the securitization process and the two ongoing operations developed by the Brazilian State. From the confrontation between these categories and the operations it is possible to better understand securitization as a whole.

This approach inserts not only the classic categories of the Copenhagen School, but also expands it, within the revision already made by its theorists to value the construction of the discourse, as well as seeks in the concrete case the result of this process by the adoption of actions that characterize the legitimization of this before the audience.

Chart 3 – Confrontation of Securitization Variables vs Ongoing Operations

	OPERATION CONTROLE	OPERATION ACOLHIDA
Reference Object (that which is existentially threatened and has a legitimate claim to survival) (BUZAN; WAEVER; WILDE, 1998).	Brazilian State: increasing homicide rates and the presence of foreign criminal organizations in Roraima.	Immigrants: vulnerability due to lack of basic needs, humanitarian crisis in the country of origin, and co-optation into organized crime.
Securitizing Agent (actor who securitizes issues by declaring something – a reference object – existentially threatened) (BUZAN; WAEVER; WILDE, 1998).	Federal Government representative adopts security measures to mitigate threats to the State of Roraima and order its border.	Representatives of the Federal Government, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and National Organizations: adopt emergency measures to welcome and internalize immigrants.
Analysis of securitization discourse and its reception by the qualified audience. (SILVA; PEREIRA, 2019).	Intense flow of illegal immigrants across the Brazilian border. Initial manifestations of Roraima's society (local impact) on existential issues to the state, with a high level of engagement and receptivity by the audience.	Vulnerability of immigrants within the Brazilian State. Initial manifestations of the Brazilian society (national impact) about the nature of the adopted strategies, with low level of engagement and receptivity by the audience

	OPERATION CONTROLE	OPERATION ACOLHIDA
Atores Funcionais (important actors because they directly or indirectly affect the security dynamics of a given sector) (VILLA; SANTOS 2011)	Brazilian Army: responsible for fighting trans-border crimes and controlling the border line between Brazil and Venezuela. PSO: Responsible for migration control and combating cross-border crimes.	Armed Forces, International, Non-Governmental and National Organizations: responsible for humanitarian assistance to vulnerable immigrants.
Analysis of the emergency measures adopted to deal with existential threats and their respective legitimization by the audience (SILVA; PEREIRA, 2019)	Border ordering to hamper the flow of illegal immigrants into the national territory and to combat cross-border crimes. The actions to combat illegal activities were legitimized in view of the effectiveness of the reduction in crime rates despite the increase in the flow of immigrants.	Sorting out the border for receiving and organizing entry into the welcoming process. Reception and internalization of vulnerable immigrants to provide a better quality of life and new job opportunities within the national territory. The society of Roraima, the main impacted one, started to legitimize the actions of Operation Acolhida after understanding its results for the state.

Source: The authors (2021).

The confrontation of Chart 3 with the theoretical perspective of securitization presented in Chart 2 allows us to broaden the debate on the issue addressed and discussed in this article. Initially, it seems clear to us that there is no room to think of the phenomenon as **Non-politicized**, because the evidence of the discussion is clear in this sense, the existence of the Operation Acolhida and Operation Controle; the creation of state structures at various levels such as the Federal Committee for Interiorization and the FT Log Hum and; the debate established at various levels of the federation with the enactment of laws and regulations to address the issue are enough to rule out this condition.

The main debate lies in identifying if we are facing a **Politicized** phenomenon or if we are facing a **Securitization**. There is no doubt that a very fine line separates one situation from the other, as well as being extremely influenced by the analyst's perception of each of the parameters instituted to think about the debate, as well as the level of approach that is taken (national, regional, local). Thus, this debate will be guided by the theoretical points discussed in Chart 2, that is, the presence of the State, public policies, and existential threat.

Regarding the presence of the State, we observe that it is present in the public debate as an essential actor in the process, be it at the national level (Federal Government through the Ministries of Citizenship and Public Security), be it at the regional level (State Governments of Roraima and Amazonas through the Government Secretariats), be it at the local level (Governments of the Municipalities of Pacaraima, Boa Vista, and Manaus through the Government Secretariats). As far as Operation Controle is concerned, its political actions do not exceed the standards already adop-

ted; border monitoring actions focused on combating illicit activities were already being carried out before the increase in the flow of Venezuelan migrants. Joint action in integrated operations (with the participation of the Armed Forces and Public Security Agencies) has always been part of the daily initiatives adopted. Although the political procedures adopted in Operation Acolhida are not normal, they are intended to treat an unusual phenomenon, without essentially inserting them in the list of security actions that would lead to a securitization vocation. In this sense, regarding the condition analyzed, it is observed that the subject is primarily politicized, but minimally securitized.

When we think about the adoption of public policies, we observe that, despite the previous existence of Operation Controle, in its initial performance there was a moment in which it was directed to respond to unrest caused by xenophobia issues raised within the local society, that resulted in confrontations and violent acts between Brazilians and Venezuelans. However, the effective solution for the extinction of such events, in fact, extrapolated the actions of public security and focused on campaigns of enlightenment, not only of the local society, as well as its representatives. Two points were fundamental, both conducted by Operation Acolhida: they sought a) to make society aware of the benefits linked to the integration of the Venezuelans, as well as of the investments made by the federal government in the regional and local dynamics; and b) the commitment to adopt a broad strategy that allowed to relieve the pressure on the services and structures in Roraima, that is, the strategy of internalization, which called on the whole country to take part of the responsibility for the reception of Venezuelan migration. Still, within the debate on public policies, and considering the depth and quality of the national legislation on migration, it can be observed that the measures adopted dealt with the operationalization of a model to put into practice devices already consolidated in the normative references prior to the crisis.

Law 13,445/17 sought to harmonize with human rights, guaranteed by treaties to which Brazil is a signatory, and fundamental rights prescribed in the 1988 Federal Constitution, such as the right to liberty, security, and inviolability of the home. In line with these rights, the law establishes that the Brazilian migration policy will be governed, among other principles and guidelines, by the universality; the interdependence of human rights; the repudiation and prevention of xenophobia, racism, and any form of discrimination; the non-criminalization of migration; and non-discrimination based on the criteria and procedures by which the person was admitted into the national territory (MENDES; BRASIL, 2020, p. 83).

However, and despite the fact that Brazilian public policies for migration already have solid bases, one cannot fail to notice that new policies have been created at all levels of the federation on an emergency basis to deal with the security impacts, as well as the humanitarian ones. The internalization strategy is an example of emergency policies adopted on Venezuelan migration that directly impacts the situation in the state of Roraima, relieving the pressure and redistributing the responsibility for the state response by all the entities of the federation. Thus, as far as public policies are concerned, the theme was treated in a perspective closer to securitization, showing clear signs of the adoption of complementary measures to the common spectrum, taken on an emergency basis.

The last vertex of this analysis is based on the question of existential threat. In the meantime, it is important to emphasize that although the border crimes resulting from illegal immigration constitute a phenomenon with implications for the Brazilian state and naturally on society's perception of it, rarely has the discourse on immigration gone in the direction of deconstructing or threatening the existence of the state per se. The events that brought Brazilians and Venezuelans into conflict at the very beginning of the crisis are enough to think about the collapse of local society (Pacaraima and Boa Vista), but not enough to discuss the possibility of the bankruptcy of the Brazilian state.

Undoubtedly, it allows us to affirm this issue in two senses: the first reinforces that the discourse at the national level, analyzing the meetings of the National Committee for Refugees, of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, and of the Civil House, migration has always been placed as a humanitarian issue for which the Brazilian state cares and has a tradition of acting, never presented as a security issue in itself, although it is accessory in some cases. In a second point, the securitizing discourses, present mainly in the speech of politicians in Roraima, did not progress, since the local society soon realized that migration was not a security issue but a humanitarian and assistance policy. Such perspectives take the analysis of the existential threat issue to a politicized and non-securitized position.

7 Conclusions

This securitization behavior has been a constant when we deal with the subject of migration, because in the last migration flows two issues have been extremely highlighted. The security issue that is reflected through border weaknesses to transnational crimes and the difficulty of countries to establish adequate protocols to combat these, often a reflection of national policies adopted, and the economic issue, deeply marked by the interdependence of border regions, areas generally part of less favored belts in the financial context.

Regarding the first, what can be observed is that securitization through discourse has become a tool to amplify the search for governmental and societal resources to develop gaps left by the state regarding the protection of goods and people in the national boundaries in the face of growing criminality. In relation to the second, and probably in the same direction, the securitization discourse has strong economic roots to seek financing for the improvement of the social and living conditions of the population.

The Venezuelan migration in Brazil did not escape this scenario, but the establishment of two distinct operations managed to keep the migration away from the securitization character, even in view of the political movements mentioned above. Another point to highlight is that the Brazilian response demystifies that the presence of the armed forces alone is enough to lead to the securitization process. On the contrary, there is room for integrated action with other international, governmental and non-governmental organizations without necessarily plunging into this process.

It is also worth pointing out that the pre-existence of the Operation Controle and its integrated action with the PSOs contributes to defining the character of each action, not allowing an overlapping of demands. Such a point was specifically marked by the constitution of a completely different contingent to act in the Operation Acolhida, whose training was conducted under a different perspective, leaving the Operation Controle in charge of the troops that already exist in Boa Vista and that already dominated the expertise.

In parallel, the unleashing of Operation Acolhida put the migratory demands of vulnerable Venezuelans under a humanitarian perspective, welcoming them in a context of respect for human rights and social assistance policies. These are dealt with in an integrated effort by all civil and military, governmental or non-governmental, public or private, national or international institutions under the same prism: the guarantee of humanitarian aid to the population vulnerable to international forced displacement without attributing contours of threat to the receiving society, seeking its full integration into the national dynamics of the receiving country, respecting the customs, beliefs, and habits of the migrants.

Thus, having said that, resuming the guiding question of this paper "Is there securitization of the Venezuelan migration crisis through the response adopted by the Brazilian government?" What we can see and observe is that the Venezuelan migration in Brazil has acquired contours of a **politicized** subject; despite some attempts at securitization, whose actors have not managed to completely validate their discourse. The existence of an Operation whose main objective was to combat the problems arising from migration avoided the contamination of the object (migration) by the harmful effects (cross-border crimes), thus ensuring that the object was not securitized while the effects were treated within their nature (security and public defense).

As migration events, especially the forced ones, happen under extremely dynamic and volatile conditions, it is suggested that the continuity of the monitoring of this process be the basis for future studies, even comparative between different moments, given the political and economic nuances that involve the whole process triggered by the government response. Thus, allowing new analyses about the cross-cutting issues of the Venezuelan flow in Brazil.

Authorship Collaborations

All authors participated equally in the elaboration of the article.

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