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**FACTS OF A MIGRATION WITHOUT CONTEXT BORDER**  
**CROSSING TACHIRA (VENEZUELA) AND COLOMBIA**

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*Abstract*

Factors such as: Social dynamics, political crisis, economic destabilization, the unwavering mental imbalance that plunge Venezuela, seize an uncertain future. Every day, the Colombian-Venezuelan border crossings are filled with our own, strangers and passers-by, who have set their sights on other countries, Colombia being the closest ally; perhaps used as a temporary space, an escape route or, otherwise, an option to seek economic resources and return to help their families continue to survive. For Achotegui migrating becomes a process that has such intense levels of stress that people overcome their ability to adapt; these elements are very typical of the theory of migratory grief, the Ulysses syndrome and the theory of basic needs. According to the Department of Migration Colombia, nearly sixty thousand people cross the migratory crossing daily from San Antonio Venezuela to Colombia, returning less than 10%, which translates into a path for mass exodus. Under this perception, the investigative approach framed in generating public policies with an impregnated respect for human rights, assessment of the socio-cultural condition, ethics and mental health, which understand people under the condition of migrants, initially oriented in three fundamental axes: Revaluation of the pedagogical action of understanding the other, strengthening free and obligatory public health and the recognition of multiculturalism.

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## 1. Introduction

When addressing the issue of migration and its origins, the main causes have been the poor social, political and economic conditions of the countries from which the flow of foreigners originates, that generate poverty and concern for security and physical integrity (Portes & Borocz, 1989). In a complementary way, Boneva & Frieze (2001) and Frieze & Li (2010) add to these environmental factors related to economic variables, migratory policies and social phenomena, the personality factor of the migrant. In the case of the Colombian - Venezuelan border, this assertion is becoming more important every day due to the uncontrolled displacement that occurs, making the migration issue of mandatory treatment on the government's agenda of the host country. According to IOM (2018), the increasing migration phenomenon has become a mega trend of the 21st century so much that it identifies 244 million people as international migrants and concludes that 1 out of every 7 people in the world is a migrant.

The migration is characterized by its irrepressible and irreversible force that is related to development and human rights (UNDP, 2018). This reality has forced to implement policies, strategies and actions in three directions: Contain migratory flows within established limits, guarantee respect for the human rights of migrants and design and implement a legal domain on the migratory flows (Moraes-Vega & Sanromán-Aranda, 2016). In 2015, migration was incorporated transversally into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In general, *"the SDGs are centrally referred to migration in Goal 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the application of the planned and well-managed migration policies, which appears under Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and among countries"* (IOM, 2018, p. 10). According to Solimano (2008), Latin America and the Caribbean has been significantly affected by migration flows due to important economic events worldwide. During the 1980s, a large influx of inhabitants of Central America was in need of fleeing their countries due to political conflicts that threatened their lives (Ronstrom, 1989); these affirmations are supported by Lomeli-Vanegas & Vazquez-Maggio (2016). In this same direction, Castles, (2014) identifies the unequal economic development, the rapid demographic transitions, the political conflicts and the technological advances in transport and communications as determining factors of human mobilization from one country to another.

Orozco (2013), demonstrates that, migrant from Mexico must face a series of obstacles that ultimately impose negative effects on working hours and few educational opportunities, which is of greater impact on the female population, which leads to acculturative stress understood as the anguish caused by cultural adaptation, economic difficulties, alienation and the discrimination that the majority of migrants must face (Bhugra, 2004). It has been demonstrated from the legal perspective that "both migration and work are inalienable and unwaiverable human rights that should be respected at all times and in all places" (Ruiz-Moreno, 2016). Education is recognized as a fundamental human right; in migrant children from Mexico, it has been shown that this population has higher risk of school non-attendance (Vargas-Valle & Camacho-Rojas, 2015). In addition to these social and economic problems, it is evident that the migrant population is affected by a series of psychological discomforts, as indicated by the studies of Jurado, et al. (2017). In the scientific literature, the case of migration from Mexico to the United States has been very studied; however, there is little interest in the academic community about the recent and growing arrival of Venezuelan citizens in Colombian territory. All the inhabitants of the planet have the right to their mobility,

as well as, all countries have the right to establish about the type of migration and the number of migrants that they can shelter within their borders (DNP, 2016).

## 2. Problem Statement

Reflecting epistemologically on the border reality leads to establish criteria on some conceptual and theoretical elements that are necessary to consider. Firstly, we consider the concept of Rodriguez & Popeanga (2015). A border is a conventional line that marks the confines of a State. Borders can be delimited physically, although it does not always occur in this way. For that reason, a convention exists: *"the different countries agree to where their respective limits reach; when this limit is passed, it is entered into the territory of the neighboring country"* (Rodriguez & Popeang, 2015, p. 39). On the migratory phenomenon Ruiz (2002) says: *"this phenomenon implies a displacement or spatial movement that aims to seek better life opportunities for individuals"* (p. 13) this concept fits what is currently being lived in the Colombia – Venezuela border axis. Additionally, it is necessary to take into account some theories that specify the migratory phenomenon. One of them is the approach given by the humanist current of Maslow (Quintero, 2008) referring to the theories of basic needs interpreted by Salvador (2012), who points out *"Migration fosters negative psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, depression or stress, in those who leave and those who stay, in addition to a feeling of abandonment, which can affect both their school and social behavior"* (2012 p.12). In fact, these aspects are analyzed and studied by theories of migrant grief, Achotegui, (2000) points out that there are seven types of griefs arising from the migration phenomenon that appears in the family and loved ones, language, culture, land, social status, contact with the community the person belongs, and the risks for physical integrity.

The migratory phenomenon that is currently lived, that are just effects that appear in the people who make the decision to migrate; a reality that is not oblivious to any inhabitant of Venezuela who currently demands better living conditions to guarantee progress, development and social welfare. The border area Tachira (Venezuela) and Norte de Santander (Colombia), 2219 km long (Tovar, 1991, p. 3), at some point in history it was called the "most dynamic border in Latin America". The wrong management have led to an exaggerated inflationary avalanche (Guerra, 2018, noted that annualized inflation until January 2018 reached 4,068%) that has disrupted the national economy and has led to the big investors have left the territory; as a consequence, an economic destabilization and a mental imbalance in society arise, which has brought along with an unemployment increase, that the first necessity products disappear and that the social programs that have been the flag of the Venezuelan national government have been sectorized for those that in some time have shown to be in accordance with national policies. In other words, social discrimination has been observed, sometimes for not stating to share the government political ideologies. This is how, when all these aspects the migratory phenomenon has emerged, the expectations of Venezuelans have surpassed the limits and it is observed how thousands of people cross the border line, returning less than 10%, which translates into a way for the mass exodus (Panorama, 2018), converting the border crossing into a scenario where a convergence of multiculturalisms, informal jobs, actions outside the law and perhaps the most serious, the transgression of human rights evidencing maltreatment, abuse, precarious conditions to survive, hunger, poverty, underestimation of women, trafficking of minors, among other aspects.

### **3. Research Questions**

Starting from these facts, it is convenient to ask: How could the causes and consequences that have emerged from the migration phenomenon be addressed? What effects is the migration phenomenon bringing both for Venezuela and for Colombia? Under what conditions has the migrant been recognized in Colombia and other surrounding countries? And what actions could be implemented to help reduce the negative effects that occur as a result of the migratory phenomenon that is being lived in Venezuela and where many people take advantage of the spacious, long and wide of the border strip to leave behind dreams, family and friends and look for better living conditions?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Along these lines, and in agreement with Castles (2014) in the sense that it is important to achieve a transformation in attitudes towards migration for the formulation of fairer migration policies, this study performed by research groups of a Venezuelan university and two Colombian universities located in the border area, has the general objective of establishing a framework that allows the generation of public policies impregnated by respect for human rights, the assessment of socio-cultural status, ethics and mental health; that are supported in the understanding to the people who are under the condition of migrants, and initially oriented in three fundamental axes: 1) the reevaluation of the pedagogical action of understanding the other, 2) the strengthening of free and compulsory public health and 3) the recognition of multiculturalism.

### **5. Research Methods**

The methodology used in the present research is based on a quantitative-qualitative study, that is, the epistemological framework of the methodology is defined in mixed methods since, firstly, it was necessary a contact with the population in transit (defined as the people who daily cross the Colombian-Venezuelan border axis) and entities such as the ombudsman's office and public hospitals. Instruments such as observation, survey and in-depth interview were needed; the research group took 289 people (different sexes and ages) as a representative sample. It is important to point out that some categories of analysis emerged from the treatment that led to the selection of some actors among Venezuelans ( housewives, young people, parents, professionals), officials from the ombudsman's office in Norte de Santander, entrepreneurs and from the Erasmo Meoz Hospital. It is significant to point out that the quantitative treatment was supported by the SPSS software, while the qualitative part was analyzed using the grounded theory with the support of ATLAS.ti, the use of open and selective axial coding, which produced semantic networks that indicate the response intensity and the guidelines for the creation of a new discourse to establish the theoretical foundation.

### **6. Findings**

The analyzes of border dynamics applied in this work point out a set of aspects of great value that should be considered in relation to the construction of an intentionality of research. These analyzes suggest

the need to establish a framework for formulating public policies based on respect for human rights, the assessment of socio-cultural status, ethics and mental health. These policies should understand the people who are under migrant status and initially focus on three fundamental axes: the revaluation of the pedagogical action of self-understanding and understanding of the other, the strengthening of the free and mandatory public health, as well as the recognition of the multiculturalism. Starting from this general framework, in this work, three variables were analyzed: human rights, socio-cultural condition and health conditions; these variables are described according to the social impact and three categories break down, namely: respect for human rights, understanding of their peers and the value of understanding each other. In the following sections the results obtained are presented, firstly at the level of variables and then in the context of the factors defined in this study. The quantitative treatment of the data collected was processed using the SPSS software, each variable was analyzed independently according to the dimensions and the items collected. For the present approach, the statistical treatment of three variables was performed. These variables were selected because, in our understanding, they are the most representative of the subject that has been developed.

### 6.1. Analysis of the variables

**Human rights variable:** It was analyzed according to the classification given by Vasak (1979), which falls on civil rights (freedom, autonomy, development and personal behavior), political rights (participation in social and political life), and economic, social and cultural rights (peace, quality of life, provision of services and State guarantees). Therefore, one of the reviewed and analyzed approaches was framed in the dimensions maltreatment, abuse, discrimination, xenophobia and behavior obtaining. In fact, it is evident in this aspect that of the surveyed population, 18% have been victims of maltreatment (both by people of the same nationality and by the Venezuelan authorities), 14% of abuse, 25% of discrimination, 22% of xenophobia, and in terms of behavior we got 21%; the latter has marked the conduct and performance of Venezuelans who say that because of their behavior or that of some compatriots who have done so unfavorably, some people do not want to give their hand or be supportive.

**Socio-cultural condition variable:** Elements that are framed in food, housing, the fear of family separation, the danger of irregular groups, the dialect, their customs and beliefs, among others, are considered; the dimensions of analysis focused on the amount of money they had to buy tickets and food (economy); the support from family and friends in other latitudes, job availability, health conditions and the degree of stress that may arise due to the separation of their loved ones. Having said that, to delve into what was done, a scale was established regarding the amount of money (in Colombian pesos COP) that migrants can carry in their pockets. As can be seen in the collected information, most people when they want to leave the country (Venezuela) do not have enough economic resources, because observing the accumulated frequency, it can be established that more than 50% of migrants that formed the sample only have as personal patrimony no more than 350,000 COP; the Colombians who return are supported with the ticket to the city of origin. without being clear that the health issue is due to international treaties and is a universal right established by the UN, 22,000 million COP have been spent since August 19th, 2016 in medical personnel in each bridge, and hospitals work in a vaccination scheme, in the treatment of emergencies and the treatment of chronic diseases which have been made by the filing of resources such as writs for protection of human rights (called "tutela" in Colombia). (INFDEF-01, 2018).

Related to the work issue, only people with Colombian documents can access, working in jobs as hairdressers and restaurants; in hairdressing salons, there has been an increase in Venezuelan personnel from 10% to 50% (According to key informant, INFEMP-01, 2018), but the vast majority work informally because Colombia does not have policies such as Mexico and Argentina that allow the humanitarian visa and the professionals, although they are very well qualified, it is very difficult for them to validate their qualifications (According to key informant, INFVEN-03, 2018); therefore, it is very common to see mothers with their children at traffic lights in the city selling what they can spend in the day, or in other occasions they resort to sexual works to be able to give food to their children (According to key informant, INFVEN-02, 2018).

**Health condition variable:** In it was possible to determine that some reasons for migrating converge in the fact that health is being affected as a result of the lack of medicines in the country, what leads to many people leaving the nation with the intention of getting the medicines that they or their families require. News have indicated a shortage of 80% in medicines, what is evident in the interviewees that state that they cannot even get a radiograph in hospitals, that a large percentage greater than 60% neglected their work places; this is also associated with the scarcity of food, the interruption of public services such as electricity in daily lapses ranging from 4 to 12 hours, public transport is very limited, garbage trucks pass every two months causing sanitation problems, and the very little circulation of cash that prevents people from being treated in hospital centers (According to key informant, INFOR-01, 2018). This is reflected in the number of people who are daily attended to in the bridges, hospitals so they go to the ombudsman's office to request legal advice for the processing of writs for protection of human rights. (According to key informant, INFDEF-02, 2018).

## 6.2. Analysis of the categories

Effectively, the qualitative treatment led to a meticulous development of some postulates that indicate that in the first place the triangulation is carried out with the intention of giving scientific rigor to the interview script applied in the in-depth interview; afterwards, the database was consolidated in the ATLAS.ti software supported by the postulates of the grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) where codes were created, their relationships and the categories of Respect for human rights, Understanding of our peers and Value of understanding emerged.

**Respect for human rights Category:** In relation to human rights, it was possible to demonstrate in the information provided by the key informants that from the Colombian government entities there is good attitude for helping the Venezuelan emigrant; as evidenced by (INFDEF-01, 2018) that: "*approximately 750,000 Venezuelans have entered the country and have taken up residence in the country*", which suggests that the population has increased. Likewise, unfair competition has been observed on several occasions, since many Venezuelans offer their workforce well below the price of what is established to pay a fellow countryman (INFEMP-02, 2018). This has generated an impact in terms of what human rights refer to, because sometimes people in the yard have expressed hate and xenophobia to pedestrians because they are subtracting jobs and offer the same services for a relatively low value (INFVEN-02, 2018). Likewise, it is observed with concern that people who had never been seen in the residential areas and neighborhoods wander daily asking the residents to help them buy something and feed their children (INFHOS-02, 2018). Situation that has been getting worse when these people have finished their "plante" (amount of money they

had to buy tickets and food, at the time of leaving the country of origin) and cannot find work (INFVEN-03). From there, various events have arisen that place human rights at risk, such as the trafficking of underage women, which leads to improper actions that infringe upon morals and good manners and have marked the history of a society that wants to progress and that every day is more frustrated by not having the minimum conditions of development and social welfare (INFDEF-01, 2018). Figure 01(a) shows the semantic network of the Human Rights category.

**Understanding of our peers Category:** The characteristics of migratory grief or Ulysses syndrome have been described by authors such as Tizon (1993), Falicov (1999), Boss (2001) and Achotegui (2002) among others; an important element of the understanding of our peers arises from the fact that many people who, as emigrants, are sometimes not understood by those around them because they are full of worries and feed chronic stress. The situation for Venezuelans is becoming more difficult every day, we changed from the images when the international bridge was not allowed to circulate but thousands of determined women crossed the bridge in the presence of the astonished gaze of the Venezuelan guards and the welcome with open arms of Colombians, to the look with mistrust that exists two years later in most of the people of Cucuta because of the creation of imaginaries such as, for example, that many people point out that the Venezuelan emigrants are being cared for from the public budget (INFHOS-02, 2018), regardless of whether the budget to cover this situation comes from international treaties, such as what is assigned by the United Nations (UN); in fact, under this view it is pertinent to review the promises of economic support from the UN, the European Union and the United States (INFDEF-01, 2018). These approaches lead to rethinking actions aimed at educating the population and trying to reduce discontent and misinformation about the crisis being treated on all sides. Figure 01(b) shows the semantic network for this category of understanding of our peers.

**The value of understanding Category:** According to (Calvo, 2005), the migratory process involves stages: preparatory stage, migration itself, settlement and integration period and finally, transgenerational phenomena (Sluzki, 1979). For Tizon (1993), the classification would be preparation, migration itself, settlement period, adaptation and integration. In the stages of settlement, adaptation and integration, the value of understanding is very important, an aspect that is very characteristic of each person's personality, since sometimes when the types of grief and depressions that arise from migration are reviewed, it is possible to demonstrate that people who live this situation seek to understand how to get along within society and for this it is relevant to be clear about the satisfaction of basic needs of both those who leave and those who remain. In the seventeenth century, Harder and Zwinger related the migratory phenomenon to homesickness, appearing in situations such as: soldiers who, after prolonged military campaigns without returning to their country, fell into enervation and sadness; or in peasants who migrated to the cities... (Tizón, 1993). Nowadays, it is observed with concern how the classrooms are being left empty because the parents leave the country and there is no one who obliges the represented to go to their classes (INFVEN-03, 2018), the classrooms are becoming places where very few students attend and it is observed with concern that those who leave the country only worry about sending remittances so that those who remain can try to cover their basic needs (INFVEN-05, 2018). However, regardless the sent amount of money will never be enough to bear an inflationary crisis of such a high level so, on many occasions, the feeling of those in the country is heard "it is better not to leave the house because we are going to spend more than

we earn" (INFVEN-03, 2018) and this undoubtedly leads to people leaving the country in search of new horizons and better living conditions.

## 7. Conclusion

Regarding the postulates for public policies, it is proposed to work on three fundamental axes which are to enhance the pedagogical action of understanding the other; it is pertinent to establish a framework to formulate a public policy so that all government institutions, including educational institutions, can design strategies that educate people who are in a migrant condition, in order to the general population can also be oriented so people understands that it is a situation that involves multiple scenarios and processes and must not leave aside the pedagogical action because the secret is to establish actions that converge to re-educate people through short radio programs, social networks, triptychs and informative material that lets you visualize what the requirements are that must be met by people in migrant status; currently, this function is done by the ombudsman's office in special days when people knows how to become a citizen, problems are explained when Colombians have double registration, they address immigration and visa issues, and cases are focused. A census is performed with Venezuelan communities in registration days; at the moment, 1271 Venezuelan children and 324 indigenous are registered, and profiles are monitored in Tibu, Puerto Santander, Cucuta, Villa del Rosario, Ragonvalia, Herran and Toledo. These efforts are not enough, there are many people who do not go through these filters and are alone, uninformed; therefore, more effective actions are required that allow for humanitarian visas, for instance. A census is currently being carried out in Colombia and Brazil, which is expected to be consolidated for the month of July.

Likewise, the strengthening of public health is proposed. According to Chacin-Bonilla (2017) there is a considerable increase in infectious diseases, malaria, dengue, Zika, Chikungunya, Chagas, leishmaniasis, leprosy, HIV, cholera and diphtheria, among others have ostensibly come back and are some of the main causes of morbidity in the country. Some of these conditions are preventable or treatable but cannot be treated properly. Information on how to control your medication change published by the Venezuelan Society of Internal Medicine (2017) circulates on the web. Understanding that health must, for humanitarian reasons, become a state policy that not only takes care of emergencies, but counteract epidemics to prevent the population from facing outbreaks of diseases that may arise from the public health problems previously presented. Finally, for the recognition of multiculturalisms it is emphatically necessary to understand that cultures vary from one person to another and for this reason, it is necessary to rethink about appropriate instruction programs for the people who have in their hands the responsibility of receiving migrants because the types of cultures should be known to avoid altercations in the handling of dialect and meaning of words.

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