

BRUNA CARVALHO BADARÓ DE MELO

**South-south migration: A Critical Discourse
Analysis of media's construction of
Venezuelan refugees in Brazil**

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how Venezuelan refugees have been constructed by the Brazilian media during the ongoing refugee crisis in South America. The fact that South-South migration has so far been understudied and the relevant and fast-escalating displacement of people from Venezuela were the motivations for this study. Twenty-one articles about Venezuelan refugees published between 2016 and 2021 by three mainstream, conservative newspapers were analyzed. The theoretical framework consisted of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis and the theoretical concepts of stereotypes and otherness, from a decolonial perspective. The findings revealed that Venezuelans were mainly associated with negative aspects, comprehending two sub discourses: in the first one, they were constructed as the origin of diseases at the borders and associated with violence and societal tension, and in the second one they were constructed as exploited, underemployed and poorly integrated into the formal labor market. The findings contribute to increasing the understanding of the South-South migration phenomena by detailing the representation of Venezuelan refugees in the Brazilian media and the main discourses related to them.

KEY WORDS

Venezuelan refugees, south-south migration, critical discourse analysis, stereotypes, Fairclough

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

As mentioned by FitzGerald (2015, 117) migrations between countries located in the Global South¹ are as large as the migrations from the Global South toward the Global North but remain for the most part unstudied. These migrations are not only economic, but also comprehend the displacement of individuals triggered by violation of human rights, political and social conflicts (Lima et al 2017, 22). In the case of South America, there is an ongoing crisis occurring in Venezuela, causing massive refugee displacement to other Latin American countries. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2022), more than 6 million people have fled from Venezuela since 2015 due to the ongoing crisis occurring in that country, involving socio-economic turmoil and political disturbance. The crisis escalated from 2016 onwards, comprehending government security forces and civil pro-government groups perpetrating extreme acts, such as unmotivated arrests, torture, and extra-judicial executions of individuals (HRW, 2020). Around eighty percent of these Venezuelans are hosted by neighboring countries in South America and the Caribbean, in the largest forced migration in the contemporary history of the region (IOM 2022).

Due to the deteriorating humanitarian and security conditions in Venezuela, the UNHCR recommended, through its 2019 Guidance Note, that the host states recognize most Venezuelans as refugees, adopting a procedure to grant refugee status on *prima facie*² grounds (Ochoa 2020, 473). Following the UNHCR recommendation, Brazil implemented the *prima facie* assessment the same year (Ochoa 2020, 489), consequently becoming the country with the highest number of recognized Venezuelan refugees in Latin America³ (UNHCR 2020). In 2020, around 60 percent of the applications for refuge in Brazil were from Venezuelan individuals (Silva et al 2020, 20).

The growing number of refugee arrivals from Venezuela noticeably attracted the attention of the Brazilian media. As argued by Smets et al (2020, 5), media has an important

¹ Global South refers commonly to regions outside Europe and North America, such as countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, that are usually (but not all) economically developing countries and politically or culturally marginalized (Dados and Connell 2012, 12).

² Whereas refugee status should normally be granted on an individual assessment basis, in some situations individuals from entire groups that are escaping from well-known and extremely urgent situations qualify as refugees at first appearance, therefore lowering the standard of proof needed to qualify as a refugee and accelerating the process (UNHCR Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, Section B, 44).

³ The main receiving country is Colombia, followed by other South American countries such as Peru, Chile, and Brazil (Ochoa 2020, 480). However, Brazil has the highest number of recognized refugees in the region (UNHCR 2020).

role in the migration phenomena. By producing images of reality, media can connect and unite, but might also play a role in the growth of resentment and discrimination, influencing the opinions of individuals and their understanding of migrants (ibid, 7). In this context, mass media coverage not only provides information about groups and issues related to migration but constructs representations and discourses regarding migrants and minorities, including positive or negative depictions of them (Bleich et al 2015, 859). The central connection between mass media and migration, the fact that South-South movements are not as studied as South-North, and the relevant displacement of people from Venezuela have inspired the topic of this article.

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above insights, the fact that Brazil has become the country with the highest number of recognized Venezuelan refugees in Latin America, the knowledge gap regarding South-South migration and the central linkage between mass media and migration, the article seeks to contribute to a growing understanding on how Venezuelan refugees are constructed in the Brazilian media during the ongoing refugee situation in South America and the main discourses related to them.

The article is guided by the following research questions: “In which ways are the refugees from Venezuela being constructed by the Brazilian media in the ongoing refugee situation?” and “What are the main discourses related to Venezuelan refugees in the context of the current refugee crisis?” As mentioned by Boréus and Bergström (2017, 196), the term “discourse” can have various and even divergent meanings. In this article, I refer to discourse as a social construction of reality (Fairclough 1995, 18) and “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 1). Twenty-one newspaper articles about the subject, selected from 3 of the main newspapers in Brazil and published between 2016-2021 will be analyzed, using Fairclough critical discourse analysis (CDA) theory and the theoretical concepts of stereotypes and “otherness”, from a decolonial perspective, in order to answer the research questions.

THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS

The Venezuelan economy has been heavily based on oil production since 1920, being so essential to the country that in 2014 it corresponded to 95 percent of its exports (Silva, Franco, and Sampaio 2021, 350). The economy of Venezuela had periods of strength when the oil price reached high levels, which turned the country into a destination place for immigration in the region until 2013, attracting especially Colombians, Ecuadoreans, and Peruvians (ibid, 349).

Due to the high dependency on oil production, Venezuela's economy suffered greatly with the significant dropping in the oil price in 2014, with the GDP decreasing 10 to 15 percent that year (ibid, 350; Ochoa 2020, 481). Regardless of unfavorable market conditions, Ochoa (2020, 481) observed that the economic crisis also emerged due to the mismanagement of the State-owned oil company Petroleos de Venezuela, which was in control of all country's oil exploration, production, refining, and exportation. Furthermore, economic sanctions from the United States contributed to intensifying the economic crisis in Venezuela, restricting the possibility of accessing foreign investors and the United States financial market (ibid, 481). At the same time, previous welfare policies collapsed, and inflation rose uncontrollably, reaching 800 percent in 2014 (Silva, Franco and Sampaio 2021, 350) and 10 million percent by April 2019, as informed by Ochoa, drawing on International Monetary Fund data (2020, 481). Moreover, the transition of power caused by Hugo Chavez's (president of Venezuela) death in 2013, and Nicolás Maduro's difficulties to maintain the welfare state and to import products triggered strong protests from the political opposition from 2014 onwards (ibid).

The consequences of the economic collapse were a shortage of food, medicines, vaccines, and medical supplies, leading to malnourishment and health issues (ibid, 482). The country is suffering outbreaks from vaccine preventable diseases (HRW 2019), and around 80 percent of Venezuelan households are suffering from food insecurity, with about 11 percent of Venezuelans undernourished in 2018 (Ochoa 2020, 482).

In addition to poverty, health and nutrition issues, Venezuelans are also facing generalized violence, political persecution, and systematic violations of human rights (HRW 2020). According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory (2019), the homicide rate in Venezuela is 60.3 per 100,000 inhabitants, much higher than any of the countries in the region (Ochoa 2020, 483). Between 2014 and 2018, almost 13.000 individuals were arbitrarily detained in Venezuela, whereas evidence points out to cases of political persecution of opponents, forced disappearances, and torture (ibid). The UN Human Rights Council established an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to verify the veracity of these allegations in 2019, concluding in its 2020 report that:

(...) there is reasonable ground to believe that Venezuelan authorities and security forces have since 2014 planned and executed serious human rights violations, some of which – including arbitrary killings and the systematic use of torture – amount to crimes against humanity (...) Far from being isolated acts, these crimes were coordinated and committed pursuant to State policies, with the knowledge or direct support of commanding officers and senior government officials.(UN 2020).

The Venezuelan government has denied international aid, claiming that there is no crisis at all in the country and that the situation is being manipulated to justify international intervention (Ochoa 2020, 484). Whereas the first waves of Venezuelans were characterized by highly skilled individuals escaping the country by plane, nowadays the flows have been called the exodus of hopelessness (Silva, Franco, and Sampaio 2021, 350). The high cost of a passport in Venezuela has made its acquisition prohibitive to the common individual and as a consequence many people have crossed the dry border to Brazil and Colombia on foot, without documentation, walking thousands of kilometers with their families and belongings (ibid, 350). The main entry point in Brazil is the town of Pacaraima, in northern Roraima state. The number of displaced Venezuelans is currently estimated at more than 6 million people, many of them in extremely vulnerable conditions (IOM 2022).

MIGRATION IN BRAZIL

Albeit nowadays Latin America is often portrayed as a region of emigration, historically the region has been one of mass immigration (Goebel 2014, 1; Lesser 2012; 4). Roughly three million immigrants from Europe and other regions settled permanently in Brazil between 1870 and 1930 (ibid). In this context, the image of the ideal immigrant was constructed as not only European and white but also hard-working and of a “superior moral and cultural background” (Bletz 2010, 22). The ideal immigrant was constructed within this stereotypical frame and would contribute to improving the image of the country as a progressive and potentially white nation, following the “scientific” racial thinking and eugenics assumptions at that time (ibid). Following this thought, Brazilian policies encouraged European immigration to pursue the whitening of the nation’s stock (ibid, 19). Immigrants would make Brazil “stronger” and “more respected” (Lesser 2012, 2). Mass immigration to Latin America declined considerably from 1930 (Goebel 2014, 4) and the idea of whitening through migration began to lose support in Brazil in favor of ideologies that perceived “race mixture” in a more positive light (Silva and Paixão 2014, 178). In line with this, around the same time the anthropologist and sociologist Gilberto Freyre presented Brazilian history as the “marriage” of three races, Indigenous, African, and European, each one with unique contributions to the Brazilian character (ibid). However, as observed by Silva and Paixão, if on one hand the racial mixture is praised in Freyre’s writings, on the other hand the European (Portuguese) contribution was still emphasized and presented as dominant (ibid, 179).

In contrast to mass immigration to Brazil during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, relevant and consistent refugee inflows to the country only emerged very recently, more specifically from 2010 with the influx from Haiti (Cavalcanti et al 2021a, 6). The massive displacement of refugees from Venezuela, the largest in the region and globally ranked second to Syria (Chami, Brown and Roy 2020, 5), is an unprecedented situation in Brazil.

Until 2010, around 592.000 migrants were residing in Brazil, with the main nationalities being from the Global North (Cavalcanti et al 2021b, 12). During the 2010s a significant change regarding the numbers and profile of immigrants emerged: according to the administrative records of the Brazilian Federal Government, it is estimated that 1.3 million migrants resided in Brazil in 2020, mainly from Venezuela and Haiti (ibid). Among the applicants for refugee status, the main countries of origin are all from the Global South (ibid, 13). Furthermore, if before 2010 there was greater participation of migrants with university degrees in the labor market, throughout the decade the education level of migrants decreased and was consolidated as a secondary educational level (ibid).

Considering the growing number of refugees influx to the country, a new migration law was approved in 2017 (13.445/2017), adopting a comprehensive approach regarding integration. According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), migrants currently enjoy favorable policies in all areas of societal integration in Brazil, such as the labor market, education, health system, permanent residence, and access to nationality (MIPEX 2020). As a result, Brazil has experienced “the second largest improvement of its integration policies of all MIPEX countries and the largest of all non-European MIPEX countries” (MIPEX 2020), moving into the top ten. In 2018, considering that the majority of Venezuelan refugees enter Brazil through Roraima state, which borders Venezuela, the Federal Government launched the “Operação Acolhida” (“Operation Welcome”, my translation) to voluntarily relocate refugees in other Brazilian states, aiming to alleviate the pressure in the border region, especially in Roraima state (Cavalcanti et al 2021b, 46).

THE MEDIA

As pointed out by Bleich et al (2015, 858), “the media” is not a singular entity, but a complex group of institutions with enormous internal distinctions, such as newspapers, magazines, social media, radio, and TV. Furthermore, the reach of the media can vary, being quite limited (for instance, a local newspaper or community television station) or extremely broad (BBC news, for instance). Therefore, it is relevant to clarify what I mean by “media” and briefly discuss the characteristics of Brazilian media. For the purposes of this article, I will use the term “media” as referring to newspapers, more specifically to three daily Brazilian newspapers with national distribution: “O Globo”, “O Estado de São Paulo” (also known as “Estadão”) and “Folha de São Paulo”.

In the article “Media and democracy in Brazil: the relationship between the media landscape and the political landscape” (2006, my translation), Azevedo analyses Brazilian press media and outlines its key characteristics, such as conservative bias, family monopoly, low number of readers in relation to the population size, readers mainly from the middle and upper classes and, as a consequence, an elite-oriented approach (2006, 89). Drawing on the

models proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) to analyze the media, Azevedo classifies the press media in Brazil as a “Mediterranean model”, which presents as key elements newspapers oriented predominantly to the political elite; freedom of press and development of commercial media relatively late; and economically fragile newspapers, often dependent on subsidies and government aid (through official publicity) to survive.

The press media emerged relatively late in Brazil. After the independence in 1822, the Brazilian press expanded and diversified, but it was only around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century that it would gain a business structure and the major press axis Rio de Janeiro - São Paulo would emerge (ibid, 93). Azevedo emphasizes that the biggest newspapers with national distribution nowadays, “O Estado de São Paulo”, “O Globo” and “Folha de São Paulo”, which are used in this article, were founded around that time (ibid).

Despite its economic fragility, the press media was deeply involved in politics in the 1950s, with “O Globo” (controlled by the influential Marinho family) and “O Estado de São Paulo” (controlled by the Mesquita family) opposing the populist president Getúlio Vargas and supporting the liberal and conservative UDN party (ibid, 103). In spite of their self-proclaimed liberal orientation, the mentioned newspapers initially did not oppose the right-wing military coup in 1964 (ibid). The newspapers “Folha de São Paulo” and “O Estado de São Paulo” later offered a growing opposition to the right-wing military dictatorship, but “O Globo” supported the regime until its end, in 1985 (ibid). As observed by Azevedo (ibid, 103) the opposition was confined to the press media, since the military regime kept strong censorship on television media. During the military dictatorship, left-wing newspapers that openly defied the regime emerged, such as “O Pasquim” and “Movimento”, but none survived the beginning of the 1990s (ibid, 104). In the first elections of the re-democratization period, in 1989, the press and electronic media generally opposed the left-wing candidates Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Leonel Brizola and openly supported the neoliberal right-wing candidate Fernando Collor de Mello (ibid, 106). Azevedo (ibid, 107) observes that a comparison between the political coverage in the 1989 elections and the 1994 and 1998 elections showed significant changes in the major newspapers (such as “O Globo”, “Estadão” and “Folha de São Paulo”). Despite political preferences, there was a better balance in the news dedicated to the candidates from all political perspectives (ibid, 107). From 1994 onwards, Azevedo observed that the mentioned newspapers adopted a formally neutral political orientation and a more informative than opinionated type of journalism (ibid, 108). Historically, the selected newspapers have positioned themselves as conservatives and leaned to the center and right-wing spectrum.

The newspaper “O Globo” was founded in 1925 in Rio de Janeiro. In the section “past mistakes and false accusations” placed on its website (2013), the newspaper recognizes that supporting the right-wing military dictatorship from 1964 to its end in 1985 was a mistake, stating that, at that time, it seemed the right attitude, “aiming at the good of the country”

(ibid, my translation). In this line of thought, they declare that “in the light of history, there is no reason to avoid admitting it was a mistake (...) democracy is an absolute value.”

The “Folha de São Paulo” newspaper was founded in 1921 in São Paulo. In the editorial line section on its website (2014), the newspaper declares that they pursue critical and pluralist journalism, without affiliations to any political party. Lastly, “O Estadão” was founded in 1875 in São Paulo. The “editorial principles” section on its website (1995) is useful to understand the newspaper’s standpoints. The editorial principles encompass being independent and nonaligned with any political parties, defending liberty, democracy and republicanism, defending private property and free enterprise, and being “radically” against populism and political extremism, among others.

LATIN AMERICA REFUGEE PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

Refugee protection in Latin America encompasses the coexistence of different legal frameworks and systems from the national, regional, and international levels (Jubilut et al 2021, 2). These legal frameworks and systems comprehend, for example, the international regime that originates from the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the Global Compact on Refugees from 2018, the Inter-American Human Rights system within the OAS, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, the Quito Process, domestic legislations and the coexistence of political asylum and refuge (ibid, 3).

Asylum in Latin America is implemented by either political asylum or refugee status, two forms of protection that coexist in the region (Jubilut et al 2021, 6). Political asylum has a limited scope, since it protects only individuals who face actual political persecution and is granted on a discretionary basis by the States (ibid). On the other hand, the refuge is invested with the nature of a right and can be implemented when the legal requirements are fulfilled (ibid).

The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees expanded the definition of refugee for Latin America, encompassing not only the elements contained in the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, but also including persons that have fled their countries 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 (Andrade 2021, 39). The definition of a refugee also includes the indirect effects of situational events, such as economic decline, inflation, poverty, violence, diseases, food insecurity and malnourishment, as interpreted at the UNHCR expert roundtable in 2013 (Ochôa 2020, 473).

Despite its soft law nature, in a practical sense the Cartagena Declaration inspired most Latin American countries to adopt, in their domestic national legislation, the extended definition of refugee, thus enhancing refugee protection in the region (Andrade 2021, 40).

Albeit most Venezuelans do not classify as refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention definition, they do classify as refugees under the Cartagena Declaration definition, which has a broader range of circumstances to access refugee status (Ochoa 2020, 473).

DELIMITATIONS

The article focuses on Venezuelans, and not on other groups of refugees or immigrants. This is because, as outlined in the introduction part, the most relevant and fastest escalating displacement of people in South America nowadays is from Venezuela. Another delimitation is that I collected newspaper articles from three Brazilian newspapers. This is based on the fact that these newspapers are the biggest and best-selling in Brazil, according to the Brazilian Communication Verifier Institute (IVC) and have national daily distribution. Therefore, by selecting these three newspapers, I aimed to obtain a representative view of Brazilian press media.

I did not compare different approaches among the chosen newspapers since the focus of this article was on similarities rather than on differences regarding the representation of Venezuelan refugees and the discourses related to them. In addition, it is important to point out that the focus is on how they were constructed by the media, and not if these representations are true or false. Only non-editorial articles were selected, since the focal point of editorials was not on Venezuelan refugees, but rather on explaining the political crisis in Venezuela and comparing it with the political landscape in Brazil, which escapes the focus and scope of the analysis. Lastly, the timeframe was limited from 2016 onwards because this period coincides with the deterioration of the situation in Venezuela and the significant increase in the refugee flow to Brazil.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

The article builds on the decolonial perspective. According to Smets et al (2020), decoloniality is the approach and practice of delinking from Western hegemonic cultural, economic, and epistemic (related to knowledge and its validation) dominance. The decolonial perspective emerged in South America in the 1990s from the works of, among others, Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones, and Walter D. Mignolo, and although similar, is not to be confounded with

postcolonialism (Smets et al 2020 and Bhabra 2012, 119). While postcolonialism emerged as a consequence of the study of scholars from Asia and the Middle East, referring, for the most part, to these locations and their former imperial interlocutors, decoloniality emerged from the work of scholars in South America and refers, for the most part, to these locations and their former metropolitan societies (Bhabra 2012, 119).

As argued by Connell (2007) social science is immersed in perspectives, concerns, and frames of reference of former metropolitan societies, while presenting itself as universal knowledge. Regarding the migration field, much of the research has been shaped by concerns particular to centers in the global north and consequently south-north migration, overlooking experiences related to the global south. Maldonado-Torres, drawing from Mignolo (2007, 242), argues that language is a salient aspect of the decolonial perspective, considering that “science” (meaning knowledge production) cannot be separated from language, and hence the importance of language and critical discourse analysis to this study. This article builds on the decolonial perspective since it aims to increase the understanding of South-South migration phenomena, by studying the construction of Venezuelan refugees in Brazilian media and the discourses related to them.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND FAIRCLOUGH'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL THEORETICAL MODEL

In this article, I use Norman Fairclough's model for critical discourse analysis, drawing on his theoretical framework for analyzing media discourse, presented in “Media Discourse” (1995).

As observed by Jorgensen and Phillips (2012, 4), in critical discourse analysis the theoretical, philosophical, and methodological approaches are intertwined and should be handled as a whole. Critical discourse analysis is mainly rooted in socio-constructionist premises, thus placing importance on the active role of discourse in the construction of the social world (Jorgensen and Phillips 2012, 7). To CDA approaches, representations of reality are created through language and the manner something is framed affects the way we act on it (Jorgensen and Phillips 2012, 8). Language is thus not just a carrier of information but a tool that constitutes the social world and potentially incites action (ibid). In other words, language is not perceived as a neutral instrument; how something is represented shapes or embeds political action (Boréus and Bergström 2017, 196). Another relevant aspect of discourse analysis approaches is the investigation of hidden power structures and change (Jorgensen and Phillips 2012, 7). In this context, concerning the media, Fairclough argues that texts contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power and domination, by selectively representing some aspect of the world (Fairclough 1995, 17).

Fairclough's CDA three-dimensional theoretical framework entails text analysis to understand how discursive practices function linguistically in texts, but he criticizes approaches that only focus on the linguistic aspects for working with a depthless and simplistic comprehension between text and society (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 66). The overarching aim of the three-dimensional model is to provide an analytical framework for discourse analysis, considering the principle that texts are not to be comprehended or analyzed in isolation, but in relation to other texts and to the broader social context (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 70). Fairclough's model for Critical Discourse Analysis consists of three interconnected processes of analysis which are linked to three interconnected dimensions of discourse (Janks 2006, 329). These three dimensions are the object of analysis; the process by which the object of analysis is produced, reproduced and how the text draws on elements of other texts; and the socio-historical conditions that conduct these processes (ibid, 329). In Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, each of these dimensions requires a different type of analysis, which are text analysis (description), discursive practice (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). Considering that Fairclough's model of CDA is both a theoretical and a methodological framework, the way I will use it to operationalize the analysis will be elaborated in the methodological framework section.

STEREOTYPES AND THE "OTHER"

As briefly defined by Stuart Hall, representation is the construction of meaning through language (1997, 16). In other words, to represent something is to describe, depict, symbolize, or conceptualize it through language, in ways other people are capable to understand. According to the author (1997, 17), the constructionist perspective of representation has had a significant impact on cultural studies in recent years, and one of its variants is the discursive approach, associated with Michel Foucault. In the constructionist approach to representation, things do not mean something in themselves, instead, the meaning is constructed by using representational systems – signs and concepts (ibid, 25). Hall observes that Foucault changed the attention from language to discourse, meaning by discourse a way of representing the knowledge about a specific topic at a specific moment in time (ibid, 44). The concept of discourse in this perspective is not just about a linguistic concept but is also about practice (ibid).

In this context, Hall observes that stereotyping as a signifying practice is central to the representation of people that are considered different from us (ibid, 225). Stereotypes get hold of some characteristics of a person and exaggerate, simplify, and fix them, reducing the person to those characteristics (ibid, 258). Hence, stereotyping "reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes differences" (ibid). As a consequence, stereotyping establishes boundaries and excludes everything that does not "belong", setting the frontiers between the "insiders" and the

“outsiders” or the “others” (ibid). As argued by Hall, stereotyping is part of the maintenance of the social order and occurs mainly where there are flagrant inequalities of power. In other words, stereotyping is what Foucault defined as a power/knowledge game, since it labels people according to a standard and represents those who do not fit as the “other” (ibid, 259). Media tend to stereotype migrants and other minorities, as observed by Smets et al (2020, 20). In this article, I used the theoretical concepts explored by Hall in order to identify the main discourses related to Venezuelan refugees and to investigate in which ways the media constructs and reproduces stereotypes related to them.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The point of departure for this study was open questions, and the analysis was guided by the themes that appeared during the investigation. The method utilized was the qualitative Fairclough three-dimensional framework. The analysis was restricted to twenty-one newspaper articles. The material was searched using the research function in each newspaper’s webpage, using relevant keywords such as “Venezuelan”, “refugees” and “immigrant”. To narrow it down, I excluded articles that only mentioned Venezuelan refugees briefly, since they would not be relevant to the aim of this study, as well as editorials, as previously delineated in the “delimitations” section. Following these steps, I reached 21 relevant articles from the selected newspapers. Since the material is in Portuguese, every time I needed to quote something I translated it to English and referred to the original article, so the reader can compare it to the original.

The restricted number of articles can be motivated by the fact that CDA is a micro-level-based analysis of discourse, and patterns identified on this micro-level form macro-level messages of hegemony, discrimination, and power (Strauss and Feiz 2013, 315-316). Hence, macro-level discourses can be investigated in the form of micro-discourses (ibid).

To proceed with the analysis, I read the selected articles several times to identify the most frequent words used to describe the refugees and the stereotypes related to them. While reading, I highlighted these words and took notes of what emerged as significant and relevant regarding the construction of refugees by the Brazilian media and the main discourses related to Venezuelan refugees. Following this, I connected the selection with the literature and theoretical concepts previously explained to support the three-dimensional framework analysis. The selected articles were analyzed together at each dimension, instead of going separately, in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions and to allow better readability.

FAIRCLOUGH'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK METHOD

As previously outlined, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework comprehends the analysis between the three dimensions of a communicative event, named text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995, 57). According to Fairclough's view, the linguistic analysis should be part of the discourse analysis of the media, and should focus on texts, such as newspaper articles or radio transcription, for instance (Fairclough 1995, 16). The analysis also includes discourse practice, meaning the processes of text production and consumption, and sociocultural practice, meaning the cultural facets in which the communicative events are part of (ibid, 57). In other words, all three dimensions should be used to analyze a communicative event, and the analysis focuses on the linguistic features of the event (text), the processes related to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice), and the broader social practice in which the event belong (social practice) (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 68). Hence, in Fairclough's model, researchers must take the following steps: description, interpretation, and explanation (Lê and Short 2009, 8). The three-dimension framework provides an analytical tool in which texts are not understood in isolation, but in relation to other texts and to the wider social context.

Discourse as text

Fairclough suggests various tools to proceed with the text analysis, such as metaphors, stereotypes, wording, and grammar (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 83). In this line, Janks (1997, 335) proposes some tools for the text analysis part, such as lexicalization, nominalization, patterns of transitivity, choices of modality, thematic structure of the text, the information focus, cohesion devices, among others. However, as pointed out by Jorgensen and Phillips (ibid, 76) it is not necessary to use all the tools to do the analysis or to use them in the same exact way in different research projects. Instead, the selection should be tailored for each project according to its characteristics, scope, and aim (ibid). In this first dimension, I focused on linguistic patterns, such as wording, as well as stereotypes (as generalized images of the other) and on two central grammatical aspects, specifically modality and transitivity.

Regarding transitivity, the focus is on how the events and processes are linked (or not) with objects and subjects (ibid, 83). The reason is to investigate the ideological consequences that distinct forms can have, and this can be done by examining the different ways the text is constructed, for instance, using passive or active voice (ibid). In the sentence "thirty refugees were attacked in Pacaraima yesterday", for example, the use of passive voice entails that there is no responsible agent for the attack, almost as if it was a natural phenomenon. Modality, in its turn, has to do with the certainty regarding communication. For instance, "this is wrong" and "this might be wrong" are different ways to address a subject, in which the speaker commits himself to the statement in different degrees. As argued by Jorgensen and Phillips,

mass media frequently present interpretations as if they were facts by using modality. Furthermore, the use of categorical and objective modalities by mass media both reflects and emphasizes their authority (2002, 84).

Discourse as discursive practice

Jorgensen and Phillips, drawing on Fairclough (2002, 69), argue that the relationship between text and social practice is conciliated through discursive practice, since individuals use language to create and consume texts, and texts shape and are shaped by social practice. The second dimension of analysis (discursive practice) involves several aspects regarding text production and text consumption (Fairclough 1995, 58). However, as pointed out by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, 82) the discursive practice analysis is usually done from a linguistic standpoint, illuminating which discourses the text draws on (intertextuality).

Intertextuality refers to the condition through which all communicative events draw on previous events, sometimes directly, for instance by citing them, which is named manifested intertextuality (ibid, 74). Therefore, a text can be perceived as a link in an intertextual chain, in which each text incorporates elements from other texts (ibid, 74). The concept of intertextuality draws attention to links between texts, so any text being analyzed is considered in comparison to other related texts (Bryman 2008, 540). In Fairclough's words, intertextual analysis is "a bridge between the text and discourse practice dimensions in the critical discourse analysis framework" (1995, 75). In the second dimension, I focused on investigating the intertextuality in the material and the analysis was also supported by the previous description part.

Discourse as social practice

The third dimension involves the analysis of the wider social practice in which the communicative event belongs. The goal is to identify the partially non-discursive cultural and social relations which are part of the wider context of discursive practice, for instance, in what types of economic and institutional conditions the discourse is immersed (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 86). As explained by Fairclough, the analysis of discourse as social practice entails different levels of abstraction from a particular event, such as a more immediate situational context, the broader institutional practices the events are embedded, and the broader frame of culture and society (1995, 62).

In this line of thought, Bryman, drawing on Phillips and Hardy (2008, 541), observes that to be able to understand discourses and their effects, we must also be able to understand the contexts in which the discourses emerge. Hence it is useful, as observed by Janks, to ask questions about time and place in order to investigate the situational context (1997, 338). It is

in the third dimension that the study between discursive practice and social practice achieves its final conclusions (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 87). In this third dimension, I drew on the context of culture and society in which the communicative events are embedded in and was also guided by the previous investigation in the two first dimensions of Fairclough's framework (description and interpretation part). The concepts of stereotypes (as generalized images of the other) were also used to provide insights into the context surrounding the construction of Venezuelan refugees by the Brazilian media.

ANALYSIS

The analysis is divided into three parts: description (text), interpretation (discursive practice) and explanation (social practice). The investigation was supported by the theoretical framework and secondary sources in the form of literature. In addition, my inferences during the analysis were also supported by quotes extracted from the selected material.

During the reading of the selected articles, an overarching discourse associating Venezuelan refugees with negative aspects emerged as dominant. Connected to this overarching discourse, it was possible to identify two sub discourses: Venezuelans associated with societal tension, violence, and diseases at the borders; and Venezuelans as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market. Both sub-discourses were analyzed together at each dimension to allow a better flow and readability.

DESCRIPTION (TEXT)

The analysis of texts covers traditional ways of linguistic analysis, such as vocabulary and grammar and it is concerned with both linguistic meaning and form (Fairclough 1995, 57). In this dimension, I focused on linguistic patterns such as wording, as well as stereotypes (as generalized images of the "other"), and on two central grammatical aspects, modality and transitivity.

First sub discourse

In the first sub discourse (Venezuelans associated with societal tension, violence and diseases at the borders), the focus was on the situation at the borders, mainly in the towns of Pacaraima and Boa Vista, located in northern Roraima state. The words "tension", "violence", "disease outbreak", "chaos", "tragedy", and "difficulties" appeared in the empirical material. The situation in the town of Pacaraima is described as chaotic, violent and out of control. The description is reinforced by the pattern of words used to describe the situation in the selected articles (Fairclough 1995, 56). Some examples are "Crisis raises *tension* in the *border area*"

(Estadão 2016, my translation, emphasis added), “Venezuelans and Brazilians *clash* in the streets of Roraima – Pacaraima became a *conflict zone* between *Brazilians and Venezuelans* last Saturday” (Folha de São Paulo 2018, my translation, emphasis added).

As another example, in one article with the headlines “After the *attack by Brazilians, 1,200 Venezuelans leave Roraima*” (O Globo 2018, my translation, emphasis added) it is emphasized that “the *tension continues to grow* in the *border area*” (ibid, my translation, emphasis added). Furthermore, the presence of “otherness” is dominant, by contrasting and contraposing Brazilian citizens and Venezuelan refugees and setting the boundaries between the “insiders” and the “outsiders”, or the “others” (Hall 1997, 258). The reader is informed that 700 Venezuelan refugees were attacked by almost 2000 Brazilian residents in the town of Pacaraima, in northern Roraima State, after a Brazilian citizen was allegedly robbed and almost beaten to death by Venezuelans (O Globo 2018). In the first sub discourse, the media used patterns of words to emphasize societal tension and to reinforce the opposition between Brazilian nationals and Venezuelan refugees, setting the distinctions between the “insiders” and the “outsiders”.

In this context, the image of Venezuelan refugees was frequently constructed as associated with conflicts and violence at the borders: “Immigrants return to Venezuela after facing *violence* in Roraima: around a hundred Venezuelans that lived on the streets in Boa Vista returned after *deaths* on Thursday” (Folha de São Paulo 2018, my translation). In this case, the transitivity consists in constructing the headlines entailing that there is no responsible agent for the violence, almost as it was a natural phenomenon (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 83). Only by reading the entire article the reader is informed that, “according to witnesses” a Brazilian was stabbed while confronting a Venezuelan, who had robbed a supermarket, leading to the Venezuelan being beaten to death by a group of Brazilians (Folha de São Paulo 2018). It is emphasized that the episode “*revived tensions* at the border” (ibid, my translation, emphasis added) as well as that the public services in Boa Vista are “completely overwhelmed by the refugee influx” and that the refugees now live in “constant *fear* of suffering new *attacks*” (ibid, my translation, emphasis added). In line with the previous article, the wording here is also used to emphasize negative aspects, connecting them to the refugee influx.

The tension regarding the flow of Venezuelan refugees is further highlighted by using words such as “tragedy”, “challenges” and “difficulties”. As an example: “The situation of indigenous Venezuelans in Brazil *is tragic*, says UN” (O Globo 2019, my translation, emphasis added). In the article, it is argued that indigenous Venezuelans are in refugee shelters in Roraima, Brazil, with little perspective of social and economic integration into Brazilian society (ibid). It is stated that indigenous people were already in a vulnerable situation in Venezuela, and that this vulnerability is now further accentuated by the need to seek refuge in another country (ibid). The article also makes connections between the refugee group and diseases: “The Warao (indigenous ethnic group) need to walk 800 km from their indigenous

communities to reach Brazilian borders. Malnourishment and a *high rate of HIV* among them make it a *complicated* situation” (ibid, my translation, emphasis added). The alleged lack of skills to join the formal labor market and the association of the refugees with diseases are described as facts by the media, leaving not much space for different interpretations.

The connection between the refugee flow and disease outbreaks at the borders emerged as prominent in the first sub discourse. Another example is in the headline “With the Venezuelan *invasion*, Roraima fears the return of *eradicated diseases*” (Folha de São Paulo, 2016, my translation, emphasis added by me). In this case, the media presented interpretations of reality as if they were true, using objective modality (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 84). Furthermore, the Venezuelans were stereotyped as “invaders”. When the article was published in 2016, the number of Venezuelans crossing the borders to Brazil was still low compared to the following years. By reading the entire article, it is stated that “every year the number of refugee applications grows (...) this year, there have been 1.805 applications already, according to the Ministry of Justice”. The modest number of refugees’ applications was still described as an “invasion”, with no indication that this was an opinion or a version among other versions of the facts.

The transitivity in the first sub discourse consists in establishing Venezuelan refugees as the origin of diseases that were already eradicated in Brazil. Stating that with the Venezuelan “invasion” there is fear that eradicated diseases will return implicitly connects the Venezuelan with disease outbreaks. In this same line, another article points out that authorities in Roraima initiated a measles vaccination campaign after a Venezuelan child, who had moved to that state, was diagnosed with the disease (Folha de São Paulo 2018). The newspaper article further emphasizes measles cases were last registered in Brazil in July 2015 and more directly states that “local authorities are concerned about an outbreak due to the migration flow” (ibid). This repetition in the media could affect public opinion and possibly result in an increase in the stereotypical image of “invaders” and “carriers of diseases” related to Venezuelan refugees. This could lead to prejudice toward Venezuelans and the maintenance of power relations and division between the two groups through stereotyping.

Second sub discourse

In the second sub discourse (Venezuelans as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market), the focus is on the social and economic integration of Venezuelans in Brazil. The words “exploitation”, “difficulties” and “survival” appeared in the empirical material. The transitivity consists in constructing refugees as a homogeneous group: vulnerable, underpaid, exploited, and underemployed. As an example, “Venezuelans *face abusive conditions in jobs* offered through Operation Welcome” (Folha de São Paulo 2021, my translation, emphasis added). The Venezuelan refugees are stereotyped as having low levels of education and as more

likely to accept jobs outside the formal market, characterized by low wages, insecurity, and higher working hours (Shamsuddin et al 2020, 2). This might reinforce the construction of Venezuelan refugees as unqualified or not able to work in job positions that demand higher qualifications. As observed by Hall (1997, 258) stereotyping might enhance power relations between different groups. In light of this, hiring Venezuelan refugees for low-skilled and underpaid jobs could be normalized and reinforce the boundaries between nationals and Venezuelan refugees.

Furthermore, Venezuelan refugees are constructed as generally unable, at least in the first moment, to transfer their human capital to Brazil and to find jobs that match their skills and abilities, even those who belong to the middle class or have university degrees: “Venezuelan *middle class* joins the growing flow of refugees in Brazil: professionals *graduated from universities* in Venezuela, military and even civil servants work as waiters, manicures and supermarket cashiers to *survive* in Boa Vista after fleeing economic crisis in Venezuela” (Estadão 2017, my translation, emphasis added). In this article, the media presented interpretations as if they were facts, using categorical, objective modality to reinforce their statements (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 83).

In some articles, ethnic entrepreneurship is presented as an option for Venezuelans who were not able to transfer their skills to Brazil and consequently enter the formal labor market. As an example: “Entrepreneurship supports Venezuelan refugees in Brazil, including during the pandemic” (O Globo 2020, my translation). This is in line with the transitivity previously delineated, which is constituted in constructing the refugees as often facing difficulties to integrate into the formal job market.

The Venezuelan refugees of indigenous origins are constructed as unable to integrate into Brazilian society. It is pointed out that they do not speak the Portuguese language (as most Venezuelans) and do not have the necessary qualifications to work in the formal job sector (O Globo 2019, “The situation of indigenous Venezuelans in Brazil is tragic, says UN”, my translation). It is affirmed that the only options for them are “begging on the streets” or “selling crafts” (ibid, 2019). In this case, objective modality is used to present interpretations of reality as if they were true, leaving not much room for other interpretations and reinforcing stereotypical thinking in relation to the refugees. At the same time, abusive conditions faced by Venezuelans in jobs offered through the interiorization program “Operation Welcome” are highlighted, as well as difficulties faced by the refugees relocated from Roraima to southern Brazilian states to “survive by themselves” (O Globo 2019, “Venezuelans *relocated in Rio face difficulties in surviving* alone”, my translation, emphasis added). This is in line with the construction of Venezuelan refugees as vulnerable, with low educational levels, unemployed or underemployed.

Furthermore, it is pointed out that the profile of immigrants in Brazil has changed “radically” in the last decade, “from European to South American” (“Number of migrants has

doubled in Brazil in the last decade, with less white people and more women”, Folha de São Paulo 2021, my translation). In this context, it is observed that the racial profile of immigrants has changed from “white” to “black” or “brown”, informing that the whites have received higher salaries in comparison to the other migrants in the last decade (ibid). Moreover, it is stated that the educational level of migrants in Brazil has decreased and that “This composition reflects the flow of new immigrants from poor or developing countries, unlike previous flows, in which more educated European workers predominated.” (ibid, my translation). In this context, the transitivity consists in constructing and stereotyping the Venezuelan refugees as part of this “radical” change of migrants’ profile, as less educated, poor, and more likely to accept low paid jobs (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 82).

In only one article it is mentioned that the first refugee wave from Venezuela was composed of highly qualified professionals, which came to Brazil by plane between 2012 and 2014 and settled in the Southeast part of the country, followed by a second wave of middle-class professionals that entered the country on foot between 2015 and 2017, and a third wave from 2018, composed by impoverished Venezuelans who settled in Roraima and were later relocated to other regions by the Operation Welcome (Folha de São Paulo 2020, “Venezuelan Migrants are in 23% of Brazilian regions”, my translation). Nevertheless, even in the mentioned article the emphasis is placed on Venezuelans that could not fit into the labor market, reinforcing the stereotypes of undereducated and vulnerable related to them.

INTERPRETATION (DISCURSIVE PRACTICE)

The second dimension of analysis (discursive practice) involves several aspects regarding text production and text consumption (Fairclough 1995, 58). However, as pointed out by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, 82) the discourse practice analysis is usually done from a linguistic standpoint, illuminating which discourses the text draws on (intertextuality). In this dimension, I will focus on investigating the intertextuality of the empirical material and will also use the theoretical concepts of stereotypes and the “other” to analyze the material. The analysis will be supported by the previous description part.

First sub discourse

In the first sub discourse (Venezuelans associated with societal tension, violence, and diseases at the borders) it is noticeable that the selected articles build and reinforce their arguments by using official data, direct or indirect quotes from organizations and statements from politicians (Fairclough 1995, 76). As an example: “*WHO director warns that crisis in Venezuela could cause an outbreak in Brazil: according to the organization, the import of diseases such as malaria, diphtheria and measles is already a reality at the borders*” (Estadão 2018, my

translation, emphasis added). In this example, the media draws on intertextuality to validate their claims, referring to well-known organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), in order to convince the readers that their statements portray the actual facts.

In another example, one article states that “according to Roraima’s *authorities*, three hundred *Venezuelan refugees received vaccines against measles*” (Folha de São Paulo 2018, my translation, emphasis added), after measles cases connected to Venezuelan refugees were identified in that state. It is also stated that the local government “*fears a measles outbreak*” (ibid) and has asked for additional twenty thousand doses of vaccine to the Brazilian Federal Government (ibid). In the same line, the media draws on intertextuality to associate Venezuelan refugees with eradicated diseases by using quotes from the Governor of Roraima stating that “beyond economic issues”, the state is concerned with “imported” diseases from the neighboring country: “We are receiving *Venezuelan refugees with some diseases almost already eradicated in our state*. The Federal Government sent medicines that are enough to use for a month, but that was a long time ago, so they must, immediately, take measures to assist our state” (Folha de São Paulo 2016, my translation, emphasis added). The repeated argumentation associating Venezuelan refugees with disease outbreaks at Brazilian borders and the use of intertextuality to strengthen these statements might affect the readers’ perception of the refugees, and perhaps even the perception of the Venezuelan refugees about themselves as “carriers” of diseases.

Furthermore, statements from politicians and local authorities are used in the empirical material to reinforce the argument that the situation at the borders is at its limit. For example, in one article (Folha de São Paulo 2018) there are quotes from a local priest, stating that “the town (Pacaraima) *is a chaos*” (ibid, emphasis added). The readers are informed that after Venezuelan refugees and Brazilians clashed on the streets of Roraima, the police and the hospital received reinforcement from the local Government (ibid). There are quotes from the Governor of Roraima claiming that the Roraima state was left alone by the Brazilian Federal Government to deal with the refugee crisis (ibid). The Governor of Roraima, Suely Campos, urges the Federal Government for financial aid of R\$ 180 million and the closure of the borders with Venezuela (ibid). The intertextuality is utilized here to reinforce the argument that the situation is out of control, as well as the perception that the local government of Roraima is overwhelmed and the Brazilian Federal Government should take measures to address the situation regarding the refugee influx.

In the same line, in another article quotes from the Governor of Roraima are used to strengthen the view that the state of Roraima is overwhelmed and cannot handle the growing refugee flow without support from the Brazilian Federal Government: “We don't have any signals from the Federal Government. *The state of Roraima is alone dealing with all this demand, this flow* within the state, on the border, says the governor of Roraima, Suely Campos” (Folha de São Paulo, 2016, my translation, emphasis added). These quotes build the argument that

the border with Venezuela needs comprehensive and urgent measures from local and Federal Governments together since violence, chaos and diseases are increasing there. The statements from the Governor of Roraima are used to argue that the Brazilian Federal Government should be more active in handling the situation. The negative aspects are repeatedly connected to the refugee flow by the media and the quotes from local authorities are used to give more credibility to these allegations. Furthermore, manifested intertextuality is used to reinforce the association of Venezuelan refugees to criminality at the borders in one of the articles. It is stated that, according to the mayor of Pacaraima, Venezuelans that currently have or had previous problems with the Justice in the neighboring country were in the Brazilian town. Quotes from the mayor are used to emphasize this perception: “The Venezuelan *police arrested 30 Venezuelans* that had *problems with the Justice* there (in Venezuela). Then you can *imagine what they could bring to our town (...)*” (O Globo 2018, “After the attack by Brazilians, 1,200 Venezuelans leave Roraima”, my translation, emphasis added). The Venezuelan refugees are stereotyped as having problems with the Justice in Venezuela and implicitly constructed as a potential danger to Brazilian citizens in Pacaraima. In this context, quotes from authorities and politicians are used to convince the readers that the view presented by the media is connected to the actual facts.

In the first sub discourse, the media refers to and draws on quotes from local authorities, politicians and well-known organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), to enhance the trustworthiness of their views. The repetitive discourse, emphasized by intertextually, reinforces the stereotyped construction of Venezuelan refugees as carriers of diseases and connects them to violence, chaos and even criminality.

Second sub discourse

In the second sub discourse (Venezuelans as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market), the intertextuality is also used in the empirical material. The media draws on quotes from authorities, statistics from the government, statements from politicians and interviews with the refugees themselves to reinforce the arguments displayed in the articles (Fairclough 1995, 76). As an example, statistics from the Government are used in the article “Venezuelans face abusive conditions in jobs offered through Operation Welcome” (Folha de São Paulo 2021, my translation, emphasis added) to demonstrate how many Venezuelans have received support from the Federal Government to move to southern states of Brazil and get jobs there through the “Operation Welcome” program (ibid). It is informed that 19,390 Venezuelans were relocated from Roraima to other Brazilian states through the program and the emphasis is placed on the lack of supervision regarding business companies that offer job positions to the refugees and the lack of compliance with Brazilian labor laws. The media draws on interviews with Venezuelan refugees sharing stories of precarious conditions they have faced

in the jobs they managed to find. As an example, in one article a Venezuelan family narrates that they were desperate for jobs opportunities and accepted extremely abusive work conditions from a Bolivian employer in São Paulo, Brazil: “He (the employer) made us work from 6 am to 10 pm, 11 pm. He said that until 7 pm we worked for our salary. After that, it was overtime to make up for the food and shelter he gave us.” (Estadão 2018). In this context, the interviews are used to build and reinforce the construction of Venezuelan refugees as exploited and underpaid and to make the text more memorable to the reader.

As observed in the first dimension of the analysis, it is mentioned in one article (Folha de São Paulo 2020, “Venezuelan Migrants are in 23% of Brazilian regions”, my translation) that the first refugee wave from Venezuela was composed of highly qualified professionals, which came to Brazil by plane between 2012 and 2014 and settled in the Southeast part of the country, followed by a second wave of middle-class professionals that entered the country on foot between 2015 and 2017, and a third wave from 2018, composed by vulnerable and impoverished Venezuelans who came on foot and settled in Roraima, being later relocated to other regions by the Operation Welcome (ibid). Nevertheless, there are no interviews with Venezuelans from the first two waves or with those who could transfer their human capital to Brazil and fit into the formal labor market, only an interview with a Venezuelan from the third wave who came to Brazil and found a low skilled position to work (ibid). The emphasis is placed on those who could not transfer their skills or have low education levels, strengthening the stereotyped construction of Venezuelan refugees as undereducated and unable to fit into highly skilled occupations in Brazil.

Similar to the previous subsection, the media refers to well-known organizations to enhance the credibility of their statements (Fairclough 1995, 76). In one article about indigenous Venezuelans from Warao ethnicity, it is argued that they are facing a “tragic” situation, with little to no perspective of social and economic integration into Brazilian society (O Globo 2019). The media draws on statements from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, who visited the region and affirmed that “They (the Warao) have less opportunities of socioeconomic inclusion in comparison to the others (refugees). It is very tragic” (ibid). The quote from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reinforces the statements of the media regarding the construction of refugees as facing considerable difficulties to integrate in Brazil. In some articles the refugees are presented in a slightly positive light. As an example, in one article with the headline “Venezuelans who fled the crisis *rebuild their lives* in the capital: neighbors of Brazilians, immigrants have left the country after suffering from political persecution and hunger” (Folha de São Paulo 2019, my translation, emphasis added), there are quotes from a local priest arguing that the Venezuelan refugees have proper documentation to work in Brazil and are able to find jobs in various areas within a short time in São Paulo (ibid). Nevertheless, the emphasis in the article is placed on those who “cannot find jobs in the formal labor market” (ibid) and consequently must find

“alternatives to survive” (ibid), such as selling Venezuelan food on the streets. In this case, intertextuality in the form of interviews with Venezuelan refugees is used to build and reinforce the stereotypical image of Venezuelan refugees as underemployed and poorly integrated into the formal labor sector.

EXPLANATION (SOCIAL PRACTICE)

The third dimension involves the analysis of the wider social practice in which the communicative event belongs. It comprehends different levels of abstraction from a particular event, such as a more immediate situational context, the broader institutional practices the event is embedded in, and the broader frame of culture and society (Fairclough 1995, 62). In this section, I analyzed discourse as a social practice by drawing on the description and interpretation part, as well as contextual background and secondary sources.

First sub discourse

In the first sub discourse, as already observed in the previous sections, Venezuelan refugees are associated with societal tension, violence, and diseases at the borders. The situation is presented in a negative light and reinforced by the patterns of words used in the articles, such as “chaos”, “disease outbreak” and “tragedy”. The wider social context involves the displacement of more than 6 million people from Venezuela due to the political disturbance and socio-economic turmoil occurring in that country (IOM 2022). Around eighty percent of Venezuelans are hosted by neighboring countries in South America and the Caribbean, in the largest forced migration in the contemporary history of the region (ibid). The refugees leave Venezuela by boat, plane, or on foot, using numerous routes. The north region of Brazil (more specifically the states of Roraima and Amazonas) borders Venezuela. Whereas the first wave of Venezuelans was composed of highly skilled people entering Brazil by plane, with the deterioration of the situation the subsequent waves were characterized by impoverished Venezuelans that crossed the borders on foot (Silva, Franco, and Sampaio 2021, 350). The main entry point is the town of Pacaraima, located in northern Roraima state, and many refugees settled in Pacaraima or Boa Vista, Roraima’s capital (Cavalcanti, Oliveira and Silva 2021, 12). The media highlights that the situation at the borders, especially in the town of Pacaraima, is at its limit, drawing on quotes from authorities, local politicians, and the refugees themselves to reinforce this perception to the readers. This could affect the Federal Government’s approach to addressing the crisis in Roraima, by, for instance, initiating vaccination campaigns, as reported in one of the articles (Folha de São Paulo 2018), or a program to relocate refugees from Roraima to other states in Brazil. In this context, in 2018, the Federal Government implemented a program named “Operation Welcome” to voluntarily

relocate refugees in southern Brazilian states, aiming to alleviate the pressure in Pacaraima (Cavalcanti et al 2021b, 45).

The “Operation Welcome” was created in March 2018 by the Brazilian Federal Government due to the growing numbers of Venezuelan refugees who entered Brazilian territory through the state of Roraima (ibid, 46). The operation has three main objectives: to better organize the refugee flow in the border region with Venezuela, to better receive the refugees in Roraima state, and to voluntarily relocate them throughout the country (ibid, 47). According to Cavalcanti et al, this last goal is a “key element” that connects “humanitarian action” with the long-term socioeconomic integration of Venezuelans in Brazil (ibid, 47).

As previously delineated, one of the articles reported that the refugee influx from Venezuela to Brazil was characterized by different waves, as well as observed that the refugees, especially from the recent waves, are being relocated through the “Operation Welcome” (Folha de São Paulo 2020, “Venezuelan Migrants are in 23% of Brazilian regions”, my translation). The reader is informed that most Venezuelans are concentrated in the North region of Brazil, where the borders with Venezuela are located, and especially in the towns of Boa Vista, Pacaraima (both in Roraima state) and Manaus (Amazonas state). From 2018, a considerable part of Venezuelans was voluntarily relocated to the South, Southeast, Centre, and Northeast regions via “Operation Welcome”, being currently widespread throughout Brazilian territory and alleviating the pressure in that region (ibid). The North region of Brazil is traditionally the poorest, contributing to only 0.2% of the Brazilian GDP, and scarcely populated: in 2016 the population of Roraima was around 0.5 million, one of the lowest among Brazilian states, and after the refugee inflow the Venezuelans quickly became around 30% of the population (Shamsuddin 2021, 6). The massive and fast escalating influx of Venezuelan refugees to the poorest region of Brazil enhanced socioeconomic problems that already existed and this is reflected in the empirical material, especially in the first sub discourse. Albeit Latin America has long been considered an example of South-South cooperation and generosity regarding asylum policies, having solidarity as a guiding principle for refugee protection (Jubilut et al, 2021, 7), the social infrastructure of many countries is not sufficient to absorb the large scale of recent displacements, which has contributed to the rise of discrimination and hostility towards newcomers (Chami, Brown and Roy 2020, 12). The public health sector is already overstretched to effectively accommodate a large number of refugees, and many arrive in need of urgent medical attention and treatment for various diseases (ibid, 5). In addition, as observed by Chami, Brown and Roy (2020, 5), refugees with no means of support might become susceptible to criminals and be enticed to criminal activities. As previously delineated, in one article Venezuelan refugees were connected to criminality and constructed as a potential danger to the inhabitants of Roraima, but most frequently they were connected to the rise of societal tension, violence and diseases at the borders. I claim that the choice to focus on these aspects reinforces the negative stereotypes

related to Venezuelan refugees, enhancing discrimination and the hierarchical division between “insiders” and “outsiders”. This could lead to further discrimination against them, who could be perceived as responsible for the increase of violence and societal tension in the region, as well as carriers of diseases.

Second sub discourse

In the second sub discourse (Venezuelans as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market), the refugees are depicted as a homogeneous group facing exploitation and hardship, even after the Operation Welcome was established. This headline is an example: “Venezuelans *face abusive conditions in jobs* offered through Operation Welcome” (Folha de São Paulo 2021, my translation, emphasis added). The words “exploitation”, “difficulties” and “survival” appeared in the empirical material. The wider social context involves the socioeconomic integration of the newcomers in the new country. Albeit Brazil has free access to healthcare, education and social protection irrespective of documentation status and forbids any type of discrimination at work, the socioeconomic integration of refugees might present challenges (Shamsuddin 2021, 3). Like the majority of Latin American countries, the labor market in Brazil is segmented into formal and informal sectors (Shamsuddin 2021, 13). The informal sector is not regulated by the government and the jobs are characterized by precarity, long working hours and lower wages (ibid). As explained by Alba and Foner (2015, 53) migrant human capital tends not to receive full recognition in the labor market of a new country, which could present an additional difficulty to access the formal sector. In this line, it is recurrent in the empirical material the emphasis on the difficulties faced by Venezuelan refugees to transfer their human capital to Brazil and enter the formal sector in positions that matches their previous education, as delineated in the previous sections.

In this line is the article “Cap, sewing machine or just the clothes on their backs: Venezuelans tell what they have brought with them when they migrated to Brazil” (O Globo 2021, my translation). The article draws on various interviews with Venezuelan refugees and although they are portrayed in a slightly more positive light than in the first sub discourse, they are still stereotyped as underemployed and facing difficulties to integrate into the formal labor sector: “I have brought my sewing machine with me to work in Brazil. I have studied in Venezuela, I am a teacher, but here I sew to earn a living” (ibid). Stereotyping took place when referring to Venezuelan refugees, producing an implicit boundary between the “insiders” and the “others” and attaching the label of underemployed, vulnerable, and poorly integrated into all Venezuelan refugees. The social impact of the media has to do with how they selectively represent the world, and discourses like these reinforce power relations and maintain hegemony (Fairclough 1995, 17). Furthermore, the repeated construction of Venezuelans as a homogenous group, underemployed, exploited and unable to fit into the formal labor sector

might affect the readers' perception about them, perceiving them as suitable only for low skilled jobs, and even shape and delimit the perception of Venezuelans about themselves, which could lead to limiting their expectations regarding integration into Brazilian society, transferring their human capital and working in jobs suitable to their previous education.

In addition, it is pointed out that the profile of migrants to Brazil has changed “radically” in the last decade, from Europeans to those coming from poor or developing countries (“Number of migrants has doubled in Brazil in the last decade, with less white people and more women”, Folha de São Paulo 2021, my translation). It is informed that white migrants have received higher salaries in comparison to the other migrants in the last decade and enhanced that the educational level of migrants in Brazil has decreased, associating Europeans with “more educated workers” (ibid, my translation). As delineated previously, historically in Brazil the “ideal” migrant was constructed within a stereotypical frame and portrayed as white, European and “hard worker” (Bletz 2010, 22). In this context, Venezuelans were constructed by the media as not part of this “ideal” stereotypical frame, but were labelled as the generalized other, which does not immediately fit in this category. In other words, they were portrayed as part of the “radical” change in migrants’ profile: non-European, less educated, poor, and struggling to integrate into the labor market. I argue that the contrast between the stereotyped construction of Venezuelan refugees and the stereotyped “ideal” migrant could reinforce power relations and potentially result in discrimination which further hinders the possibility of socioeconomic integration.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This article aimed to contribute to a growing understanding of South-South migration, by studying how Venezuelan refugees are represented by the Brazilian media during the ongoing refugee crisis in South America. The connection between mass media and migration, the knowledge gap regarding South-South migration and the relevant and fast-escalating displacement of people from Venezuela, as well as the fact that Brazil has become the country with the highest number of recognized Venezuelan refugees in Latin America, have inspired the topic of this article. Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis and the theoretical concepts of stereotypes and othering, from a decolonial perspective, were used to address the research questions. Twenty-one articles about Venezuelan refugees, published between 2016 and 2021 by the biggest and best-selling Brazilian newspapers were analyzed. Throughout the readings, one overall discourse, associating Venezuelan refugees with negative aspects, emerged from the material. Connected to this overall discourse, two sub-discourses were identified: Venezuelans associated with societal tension, violence, and diseases at the borders and Venezuelans as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market.

In the first sub-discourse, Venezuelan refugees were constructed as the origin of disease outbreaks and linked with chaos, violence, and societal tension, especially in the state of Roraima. The media used patterns of words in the articles to emphasize this construction, as well as transitivity, objective modality and intertextually. The tension at the borders is directly connected to the flow of Venezuelan refugees and enhanced by the use of words such as “tragedy” and “chaos”. Objective modality was used to present interpretations of reality as if they were true, and the Venezuelans were stereotyped as “invaders” in some of the articles. The transitivity in the first sub discourse consisted in establishing Venezuelan refugees as the origin of diseases that were already eradicated in Brazil. In one of the articles the Venezuelan refugees were connected to criminality and constructed as a potential danger to the inhabitants of Roraima, but most frequently they were connected to the rise of societal tension, violence, and disease outbreaks at the borders. In this context, the articles draw on statements from authorities, politicians, and well-known organizations, such as the World Health Organization, to enhance the trustworthiness of their arguments to the readers. Albeit Latin America has a robust regional system of refugee protection, the socioeconomic infrastructure of many countries in the region, including Brazil, is already overstretched and might not be sufficient to absorb the large scale of the Venezuelan displacement, which could contribute to the rise of discrimination and hostility towards newcomers. The repetitive discourse of the media regarding Venezuelan refugees, emphasized by intertextually, could further enhance discrimination against them and possibly reinforce the hierarchical division between “insiders” and “outsiders”. Furthermore, the construction of Venezuelan refugees as the origin of disease outbreaks and conflicts could also affect the Federal Government’s approach to addressing the situation in Roraima, by, for instance, initiating vaccination campaigns directed at refugees (as reported in one of the selected articles), or programs to allocate them in other regions of the country, such as the “Operation Welcome”, initiated in 2018.

In the second sub-discourse, Venezuelan refugees were constructed as exploited and poorly integrated into the labor market. The focus was on the social and economic integration of Venezuelans in Brazil, especially in the formal labor market sector. The media used patterns of words to enhance this construction, as well as transitivity, objective modality and intertextually. The transitivity consisted in constructing the Venezuelan refugees as a homogeneous group: vulnerable, underpaid, exploited, and underemployed. The words “exploitation”, “difficulties” and “survival” appeared in the empirical material, reinforcing this perception to the readers. Government statistics, statements from politicians and interviews, especially with refugees, were widely utilized in the articles to enhance the construction of the refugees as a homogeneous group, generally underpaid and underemployed, struggling to transfer their human capital to Brazil and willing to accept any job position to be able to survive. In this context, the Venezuelan refugees were stereotyped as having low levels of education and as more likely to accept jobs outside the formal labor market, characterized by

low wages and higher working hours. Even those who belong to the middle class or have university degrees were constructed as generally unable, at least in the first moment, to transfer their human capital to Brazil and to find jobs that match their skills and abilities. In this context, I argued that stereotyping could enhance power relations between nationals and refugees and possibly have consequences, such as the normalization of hiring Venezuelan refugees for exploitative, low-skilled, and underpaid jobs. In other words, the repeated construction by the media of Venezuelans as a homogenous group, understudied, exploited and unable to fit into the formal labor market might affect the readers' perception of them, perceiving them as suitable only for low-skilled jobs, and even shape and delimit the perception of Venezuelans about themselves, which could lead to limiting their own expectations regarding integration into Brazilian society. Furthermore, the Venezuelan refugees were constructed by the media as not part of the "ideal" stereotypical migrant, but as the generalized other, which does not immediately fit in this category. The contrast between the stereotyped construction of Venezuelan refugees and the stereotyped "ideal" migrant could reinforce power relations and potentially result in further discrimination and difficulties in the socio-economic integration of Venezuelan refugees.

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