Brazilian response to the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis: Operation Acolhida as a politics of hope

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Abstract: This article discusses how Operation *Acolhida*, within the context of the Venezuela Situation, functions as a customized politics of hope where the Venezuelans refugees and migrants crossing the Brazilian border's *need for hope* of is instrumentalized in a strategy to define how/what to hope for. The methodology is divided in the following subsections: the first section brings the discussion on the metaphysics of presence and its logocentric and teleologic perspectives; section two discusses how theories and understanding of hope have been evolving from the Ancient Greek thinkers till the present day and presents the *politics of hope* as a tool to understand the Operation Acolhida. The last two sections draw its conclusions by analysing how Operation Acolhida activates a customized strategy.

Keywords: hope; politics of hope; metaphysics of presence; Operation Acolhida; Venezuela Situation.

Introduction

Discussions about hope, and about the role of the idea of hope shaping beliefs, motivations and human actions, has been theme of philosophy and politics since the Greeks. Throughout the centuries, theories on hope have been directly linked to politics and have been deeply influencing socio-political structures and the formation of the world we live in. In that sense, hope, as the perception of a possible future or of the link between present actions shaping future outcomes, is ultimately a political notion.

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When we analyse hope as a political instrument, we are able to shed light on its political strategies and the complex power web that determines space and time, shaping actions, processes, narratives, subjectivities and steps to be taken. By understanding the link between a politics of hope and the shaping of the future, we also understand the link between the politics of hope and violence.

The present article aims to discuss how the politics of hope are perceived in the context of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis and more specifically, in the scope of Operation Acolhida, which is the Brazilian operation responsible to ensure border control, documentation, shelter and reallocation to refugees and migrants forced to flee Venezuela. In sections one and two, we will present how hope is transformed into a political strategy through the approach of metaphysics, and how the search of a transcendental truth could lead to infinite violence toward the other. In section three, we will present the Venezuelan Situation and how Operation *Acolhida* in Brazil has been functioning in order to provide a humanitarian response to the high number of refugees and migrants crossing the border every day. Finally, in section 4, we will further analyse how Operation *Acolhida* activates a customized *politics of hope* in order to manage a population entering Brazil with a hopeful heart.

Hence, our intent is to present how Operation *Acolhida* is designed in a way to limit and frame the idea of hope, transforming it into a specific politics (with defined temporalities and spaces). More than a mere mechanism for managing a population of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, Operation *Acolhida* is responsible for capturing a metaphysical idea of hope and instrumentalizing it into a politics of hope through its own means, instruments, pathways and possibilities. Hopes are redefined, actions are steered, violence is framed, spaces of hope are established, vulnerability criteria are set, and temporality is linked with political objectives.

Violence in logocentrism, teleologism and metaphysics of presence

This section intends to present the diverse deficiencies of logocentrism, which, alongside teleologism and universal moralism, creates the idea of 'truth of all truths' or the centralization and sovereignty of truth. On the contrary, we advocate in favour of an ontology of performative discourses that shape different regimes of truth and produce different political mechanisms. With the attempt to avoid a logocentric interpretation of 'hope', how do we come to understand 'hope' within the context of Venezuela Situation, specifically in the Brazilian Operation *Acolhida*?

Since Plato, philosophy has been underpinned by a logocentric approach, meaning truth and reason gain centrality in an absolute and universal range. The centrality of *logos* (words, thoughts, rationale, verbs, et cetera) provides an ethnocentric and occidental view of scientific unilateral truth (until proven wrong), called by Derrida as the 'imperialism of the logos' or the 'cientificization of science' (Derrida 1973).

Logocentrism does not open up space for diverse forms of truth and modes of life, because, as it centralizes one idea, it excludes and epistemologically uses violence against others. By determining the unity and transcendence of the Being and the Truth,

logocentrism's way of thinking erases all possibility of empirical differences and temporalities. That is how logocentrism is a philosophical strategy dependent on the idea of the metaphysics of presence and the transcendental truth, which determines the 'Being as absolute Presence'. Drawing from Hegel and Heidegger, Derrida states that, in this logic, the term 'presence' is a signifier that *is* and that will not change regardless of its variations, and will be eternal and considered as final reference (for discourses, writing, policy making, etc.) until a new transcendental signifier occupies this centre of truth (Derrida 1973). 'Peace', for instance, as a metaphysical foundation and logocentric biased, can only exist as a unity, as universal and considered as a truth reified and sovereign in relation to other interpretations.

To criticize and subvert the logocentric approach, Derrida relies on his 'deconstruction' approach. Derrida does not consider deconstruction as a method, act, operation, philosophical system, methodology, or intellectual project. Neither he considers deconstruction a tool to be applied in the face of a social problem, but rather a strategy that seeks to challenge and invert the sovereign and transcendental value of the Other and the Word (it is a challenge to logocentrism and phonocentrism). Ultimately, deconstruction is an attempt to intercept and put a stop to the idea of a knowledge that is absolute, transcendent and sovereign.

According to Derrida, Western metaphysical thought creates at its core binary relations of hierarchies, where concepts override others, or even gain their predominance precisely by opposing other concepts. Science and philosophy have been based on binarism such as inside-outside, left-right, body-mind, nature-culture, peace-war, among other concepts (Derrida 2001; Ramond 2015).

Hence, the deconstruction approach has a two-fold strategy. First, it is critical to identify a hierarchical structure of concepts (as an example the binary constructions), shedding light on both the protagonist/central concept and the subjugated/inferior/negative concept to subsequently invert them in a discursive analysis. If classical philosophy transcended a concept based on the subjugation and negative valuation of another concept, now Derrida changes the tone, giving positivity to the once negative concept and defining it as central. There is an inversion in the idea of superior to inferior, and vice versa, deconstructing the fixed and hierarchical relationship that existed between concepts or representations. In this context, a new relational dynamic is perceived, but still binary and violent, where the subjugation between ideals is perpetuated in the text. How, therefore, to shatter this binary logic, considered by Derrida as violent? The Algerian philosopher proposes a second moment to his deconstruction strategy, called neutralization (Derrida 1973, 2001; Culler 1994).

In the aftermath of the inversion moment, the neutralization approach proposes to shatter the existing dualistic logic in Western metaphysical philosophical thought. In this regard, all transcendental metaphysical meaning, with absolute and sovereign value, must be shattered. Since this is what necessarily demands the existence of a dynamic of epistemological (and subsequently political) subjugation and hierarchization. Thus, Derrida presents the possibility of exercising philosophy based on the '*game*', which would be an *open thinking system* underpinned by '*quasi-concepts*', whose intention is to avoid

attributing meaning to something in an absolute and transcendental way. The idea is that this *game* allows for an incessant substitution and exchange of concepts based on specific events in a given space-time (Derrida 1973, 2001; Culler 1994).

A crucial point in Derrida's philosophical strategy is: there is no intention to destroy, immobilize or obliterate the metaphysical classical philosophical system, but to promote this inversion and insert a new dynamic (the game) that neutralizes the transcendental and destabilizes it within itself. It will be within the very discourse of the deconstructed system that one must operate.

In this sense, based on his deconstruction strategy, Derrida highlights an 'insoluble antinomy' that exists at the heart of hospitality, between the 'Law of Hospitality' and the 'laws of hospitality'. Right at the beginning of his book 'Of Hospitality' (2003), Derrida already announces the existence of an understanding of hospitality as a 'Law of hospitality', which would be the metaphysical interpretation of hospitality as welcoming without conditions or limitations of any nature. The 'Law of Hospitality' is sovereign and absolute, and there will always be a *yes* to whomever arrives and needs to be welcomed.

The Law of Hospitality, as Derrida well identified, has logocentric roots, as it carries within itself the idea of a hospitality that is 'absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic, as if the categorical imperative of hospitality required transgressing all the laws of hospitality' (Derrida 2003:69). The Law of Hospitality, due to its transcendental character as a categorical imperative, enhances its universal and singular validity at the same time, distancing itself from any attempt to be defined from historical, political or social contexts (Derrida 2003). On the other hand, and in contrast, Derrida presents the laws of hospitality, which are translated as rights, duties and conditions which are projected, for example, through the traditions of the family, civil society, and the state. The laws of hospitality, unlike the Law of Hospitality, are plural and are distributed based on a certain historicity and geographic, social or anthropological context (Derrida 2003).

Thus, this hierarchical dynamic and the abandonment of binarism is what opens up the possibility to think about unconditional hospitality and pluralistic hospitality. Derrida allows for greater coverage and greater sensitivity to the various perspectives and paths of the laws of hospitality, its gifts, its practices and, in equal measure, its violence.

In a few words, this metaphysical incursion is constantly seeking for a transcendental truth[1], that can only be captured by reason (Derrida 1973). Logocentric concepts – and, consequently, ethnocentric ones – are socially produced and considered as transcendent, external and metaphysical, such as 'State', 'Peace', 'Hope' and 'Happiness'. However, in fact, these concepts are performative discourses that, by producing evaluation criteria and legitimate representation, manage to introject in the subjects specific social identities, creating social positions which establish a game/regime of power relations based on classifications and perceptions – especially theological and teleological ones, written with capital letter, possessing a mystic characteristic of a 'final purpose with the possibility to justify absolutely anything' (Bourdieu 1989).

As anticipated by Kant (2010), the idea of a transcendental truth means that one will always continuously try to reach out for the external and unreachable metaphysical

ontology of object/desire. Here is where teleology[2] presents its epistemological mechanisms. Teleologism refers to the perceptions that take into account ultimate goals or ends that guide humanity in a natural and forward-moving way. *Purpose* becomes the most important component, as it gives meaning to all historical evolution and human transformations. Teleology, then, adheres to the metaphysics of presence in so far as it presupposes the signifier is present and absolute, even though it is not reachable due to its transcendence, superiority and perfection.

Furthermore, teleology intertwines itself with a universal moral value programmed to seek truth, due to the fact that behind the search for this *telos* there is the rationale that the future will always be valuably and morally better and will consolidate values of progress, peace, the divine or the sublime. Shortly, teleology and moral universalism are fundamental in the fabrication of logocentric concepts of sovereign truths.

When relying in metaphysics, there is no discernment between what is mere representation – an interpretation from our mind – and what is real. Unlike logocentric concepts with a universal will to truth, what really comes forth are distinct regimes/games of truth[3] that, combined with power mechanisms and specific rationalities, produce different effects. This distinct perspective presented by Nietzsche (2006: 49) and later emphasized by Foucault allows us to unravel epistemological violence caused by logocentrism and opens up space for new ways of life and of thinking transformative political spaces.

According to Bourdieu (1989), the framing and demarcation of preconceived concepts is, in reality, a constant classificatory (or symbolic) struggle among scientists (geographers, historians, ethnologists, sociologists, internationalists), which ultimately aim for the monopoly of the legitimate definition. What is at stake, for Bourdieu (2014: 106), is 'a symbolic struggle of all against all, of which each can aspire to the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence, of naming'. Such struggle for legitimate classification and set of boundaries, in addition to occurring in the scientific field, also occurs in the day-to-day social and bureaucratic practices.

> The search for objective criteria of "regional identity" or "ethnicity" must not make us forget that, in social practice, these criteria are object of mental representation, which means that acts of perception and appreciation, of knowledge and recognition in which agents invest in their interests and assumptions, in things (emblems, flags, insignia, etc.) or in acts, strategies interested on the symbolic manipulation are aimed at determining the mental representation that others many have of these properties or agents carrying it (Bourdieu, 1989: 112, translated by us).

Hence, the role of legitimate classification is to make one believe, to acknowledge, to establish social boundaries to the world, to introject in the minds of subjects rooted 'truths' and to be the instrument of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1989). The concept of symbolic violence refers to mechanisms of power where sociocultural and political knowledge imposes itself on society as something natural, true, unquestionable, universal, which is part

of the subject's *doxa,* that is, of his conscience and 'immediate complicity with himself and with his own history' (Bourdieu 1989: 105).

Let us return to the question of discernment between mental and real representation: if the world is temporally and incessantly defined by classificatory struggles, how can one accept the existence of an ontological truth that has as its cornerstone logocentrism, teleologism and universal moralism? With that in mind, Philip Abrams (1988) reminds us of the importance of deconstructing such preconceived and universal theories – such as the idea of an indivisible and single State – and accepting the existence of two complementing and mingled components: i) the imaginary construct, the idea, the legitim classification; ii) the real, the effects that arise from such ideas, the institutionalized powers in a contextualized way. Thus, as previously mentioned, considering that all logocentric scientific production is framed as an exercise of symbolic violence – in so far as it considers itself universal until proven wrong and substituted by another universal truth – it would be deleterious to simply accept it as an axiomatic truth and to ignore its day-to-day effects and real practices. In sum, as Bourdieu himself elucidated, 'we must break with preconceived spontaneous sociological notions and concepts, between representation and reality, on the condition that the representation of the real must be included in the real *per se*' (Bourdieu 1989: 113, Translated by Us).

Drawing from this idea of symbolic violence and the day-to-day effects that derive from pre-conceived notions, Didier Fassin (2007) explores the world of humanitarian aid and the management of vulnerable populations through a non-logocentric approach. Going beyond Michel Foucault's 'biopolitics'[4], Fassin recognizes a different power matrix in humanitarian interventions: the politics of life. To understand how the politics of life works, Fassin (2007, 501) raises the question of 'what sort of life is implicitly or explicitly taken into account in the political work of humanitarian intervention?'. The main conceptual shifts from biopolitics to politics of life summed up by Fassin are:

> Politics is not only about the rules of the game of governing, but also about its stakes. (2) More than the power over life, contemporary societies are characterized by the legitimacy they attach to life. (3) Rather than a normalizing process, the intervention in lives is a production of inequalities. (4) The politics of life, then, is not only a question of governmentality and technologies, but also of meaning and values (FASSIN 2009, 44).

First, there is a process of objectivation of subjects that are 'waiting to be saved', that are vulnerable; they are considered victims that need individual saving or/and relief. Furthermore, there is the element of 'selection' that humanitarian actors go through, basically stating which lives are viable, legitimate or of political importance to act upon – creating unequal subjects along the process and degrees of legitimacy over lives. For instance, which category of refugees are we going to focus on, or which vulnerability criteria should be set to prioritize a few migrant families over others (Fassin 2007).

The power mechanisms in the politics of life is sustained by defining and, subsequently, selecting important 'causes to be defended'. This dynamic not only presupposes that the

choosing of one cause means the discard or silencing of many others, but it also means that it is necessary to produce a public representation of the aid recipient as a victim rather than a combatant or resistant individual. This is the moment when values and the moral appeal of suffering is active and works alongside the political rationality of humanitarianism, producing inequalities (Fassin, 2007, 2009).

The philosophical incursions presented in this section impel us to take a next step and propose the following question: how does deconstructing logocentrism, teleologism, universal moralism and metaphysics of presence helps us further comprehending *hope* within Operation Acolhida in Brazil? Hope is often considered as the perception of successful agency related to goals and influenced by the perceived availability of successful pathways related to goals, in an absolute and universal matter. In a few words, in this perspective, the possibilities of pathways and of goals would be infinite. It is also universal in the sense that it is considered that every single human being has the preconceived rationality and agency to hope for absolutely anything (life, money, peace, fame) and can, therefore, design its own pathways – with infinite possibilities of action – towards it. The understanding of "hope" is, thus, fit to become a metaphysical idea (logocentric, teleological and, consequently, universal) which will be explored in the next section.

Metaphysics of hope *versus* politics of hope

The idea of hope has been one of kinship between action and the future, always navigating in the realm of temporality. For the early Greek thinkers, hope was considered as negative, related to wishful thinking and lack of sufficient knowledge on a certain goal or object. While Solon saw hope as "false dreams", Thucydides perceived it as lack of deliberation and poor understanding of the situation. As for Seneca, hope is connected to fear and anxiety, causing harm to the soul (Vogt 2017).

On the other hand, Plato was the thinker who came to challenge this negative perception of hope. For him, as stated in *Philebus*, hope, as possibilities of futures, has the potential to enhance our agency by inviting us to thoroughly reflect on our desires, pleasures, pains, affections and possibilities of action (Plato 1975). In a few words, Plato's argument is that – in contrast to early Greek philosophers – hope has the potential to enable one to better understand and thoroughly think on what they really want to pursuit; moreover, hope foments agency with future-oriented decisions with a realistic grasp on the situation and on the possibilities; lastly, hope helps one become a good agent as imagination will guide them to live a life as a good person[5] (Plato 1975; Frede 1985; Vogt 2012).

On this perspective, whether it is the early Greek thinkers, or Plato and his followers, it is important to bear in mind that the understanding of 'hope' for them functions as a logocentric, teleological and, consequently, universal metaphysical idea. Hope activates the subjectivity of subjects to create discourses of perfect and logocentric unreachable future possibilities of something 'yet to come' (shaping its teleological mechanism). This categorical imperative, with ultimate moral value of pursuit nurtured by hope (refering to Plato in *Philebus*) establishes power mechanisms in reality and produces particular and

often violent effects and practices. Moreover, the achievement of this ultimate 'dream' fuelled by hope is an individualized responsibility and burden.

However, in Kant's philosophy the idea of hope – primarily discussed as a non-cognitive attitude – gains greater significance, since it means a necessary connection between the moral law and happiness. Although the difference in Kant's ideas about hope and faith is not clearly distinguished, we can state that in his political and historical writings, the philosopher puts the concept of hope as linked with the historical progress towards a morally better, peaceful future. Kant believes that perpetual peace could be attained among nations and peoples. Hope plays a crucial role in moral motivation, as it is the driving force behind our desire to work towards the common good. Without hope, the necessity and inclination to contribute to the well-being of humanity would be absent. According to Kant

> reason is not sufficiently enlightened to survey the series of predetermining causes which would make it possible for us to predict with certainty the good or bad results of human action, as they follow from the mechanical laws of nature; although we may hope that things will turn out as we should desire (Kant 1975: 32).

From this perspective, hope transcends mere human desire and takes on a political significance, becoming a central element for peace and reason. Drawing on Derrida's deconstruction approach, we can argue that hope becomes the guiding principle that shapes subjective strategies, establishes unity, and represents the ultimate reference point and truth centre for achieving goals.

Contrary to this acceptance of *hope* as being comprehended as a metaphysics of presence, we advocate in favour of a 'politics of hope'. This 'politics of hope', by which the individual's will to overcome and reach out for future objectives, is accompanied by a space and temporal understanding in relation to the individuals and to the mechanisms of power engendered in that context. Other philosophers, such as Ernst Bloch, have advanced in this consideration.

Ernst Bloch moved forward to develop his unique way to approach the vicissitudes of hope, utopia and social transformation, through the idea of the 'Not Yet'. As a turning point on theory of hope, Bloch advocates against a utopia that is transcendental and teleologically infinite to reach, but instead as something real and concrete which could be achieved by political means. Against the metaphysics of presence, empty of reality, Bloch 'seeks to relocate man's metaphysical aspirations and apotheosis in worldly experience itself' (Plaice, Plaice and Knight 2005). Bloch is crucial for he breaks the inevitability of the *telos* and the centrality of the *logos* through layers of possibilities in an open process.

Through a materialist lens, Bloch observes that, based on finite matter, anything that is latent, and presents itself in the real world as a possibility, has the chance to ascend into existence, shifting from a 'possible' to a 'fact'. An open space in temporality becomes possibility and hope with human will and strength to turn this into reality. After the will becomes active by a human, hope does not become logocentric, but the very statement that 'reality is inexhaustible, multiform, open, provisional, which explain the need for

new directions, goals, constructors' (Bloch 2005). Hope exists when a possibility can turn into Nothing or into Being and emerge from the discontent of the existing present norm. According to Carvalho (2014: 25, Translated by Us), when explaining Bloch's theory:

> One can perceive two ideas from Bloch's advocacy for historical materialism. The first one is that possibility is a force enriched by experience, and not contradicted by it. The second is that possibility is the mirror before which the real becomes more real, awakening the forces of its own regeneration. The first idea protects Bloch's concept of hope from any Christian-platonic idealism; the second, from the any ontological naivety that understands maximum of value as maximum of Being.

Bloch poses that hope 'is surrounded by dangers, and it is this consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for object possible'. Key to his theory of hope is his concept of 'not yet conscious', which perceives the unconscious and the past not as past-determined or repression-centred (as thought by Freud), but on the contrary as 'intrinsically creative and as a source of the utopian impulse, which Bloch appears to regard as a fundamental human propensity' (Aidnik and Jacobsen 2017: 139), which becomes the psychological anticipation of the 'Real Possible'. Past, present and future, therefore, are interconnected. Possibilities not realized in the past can still be latent in the present and socially transform the future (Bloch 2005).

Contributions of Richard Rorty were also of paramount importance in order to cement the turning point of the epistemological understanding of hope and its critique as a violent metaphysics of presence. Calling himself an anti-platonist, anti-metaphysician and antifoundationalist, Rorty was a pragmatist that believed in the impossibility of using knowledge in order to represent an intrinsic nature of truth or a universal pre-concept based on reason as established by Plato and Kant. On the contrary, knowledge and understanding, for him, are merely tools in order to deal or cope with reality and with the environment (Rorty 1999). As stated by Rorty 'narratives as well as laws, redescriptions as well as predictions, serve a useful purpose in helping us deal with the [current] problems of society' (Rorty 1981: 577).

For Rorty, beliefs (or metaphysical representations) are not more than tools to interact with a defined temporality and to define our habits of action (Rorty 1999 and 2002). With that in mind, instead of the 'liberal metaphysician' perception of hope filled with messianic meaning and empty essence, Rorty advocates in favour of the melioristic utilitarian and pragmatist hope. As mentioned by Smith when introducing Rorty and his idea of hope,

> speaking as a utilitarian, he is suspicious of such hope, and warns against taking orientation from abstract hopes about the future. What matters is the here and now, and the hope that things can get better bit by bit, through small scale increases in the sum of human happiness, within the framework of the current (liberal, social

democratic) standpoint of the world. (…) The telling of plausible historical narratives of progress is, after all, not just a matter of imaginatively re-describing the present; it is also an important way of giving reasons, reasons that make explicit the real potential contained in the present. (Smith 2005: 95-96).

Leaning on Bloch (2005) and Rorty (2002), our intent is to make sense of the Venezuelan situation and of Operation Acolhida in Brazil not as a metaphysics of presence towards hope, but as a 'politics of hope'. This means that 'hope' as an idea should foresee strategies linked to space and time and to habits. Its temporality of action, moreover, should be well defined with clear, transparent and pragmatic processes of action (so as to avoid the empty and messianic hope). Moreover, by understanding hope and its goal not as the 'yet-to-come' but as something taking action in the present and using the forces of the past, one should design and clarify the tools and instruments to be used in this day-to-day actions and habits that are ignited by hope. 'Politics of hope' does not focus on the ideal future with infinite actions to choose – which opens space for indiscriminate violent effects – but instead, as Bloch has stated, it focuses on [finite] pluralism of latent possibilities within a determined temporality.

The logocentric hope, as explained in section 1, is an empty metaphysical ideal that transcends reality and enables the justification for endless pathways or actions to take place (just think of the distinct actions taken under the ideal of Peace throughout modern history). Infinite possibility of actions can be translated into infinite possibility of violence. In this sense, when we think of the anti-metaphysician 'politics of hope', we consider that all strategies, actions, instruments and collective subjectivities are transparent and cleared out, which means that even though there still can be violence in the process, it is diminished or at least foreseen as an ethical process.

In a few words, contrary to considering it as an empty ideal to be achieved, such as 'Peace', 'Security' or 'Human Dignity', the politics of hope dismember hope and devolve it into political strategies set in a complex power web and in a determined space and time, and every step of this process is translated into the present actions of the one who hopes for. With that in mind, in the next section (section 3), we will present the Venezuelan Situation and how Operation Acolhida in Brazil has been operating in order to provide a response to the high number of Venezuelans fleeing their country of origin, so that we can, subsequently, in section 4, analyse how Operation Acolhida activates a politics in order to manage a population entering Brazil with a hopeful heart.

Venezuelan situation and Operation Acolhida

During the last few years, Venezuelans have been suffering from a political, economic, financial and humanitarian crisis. Generalized dysfunctions in relation to lack of food, medicine, transportation, social and health services, are more frequently denounced internationally. Based on data released by the 'Coordination Platform for Venezuelans Refugees and Migrants', as a consequence of this crisis, 7 131 435 Venezuelans (refugees,

migrants and asylum seekers) have already fled their country of origin (date 12 December 2022) (R4V Platform, 2022).

As aforementioned, the reasons for the current Venezuelan crisis are manifold and derive from historic political considerations, productive and socioeconomic domestic issues, diverse domestic political concerns, global finance interests, geopolitical and ideological international affairs, among others. In a scenario of poverty, unmet needs and generalized difficulty to have access to basic services, Venezuela has been experiencing a significant outflow of people to Brazil (and other regions) which is increasing over the years. The city of Pacaraima, in the state of Roraima, is the main official entry point for around 500 Venezuelans fleeing from their country on a daily basis.

In the wake of this situation, in 2018, the Brazilian government decided to intervene and respond to the flow of refugees and migrants through federalized actions and decrees. The creation of Operation Acolhida was made possible in February 2018 by the Provisional Measure nº 820, 2018, establishing the Federal Committee for Emergency Assistance composed of different ministries and with the mission to ensure the 'reception and sheltering of persons in situation of vulnerability from the migratory influx due to the humanitarian crisis' (Art. 5) and to 'establish the guidelines and priority actions from the public federal administration and to represent the government in signing the instrument of federative cooperation' (Art 5, §1º, I e II).

Through the work of the multi-ministerial Federal Committee, the Provisional Measure nº 820/2018 delimited the actions for emergency assistance in distinct realms, such as social protection, education, health, capacity building, border control, indigenous populations, public security, infrastructure and sanitation, guarantee of human rights, among others (Art. 4). After ongoing efforts and just over a year, the Brazilian government showed its commitment to continue supporting with the emergency humanitarian assistance to Venezuelans at risk entering in Brazil, which continues to take place to the present day (25 January 2023).

Operationally, Operation Acolhida is executed through the cooperation among Armed Forces, international organizations, civil society, municipal and state entities, non-governmental organizations, among others, acting on three main dimensions: i) border control; ii) shelter; iii) relocation. To understand Operation Acolhida on its daily and on-the-ground functioning, it is important to understand these three dimensions.

i.   Border control

Border control is an ongoing exercise conducted in the city of Pacaraima (border with the Venezuelan city of Santa Elena de Uairen), Boa Vista and Manaus with the humanitarian logistical support of the Brazilian Army. In those cities, Operation Acolhida established a Reception and Identification Centre and a Screening Centre, so that Venezuelans fleeing from their country can be offered basic services such as first reception and information, access to documentation, access to justice if needed (through the federal public defenders), immunization (through vaccination conducted by the Army), biometric registration,

psychosocial assistance, emergence medical care (through the Army Advanced Health Centre) and communication services (Operação Acolhida 2020).

Specifically, in regards to the documentation process, Venezuelans have the possibility to claim for asylum or temporary residence, and both documents give the right to withdraw work permit, CPF[6], health card and have access to all the basic public Brazilian services. The asylum seekers can stay for a year, with unlimited renewal and wait for CONARE's (National Refugee Council) decision about the status of their asylum claim. After the approval and recognition as refugee, they are allowed to apply for the naturalization. Temporary Residence, based on Mercosur Agreement, ensures they will be able to stay for two years in the country. Also, this could be renewed for two more years and after this, it is possible to request the permanent residence (Operação Acolhida 2020).

ii. Shelter

Venezuelans at risk, fleeing their country of origin, have the possibility to access temporary shelters provided by Operation Acolhida. As agreed upon by the Federal Committee for Emergency Assistance, the shelters must be managed under the coordination of Ministry of Citizenship and UNHCR, while the Army is responsible for logistics (including water, sanitation, hygiene, provision of meals, security) and health within the shelter structures. Inside the shelters, other institutions also play important auxiliary roles, such as providing communication services, conducting Portuguese classes, promoting cultural activities, fomenting local integration, provisioning individual and collective psychosocial support, among other types of assistance.

Nowadays, Operation Acolhida runs 2 shelters in the city of Pacaraima (1 indigenous shelter and 1 transit accommodation site) and other 5 shelters in the city of Boa Vista for multiple distinct profiles), reaching a total of around 7 thousand refugees and migrants sheltered in the state of Roraima (ACNUR, 2023). According to data provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in September 2022, additionally, there is a population of around 3.800 Venezuelans staying outside of the shelters in spontaneous settlements in the cities of Pacaraima and Boa Vista, state of Roraima (IOM, 2022a, 2022b).

iii. Relocation

Relocation is the main strategy of Operation Acolhida to foment socioeconomic inclusion and local integration as a durable solution to Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Venezuelans willing to participate in this process are voluntarily transferred to other states throughout Brazil in order to reduce pressure on public services in Roraima and to provide them with better opportunities and life conditions nationwide[7] (Barchfield 2020; Casa Civil 2022a).

With regards to transportation, the relocation process has the support of multiple actors, such as the Brazilian Air Force, Commercial Flights from private companies, terrestrial transportation from the Army, Civil Society efforts, among others. Almost 90.000

Venezuelans have already benefitted from the relocation process, transferred to more than 900 cities throughout Brazil, from April 2018 and November 2022, predominantly to the south and southeast part of the country (Casa Civil, 2022b).

With the intent of boosting the effectiveness of the relocation strategy, Operation Acolhida has established a Screening Centre and a Hub Centre for relocation in the city of Manaus – AM, in order to centralize more flights departing from there. In other states in Brazil, multiple actors (such as international organizations and governmental bodies) have been promoting seminars in order to sensitize the Brazilian private sector towards hiring Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Also, the National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM) has been working alongside the Brazilian cities to provide technical support, articulate initiatives with the Union, States and Municipalities and coordinate, identify and make viable job offers to Venezuelans (Martimon 2019).

To that end, of course, many challenges regarding local integration are raised. The first, and perhaps the utmost challenge, refers to the lack of comprehensive and worldwide capacity to monitor cases that are being relocated throughout Brazil. Furthermore, the number of relocated Venezuelans is still too low in relation to new arrivals every day in need of this service. This has caused the Operation Acolhida to accelerate the process by reducing its control and supervision capacity, which can result in protection risks for the refugees and migrants. Also, the relocation of Venezuelans needs to be thought through in an inclusive manner, trying as much as possible to integrate and consider specialized services to persons with disability, LGBTI community and elders. Needless to say, as municipal elections approach, political insecurity increases.

Politics of hope and Operation Acolhida

The Venezuelan Situation has become a scenario of suffering, political destabilization and generalized dysfunctions in terms of access to basic needs by the population (due to manifolded reasons as already mentioned). But beyond a humanitarian crisis, the Venezuelan Situation has become a catalyst for constituting a need for hope, as people are fleeing their country of origin in search for a 'better future', 'human dignity', 'security' or 'peace'. Brazilian Operation Acolhida, henceforth, more than a social, economic and humanitarian response, can be understood as an instrument that captures that need for hope from people at risk fleeing Venezuela and creates a politics of hope.

When a refugee or migrant crosses the border into Brazil in search for hope, for most people, it is still a logocentric pursuit with endless possibilities of advancement but, at the same time, endless possibilities of violence. Therefore, instead of ensuring the entry of Venezuelans in Brazil and abandoning them for their own messianic hope, Operation Acolhida foresees strategies linked to space and time, with a [finite] pluralism of possibilities determined by established criteria and actions to be followed. Moreover, what once was understood as a transcendent understanding of 'hope', 'security' or 'peace', comes to be predefined and transparent by Operation Acolhida. From an empty concept – hoping for a better life – becomes hoping for a slot at a shelter, a relocation to another state in Brazil, social integration, a job acquired within Operation Acolhida relocation program, family

reunification, overcoming a chronic disease, a future for their children through access to education and other possible hopes.

Operation Acolhida frames hope into a space and time reality. Spaces of hope are created in order not only to alleviate suffering through provision of humanitarian services, but also to establish safe spaces where refugees and migrants can be informed, have them redefine their habits of action and, most importantly, feel connected with pragmatist hope. These spaces of hope are what limit the infinite possibilities of advancement and constitute the narrative of achieving 'a better life' or 'security' as a real – though latent – possibility, instead of a logocentric ideal. Spaces such as the Reception and Identification Centre, the Screening Centre, Shelters, Informational desks, Support Spaces throughout cities in Brazil, enterprises hiring, and so on, are all part of how space is inscribed in this politics of hope. Geographically speaking, of course, Brazil is the ultimate frontier.

The moment Operation Acolhida establishes its procedures and determines what to hope for, redefining habits and actions from refugees and migrants, is the moment called by Gabriel Godoy as 'the moment of the *encounter*'. The *encounter* is a moment when the refugee or migrant goes through the recognition as a vulnerable subject and in need of social support and legal recognition (as Refugee or Migrant). This encounter is an experience that not only tries to understand who that subject is, but goes beyond by re-constituting and re-shaping the subject. According to Godoy, 'The encounter can be an event that recodes the self and the other, and therefore its own scene' (Godoy 2016:40, Translated by Us).

This encounter is exactly when the laws of hospitality take place. At the same time as spaces of hope are offered to these subjects arriving under precarious conditions, frontiers/limitations are imposed on them and on their own way of recognizing themselves and their future. Using again Godoy's words: 'In that sense, there is a component of violence, or a de-constituting power in the encounter' (Godoy 2016:41). The encounter as a moment of limited hospitality can be productive, as it generates process of subjective transformation on refugees and migrants, establishing new bodies, new minds and new expectations based on limited pathways of hope.

In this sense, for the politics of hope to take place under the laws of hospitality, and for spaces of hope to be created, there must be a process of objectivation of the refugee or migrant 'waiting to be saved' and 'in need of hope'. Through Didier Fassin's (2007) lens and his 'politics of life', refugees and migrants are produced as vulnerable and hopeless subjects, creating distinct levels of categorical inequalities. For instance, only those documented and recognized as refugee or migrant can have access to Operation Acolhida's services (creating the categories of refugees or migrants documented, undocumented, waiting for documentation)[8]. As another example, for slots on shelters, a series of vulnerability criteria are set in order to determine who should have priority in occupying this space of hope (creating dozens of degrees of vulnerable subjects, such as high-risk cases, critical cases, medium cases, non-prioritized cases, etc.). At the same time this process creates inequalities in the access to humanitarian support, it also feeds the politics of hope, as it generates, for example, hope to the Venezuelan refugees or migrants queueing for a slot at a shelter. The day-to-day practices, values, gifts, decisions and restrictions are what

generates this power matrix to define which lives matter most. Ultimately, politics of hope and politics of life feeds into one another in the power matrix of Operation Acolhida.

In terms of temporality, as for section three, Operation Acolhida and the Brazilian government take into account as part of their narrative the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and its consequential historical severe violation of human rights against the population, which justifies very much for the support for refugees and migrants. They use these forces of the past, so as to design and clarify the tools and instruments of the present and to foment a melioristic hopeful future. Operation Acolhida operates within a time limitation, focusing on providing assistance until the Venezuelan migrants are integrated into another state, after the relocation process. As a result, Operation Acolhida does not undertake evaluations of the quality of the integration or establish repatriation policies for these Venezuelans.

Information, then, is key as it can be part of a strategy of the narrative constituting this politics of hope, where processes, possibilities and actions are already stable and existent. Information can also go against a violent teleology of metaphysical imperative in so far as it avoids empty discourse of a path that leads to a perfect final goal that is infinite, universal and omni potent, a hope that never comes as promised and that enables infinite possibilities of violence. For such a politics of hope, it indeed produces violence against the targeted population that one aims to support: for instance, by defining obligations to follow, such as the obligation of vaccination, documentation, long waiting time for several services to be available, rules inside shelters, several conditionalities over some social assistant services, among others. This violence, however, is diminished as much as possible, as it is possible to manage the processes and actions and ensure other types of violence will be at least closely monitored and tackled, such as human traffic, sexual exploitation, child labor, homeless people traveling with an empty hope waiting for something to happen, and so on. A realistic scenario is presented, informed and there is the promise not to end violent episodes, but to reduce and manage them.

As stated by Spyros Franguiadakis, drawing from Derrida, this matter of politics of hospitality will always refer to the place produced for the other (in this case refugees or migrants) in a delimited space, whether it is a home or the country. The politics of hope, therefore, embraces the laws of hospitality to itself and makes sure to design a framework of possibilities regarding what to hope for. It is always important to bear in mind that,

> While the issue of accommodation is generally related to the beneficiaries and the needs of populations (and in this case it represents a "social problem"), **hospitality is on the side of the host, the one who receives**. At that moment, the issue is no longer that of the public management of needs, but of the will, or to use Anne Gotman's expression, "to sacrifice a part of oneself" (Franguiadakis, 2016, p. 203, Translated by Us, Highlighted by Us).

Operation Acolhida, hence, captures a logocentric need for hope and instrumentalizes it into a politics of hope through its own means, instruments, pathways and possibilities. Hopes are redefined, actions are steered, violence is framed, spaces of hope are

established and temporality is linked to political objectives. In this strategic setting, time and space are delimited and Operation Acolhida sets processes with the intent to frustrate any possibility of emerging *spaces of hope* in Venezuela (be it in a past or future sense). A refugee or migrant that chose to take part in Operation Acolhida and absorb its hopeful limited possibilities and ultimate goals (job, relocation, shelter slot, etc.), choses also to forget or put a hold on the hope to return to its country of origin. In this sense, violence is produced through this subjectivation process of what/how/when to hope for.

To deny the possibility of Venezuela to become a space of hope means not only ignoring the manifold reasons and history to why this humanitarian crisis scenario came forth, but also ignoring potentialities to overcome it by identifying and tackling root and structural problems. No pathway was designed for Venezuelans for their medium/long-term return or repatriation of Venezuelans as per their will. Hope to return is not included in Operation Acolhida's temporality strategy. The majority of funding programs, international institutions, global banks, U.N. agencies have been incorporating this temporality strategy of hope, where the reestablishment of the Venezuelan government economy and financial status is not an option as it is. The politics of hope that has been at stake in this Venezuelan Situation is one where Venezuela is not considered as a space of hope neither geographically (space) nor temporally (time). Actions, processes, narratives, steps, creation of spaces of hope, etc., are always restricted to a post-Venezuelan temporality, where structural problems are forgotten, such as currency speculation by different countries, unilateral sanctions, destabilization techniques conducted against Venezuela by credit rating agencies (primarily Standard & Poor`s, Moody`s and Fitch), or international terrorist activities.

Lastly, it is important to bear in mind that, as Operation Acolhida determines with clarity its objectives and temporality in terms of what/how to hope for, even though it promises a reachable final goal for refugees and migrants, it also implicitly affirms that those that do not fit the criteria or are not willing to accept this politics of hope will be left by their own fate. It indeed reduces violence and manages it, but it also excludes and creates a politics of hope for a few. For instance, when you build shelters as spaces of hope with vulnerability criteria and limited slots for six thousand refugees and migrants only, you are latently leaving other spaces as forgotten and outside of the humanitarian mechanisms of support, such as people living on the streets or spontaneous settlements. In the border city of Pacaraima, as another example, transportation to Boa Vista (3 hour away by car) is only provided for those that fit the vulnerability criteria and are waiting on shelter for relocation. But then again, as aforementioned, a politics of hope is one of limiting and regulating the possibilities of violence, not one of extinguishing them.

Conclusion

The idea of hope as a metaphysics of presence gives way to the thought of a politics of hope. The idea of hope, through a metaphysical perspective, becomes a universal truth and opens up possibilities for infinite violence when thought of in its real applications. As seen in Bloch (2005), different from a metaphysical and logocentric hope, the politics of

hope allows us to start from the 'not yet' perspective and then frame the possibilities and conditions of hope and violence.

This becomes clear when we shed light on the ongoing practices of Operation Acolhida and in the delimitation of their strategies to receive with dignity thousands of refugees and migrants that cross the border to Brazil every day hoping for a better life. For those fleeing their country, Operation Acolhida functions through established solutions, allowing hope to be framed into specific possibilities of what one can seek and desire.

With that in mind, Operation Acolhida plays two main and paradoxical roles. On the one hand, it identifies and manages to suppress diverse scenarios of violence, but on the other hand, it commits a form of finite and framed violence in its performance, as the Operation restricts solutions in a present-future space, demanding the past to be forgotten. Furthermore, this conditioning of hope is directly linked to the strategy of relocation of these population, which cannot, for instance, expect anything beyond these established limits. An answer that reconciles the past and allows it to be taken in consideration in how the future should be shaped is out of the question.

Hence, contrary to considering hope as a mere empty concept to be achieved, Operation Acolhida instrumentalizes the *need for hope* and breaks with the endless loop of possibilities of violence. By establishing a real politics of hope, it frames hope into a space and time reality by alleviating suffering through the provision of humanitarian services, establishing safe spaces for refugees and migrants, set out criteria for each of the benefits delivered, redefine habits and actions of the population and offer a pragmatist hope. At the same time, it produces violence through this conditioning and subjectivation process of what/how/when to hope for, regulating and managing the – now – finite possibilities of violence.

Notes

1   Transcendental truth is based on the search for scientific truths based on rational thinking. Truth, however, is transcendental in relation to human beings, which means that the movement to reach out for it will be always continuous and eternal (Kant, 2010).

2   According to Nicola Abbagnano's philosophy dictionary, finalism (synonym of teleology) is the 'doctrine that admits the causality of the end, in the sense that the end is the total cause of the organization of the world and the cause of its isolated events. This doctrine implies two theses: First, the world is organized based on an end; second, the explanation of any event in the world consists in adducing the end to which this event is directed' (Abbagnano 2012: 532, Translated by Us).

3   Foucault's idea of 'truth games' is, before anything, a critic to the logocentric science, based on a rationality of universal truth. Games of truth refers to a constellation of rules of discourses that historically produce regimes of truths; that is, to analyze the games of truth means to drift away from the search for a rational and transcendental truth. The focus becomes what is historically constituted as truth. In sum, the rules are what will lead the subject to distinguish between 'truth' from "false" (Revel 2005).

4   In the transition to modern society, emerging in the 18th century, arises biopower, with the function to 'manage life' (Foucault 2008: 129) or 'cause life and give back death' (Foucault 2008: 130). Such power acts collectively through a biopolitics of population, that is, political practices are exercised by the government in order to manage, equalize, distribute, regulated, normalize, sanitize the bodies of a specific population. Among the discourses that legitimize such power, arise the statistics, demography, political economy, psychiatry, social hygiene, *et cetera*, attributing a technical idiom/categorization to the anomalies of a

certain population. Based on these discourses, there is a claim by specialists for the need of interventions with the intent to manage a specific population (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1995).

5   Other thinkers that developed the idea of hope and gave continuity to this discussion were Aquinas (discussing ideas of passion, impulses and irrational hope), Descartes (discussing confidence, courage and virtues), Spinoza (deepening the relation of hope to passion, desire, joy, sadness and ethics), David Hume (with passion, certainty and uncertainty) and Kant (moral, reason, faith, goodness).

6   Cadastro de Pessoa Física – CPF is the Brazilian Individual Taxpayer Registry, which allows people to have access to several services, such as healthcare through Brazilian Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS), access to public education, opening of bank accounts, access to other financial facilities, among others.

7   There are 4 main relocation modules that one can apply to: i) shelter to shelter (state, municipal or from the civil society in partnership with international organizations), which ensures Venezuelans will be transferred from a shelter in Boa Vista/Manaus to another shelter in another state in Brazil; ii) family reunification, which promotes the reunion of dispersed family members that are in other states by ensuring transportation (after verification of documents, verification of receptor information and health conditions of the traveler), iii) social reunification, which promotes the reunion of friends that are willing and able to receive venezuelans in other states of Brazil by ensuring transportation; iv) job offer, which supports Venezuelans to be hired by companies while they are in Boa Vista/ Manaus and, subsequently, Operation Acolhida provides the person with transportation to the state where the job was offered (Casa Civil 2022a).

8   According to the Ministry of Defense, through the Information Service to the Citizen 'Currently, pursuant to Ordinance No. 652, of January 25, 2021, of the Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic, which provides for the exceptional and temporary restriction on entry into the country of foreigners, as recommended by the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), Venezuelans who cross the border illegally, who are illegally in Brazilian territory, are not being sheltered. However, vulnerable people are being welcomed in special cases: Family group accompanied by a minor (children and adolescents); Venezuelans with health vulnerability confirmed by medical expertise; and Migrants from Venezuela who are at serious risk to their integrity and physical security in their country of origin. This reception takes place after an interview with the family nucleus and medical expertise, if applicable. As for internalization, this only occurs with those people who are documented, who entered the country before the border was closed. In the strategy coordinated by the Federal Government, only Venezuelan migrants and refugees who are regularized in Brazil, immunized, clinically evaluated and with a signed voluntary agreement can participate in the actions' (SIC-MD, 2021: 1, translated by us)

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Resposta brasileira à crise humanitária venezuelana: A Operação Acolhida como uma política de esperança

Resumo: Este artigo discute como a Operação Acolhida, no contexto da situação da Venezuela, funciona como uma política de esperança personalizada, em que a necessidade de esperança dos refugiados e migrantes venezuelanos que cruzam a fronteira brasileira é instrumentalizada em uma estratégia para definir como/o que esperar. A metodologia está dividida nas seguintes subseções: a primeira seção traz a discussão sobre a metafísica da presença e suas perspectivas logocêntrica e teleológica; a segunda seção discute como as teorias e a compreensão da esperança têm evoluído entre os pensadores desde os gregos antigos até hoje e apresenta a política da esperança como uma ferramenta para entender a Operação Acolhida. As duas últimas seções tiram suas conclusões analisando como a Operação Acolhida ativa uma estratégia personalizada.

Palavras-chave: esperança; política da esperança; metafísica da presença; Operação Acolhida; situação da Venezuela.