

**SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC
AND LABOR
PROFILE OF
VENEZUELAN
IMMIGRATION**

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

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Observatório das
migrações internacionais



REALIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research was promoted by the National Immigration Council (CNIg), with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees (UNHCR). The investigation's methodological design was carried out by the International Migrations Observatory (OBMigra) and the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Consortium (SVMAC) at Roraima's Federal University (CSVM/UFRR) was in charge of its execution.

PURPOSE

To analyse the sociodemographic and labour profile of Venezuelan immigrants in order to support the formulation and implementation of specific migration policies in line with the needs of Venezuelan immigrants in Brazil.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology was conceived based on two studies: 1) a quantitative statistical survey, with a stratified probabilistic sampling design to estimate proportions. Strata was built based on sex and age groups, with a confidence level of 95%, an error margin of 2.5% and variance of 11%, resulting in a sample size of 650 interviews applied to the non-indigenous population, aged 18 or more, resident in 33 districts of the municipality of Boa Vista; 2) an ethnographic research with Aydamos leaders of the Warao population in the municipalities of Boa Vista and Pacaraima.

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

1– Sociodemographic Aspects

- Mostly youth immigration (72% of the total have 20~39 years), predominantly male (63%) and single (54%);
- The economic and political crisis is pointed out by 77% of the participants as the main reason to migrate. 67% of the interviewees immigrated to Brazil in 2017;
- Immigrants come from 24 Venezuelan regions, however most of them come from three states: Bolivar (26%), Monagás (16%) and Caracas (15%);
- Most of the immigrants arrived by bus and took averagely 1 to 2 days to get to Pacaraima, in the Brazilian side of the border;
- A significant amount (58%) relies on migratory networks mostly composed by family and friends who already reside in Brazil;
- Immigrants have a good level of education (78% have completed high school and 32% have an undergraduate or graduate degree);
- Venezuelans in Roraima have little knowledge of Portuguese and many do not study the language;

2– Work and Housing

- 82% are asylum seekers. Approx. 1/3 of Venezuelans only have the provisional protocol, 23% have a work permit, 29% have the individual taxpayer number (CPF) and 4% do not have any documents;
- Most of them live in rented housing (71%), sharing the property with others, with rental prices up to R\$ 300.00 (56%);
- As to employment, 60% carry out a wage earning activity, and 28% are formally employed;
- Most of them work in the following areas: retail (37%), food service (21%) and civil construction (13%);
- 51% of the workers receive less than a minimum wage, 44% receive between 1 and 2 (monthly) minimum wages and only 5% indicated receiving more than 2 minimum wages;
- More than half of the interviewees (54.2%) use their income to remit money (from R\$ 100.00 to R\$ 500.00) to their spouse and children in Venezuela to help with their family members' livelihoods;
- Approx. half of them already have access to public services in Roraima, especially health services (39%). However, it is important to highlight that almost half of Venezuelans immigrants (48.4%) did not use any public service whatsoever;
- A significant number of the interviewees emphasized they had experienced prejudice by Brazilians mainly motivated by the fact they were foreigners.

3. Possibility of internal movement in Brazil and perspectives of return

- The majority would accept to move to another state if support from the Brazilian government is available (77%);
- The existence of job opportunities (80%) in other regions of the country is the main demand to accept moving elsewhere. Economic aid (11,2%) and housing assistance (5,2%) appears as the second and third influencing factor.
- A migratory policy on employment and support for internalization finds a considerable percentage of adherence. In this sense, it is fundamental that such policies are properly planned with federal entities, business community and civil society;
- Among those who would not accept displacement, the majority have no job or have lower levels of education - the most vulnerable segments. The main reasons for not accepting internal displacement are the proximity of the border (38%) and the fact of considering themselves integrated in Boa Vista (37%);
- Only 25% intend to return to Venezuela. The majority do not intend to return soon (47%) or do not know if they will return (27%);
- Among those who intend to return, the majority estimate a timeframe of more than 2 years (47%), but conditioning the return to the improvement of economic situation (61%).

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH WITH THE WARAO

1 – The Warao displacement to Brazil

The Warao people live in the Delta Orinoco region, where they are found in three Venezuelan states: Delta Amacuro, Monagas and Sucre. Its population is estimated at 48.771 people (INE-VE). Most of this population is concentrated in the first state, especially in the municipalities of Antonio Dias and Tucupita.

The Warao travel approximately 925km until reaching the city of Boa Vista. The starting point for most of them is the city of Tucupita, which is accessed by fluvial transportation by those who come from traditional communities.

When in the border region, in Santa Helena do Uiarén, they have two ways of reaching Pacaraima in Brazil: through the official border or by walking through the mountain region, the unofficial border.

They also have two options to reach Boa Vista: an exhaustive walk, which according to their accounts takes approx. three days or by road transportation.

2 – The Warao in the Immigrant Reference Center and in the streets of the cities of Boa Vista and Pacaraima

- The Immigrant Reference Center, created in November 2016, hosts approximately 500 Warao. When asked about the reasons to migrate, hunger is presented as the main one. Other reasons are the lack of education and health public services and the neglect of the Venezuelan government with the indigenous.
- The presence of the Warao in Boa Vista started to take place in 2014. Their influx to Brazil intensified from 2016 onwards.
- Availability of daily food is presented by the Warao as a positive aspect of life at the Immigrant Reference Center. As to possibilities of improvements, the respondents recommend the following issues: conflicts between the indigenous themselves and between the indigenous and non-indigenous Venezuelans in the shelter; the overcrowding of the space and the need for more Portuguese learning opportunities. Beyond these issues, we observed in the fieldwork that structural problems in the shelter need to be solved, such as basic sanitation, health care - mainly in relation to transmissible diseases and inadequate acclimatization - among other aspects. The Warao in street situation say they do not opt for living in the shelter due to the following aspects: coexistence with non-indigenous people, overcrowding and movement limitation to enter and exit the shelter.
- Regarding access to documentation in Brazil, the reference presented by them is the scheduling protocol for claiming asylum, although some respondents do not have it. The Venezuelan document presented by them was the national identity card, which contains information on ethnicity and community of origin of its owner.
- Few have shown interest to migrate to another Brazilian state. The will to go to Manaus (in Amazonas State), which used to be more widespread among the Warao, has changed as a migratory strategy. There are examples of families that were in Manaus and returned to the Immigrant Reference Center in Boa Vista. A new migratory destination mentioned is Belém, which has already received some Warao who are relatives of individuals currently living in the Immigrant Reference Center.
- There are approx. 130 Warao in street situation in the municipality of Pacaraima. They are divided in three family groups from different regions of Delta Orinoco, coming from villages in the municipality of Antonio Dias, and a group that lives in Tucupita (capital of the Delta Amacuro State). Most of them did not reach Boa Vista. Among the respondents, only the Warao from the municipality of Tucupita spent periods in the shelter in Boa Vista, returned to Venezuela and came to Pacaraima. The three family groups have relatives in Boa Vista and in Manaus. Returning flow to communities of origin were identified, either to take back part of what they accumulated in Brazil (goods, clothes, supplies) or to obtain more handcrafts to sell them in the country.
- Another indigenous group was also identified during the research: the Panare (Eñape) group whose origin is the Bolívar state. They have a different language and culture from the Warao. The Panare individuals in Brazil belong to a same family composed by approx. 20 people. They say they have lived a year in Bolívar City before arriving in Pacaraima. They are currently living in the Bus Station of Boa Vista.
- In addition to the Panare, other two groups of Warao families – approx. 35 people each – are currently at the Bus Station of Boa Vista, occupying different spaces.

3 – Summary of Warao Expectations and Perspectives

- Regarding their migratory project, accounts indicate they left part of their families in Venezuela, so they could look after family property, and migrated to Brazil accompanied by other relatives, so resources could be sent back to Venezuela. The concern with family members is constant. They regret the lack of information about those who stayed and express the desire to bring them to Brazil.
- Regarding Warao mobility and presence within Brazilian territory, there are accounts of movement and residence in Pacaraima, Boa Vista, Manaus, and more recently in Belém.
- Education and health services accessed by the Warao are those available at the Immigrant Reference Center. When there is a serious health issue, they are referred to the children's hospital, the General Hospital of Roraima or Casa do Índio. In the municipalities of Pacaraima and Boa Vista, homeless Warao are not assisted by public agencies, nor are the the Panare in Boa Vista.
- In Boa Vista, as to indigenous people housed in the Immigrant Reference Center, most Warao men do not carry out economic activities. Among women, there is a greater number of individuals who continued to perform activities in which they were engaged before immigrating, such as asking for donations on public roads, producing handicrafts and sewing.
- In Pacaraima, labor inclusion among women is much lower. However there is a supply of male workforce which is lowpaid and is engaged in the unloading of trucks daily arriving in that region. It was also possible to observe the employment of male individuals and couples to work on farms and ranches in the region.
- The Waraos' future expectations vary between returning to Venezuela when the crisis eases and reuniting with their family in Brazil. In general, they expressed the desire to stay in Roraima, preferably settled in an urban environment and with economic means for self-reliance.

Conclusion

The present study has contributed to a detailed knowledge on sociodemographic and labor profile of Venezuelan immigrants in Roraima. Concerning the non-indigenous influx, this is an immigration flow with strong potential to be fully included to the Brazilian society and labor market given its age and educational profile, either through integration in Roraima, or through internalization policies with employment and housing support for those who were absorbed or not by the local labor market. The research reveals that such policies would find wide acceptance among the Venezuelan immigrants in Roraima

In addition, it can be seen that although being groups belonging to the same migratory flow, the design of public policies to indigenous and non-indigenous groups must be carried out separately, given their cultural differences, needs and perspectives in the short, medium and long run. In sum, the results of the research indicate that there is a greater need to improve public policies to this segment of the population, with the expansion and improvement in the quality of services on education, health and social assistance through the appropriate training of local public agents. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen activities being implemented by civil society.

