

Introduction: *Venezuelan Migrations, Journeys, and Trajectories across the Americas*

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The continuous large-scale process of human mobility from Venezuela can be attributed to recent years' political and economic instability; the related, and unprecedented, humanitarian crisis; and the widespread suppression of civil liberties by an autocratic regime that remains in power (Freier et al., 2022; Vera et al., 2021; Freier and Doña-Reveco, 2022). It has been more than a decade since Anitza Freitez (2011: 11) argued that leaving the country, whether temporarily or permanently, had already become commonplace for Venezuelans to cope with the “structural problems affecting the daily survival”. As a result, as Venezuelan groups and individuals became more visible in their new “host” communities across the Americas, so did the use of the term “Venezuelan Migration” as a singular umbrella term to embed Venezuelan cross-border mobilities with issues related to security, economic development, humanitarianism, and foreign policy. The term has continued to dominate rhetoric from policymakers, international organizations, the media, and academics. However, the indiscriminate and repeated use of such terminology imposes significant constraints in the understanding of the situation, which oftentimes perpetuates disparities between the diverse forms of mobility that exist in this case. Therefore, a comprehensive examination and reflection on the definition and scope of “Venezuelan Migration” is essential to both understand the complexity of the phenomenon and to improve the analysis to devise viable ways of political and scholarly action.

The articles in this special issue on Venezuelan Migrations, Journeys, and Trajectories across the Americas offer a variety of perspectives on how to navigate the complexities of the varied and related forms of cross-border mobility in the region. The authors, coming from different disciplines, including politics, international relations, economics, anthropology, and cultural studies, examine the opportunities and constraints attached to migration, including areas of social and economic integration and inclusion; security and border crossing; as well as the generalized use of the category of “migration” as a single phenomenon, and the consequences of Venezuelans moving throughout the Americas.

In this introduction, we first contextualize the cross-border movement of Venezuelans, discussing both the reasons and the numbers; we analyze the terminology used, both within this Special Issue as well as elsewhere, and evaluate the implications of this use; and we offer short summaries of the articles and some concluding thoughts about the overall situation.

Context

In descriptive terms, the analysis of the migration processes starts with recalling the most evident similarities and differences among those on the move. It starts by focusing on the experiences of those who self-identify as Venezuelans due to their attachment to an idea of a given community, a localized origin, or the vicissitudes in the construction (and contestation) of national belonging, among other subjective experiences. Yet, it also involves taking into account how hegemonic power structures shape and politicize these perceptions into political facts, visible in the production of citizenship, beyond sheer legal frameworks (Palma-Gutiérrez this Special Issue). This involves questioning nationality as a given, in the case of Venezuelans on the move across the Americas. In fact, in the midst of recent migrations, some communities experience ambiguity, such as the example of people living in the Colombian-Venezuelan borderlands and the notions of “nationals” and “foreigners” (Price, this Special Issue). As discussed below, due to this variety of conditions, characteristics, routes, and practices, we favor the term Venezuelan Migrations, in its plural sense, to encompass and more accurately describe the diversity of the migrants and migration processes.

Moreover, the investigation of such diverse settings can benefit from the observation and critical approach towards the notion of “Migration Waves” informing recent analysis on the subject (Devis-Amaya, this Special Issue). Coinciding with Freitez’s (2011) analysis, as well as that of Phélan Casanova and Osorio Alvarez (2020), the first wave of migration started soon after Hugo Chávez reached the presidency of Venezuela in 1999. Some were fearful of Chavez’s “Bolivarian” economic reforms and aimed at safeguarding their economic assets; some were political dissenters, who felt persecuted by his regime. The latter group included civil servants who participated in anti-government protests and were subsequently fired from their jobs and blacklisted from government-related positions. Meanwhile, during the 2000s, the Venezuelan economy became increasingly reliant on its petrol exports. The strains of this over-reliance started to be seen with a rise in inflation and a shrinking of the Venezuelan economy, together with an increasingly authoritarian regime (Devis-Amaya, 2020). These conditions accentuated after Chávez’s death in 2013 and the take-over by current president Nicolás Maduro shortly after.

Up until then, most people leaving the country were part of the urban middle and upper middle classes. Many had university and technical titles. Persons of foreign descent, many of them with European ancestry due to the historical waves of migration into Venezuela, had migrated by relying on third-country passports (Castillo Castro & Reguant Alvarez, 2017). However, this was soon to change as the Venezuelan Migrations became a lot more heterogeneous. A combination

of economic, social, and political crises set the scene for a second wave of migration, which started in 2014 when the price of oil began to fall after years of sustained high prices (Devis-Amaya, 2020). Venezuela was one of the hardest hit oil economies due to the drop in prices, its high reliance on the commodity, a drop in FDI, and a decrease in oil production (Monaldi, 2015). According to the OPEC (2023), the barrel of oil reached a peak price of almost \$197 US dollars per barrel, in 2008 right before the financial crisis. It then dropped sharply to \$61 a barrel during the crisis and slowly rose to double that price, oscillating between \$120 and \$150 for the following four years. However, in 2014 there was another sharp fall to \$62 and a further fall to \$43-44 in 2016. It is interesting to see how the latter two dates match the sharp rises in migration numbers, demonstrating just how reliant the Venezuelan economy was (and still is) on the price of oil. The price of oil has since recovered, mostly ranging from around \$60 to \$100, apart from a sharp fall during the Covid-19 Pandemic (to \$22.61) and a rise during 2022 (to \$120). It has not been able to recover to pre-2014 prices. These conditions led the already weakened Venezuelan economy to fall into a deeper recession connected to a rapid rise in inflation rates (Su et al., 2020). Living standards deteriorated rapidly, visible in how thousands of Venezuelans could not afford the Basic Food Basket (UNHCR, 2023). Moreover, 64% of the population lost at least 11 kilograms of weight in 2016-17 (Observatorio Venezolano de la Salud, 2018). Millions of Venezuelans fell below the World Bank's extreme poverty line, spending less than two dollars a day, including three million civil servants and five million pensioners (Mazuera-Arias et al., 2020). Meanwhile, criminality rose, noticeably in a sharp increase of homicide rates (Antillano et al., 2020).

These conditions, together with heightened levels of authoritarianism, also saw an intensification of anti-government protests sweeping the country. In 2017, a new process of public protests was violently repressed amidst the dubious procedures related to the establishment of a new Constitutional Assembly (Morselli et al., 2021). This political crisis, together with the continuing free fall of the Venezuelan economy and the worsening of life conditions framed by different organizations as a “complex humanitarian emergency” (Human Rights Watch, 2019), resulted in the further intensification of cross-border movement departing from Venezuela. These movements, mostly undertaken overland – combining on-foot trajectories with other means of transportation – have been increasingly precarious, due to the limited availability of resources, the journey's difficult terrain, and the increasingly restrictive politics of border control. Interestingly, a section of literature has identified these movements as part of “a survival diaspora” (Rodríguez & Robayo, 2018: 11), which connects to Betts's (2013) idea of “survival migration”. This term refers to individuals leaving their country “because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution” (Betts 2013: 4–5) but are not necessarily covered under current international protection agreements. With the Covid-19 emergency, which led to the worsening of conditions of people in Venezuela and Venezuelans engaged in precarious jobs across the Americas, cross-border movements to and from Venezuela peaked again (Freier & Vera Espinoza, 2021; Palma-Gutiérrez, 2023).

Migration numbers and data

Table 1 shows the regions with over 10,000 Venezuelans living in them, from 1990 to 2010: Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. As can be seen at the beginning of the 1990s the numbers for the three regions were similar, and the initial growth was more pronounced in the Global North, with North America overtaking Latin America by the mid-1990s and Europe by the early 2000s, and both Europe and North America widening the gap in the 2010s. However, by 2020, the trend had switched, and Latin America and the Caribbean hosted the large majority of Venezuelan migrants.

Table 1: Regions with more than 10,000 Venezuelans (1990-2020)

Destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
World	185,492	241,864	317,753	437,087	560 528	709,140	5,415,337
Europe	68,927	81,517	111,570	188,832	250 560	270,191	460,863
Latin America and the Caribbean	69,469	77,358	86,478	90,762	108 909	175,445	4,417,998
Northern America	45,458	81,154	117,706	155,140	196 910	256,916	528,022

Source: Data compiled by the authors from the UN International Migrant Stock 2020.

A more detailed account can be seen in Table 2, which shows the number of Venezuelan migrants per country in these regions, from 1990 to 2010. The table shows that by 1990 the top countries were, in order, the USA, Colombia, Spain, Portugal, the Dominican Republic and Italy. For the most part, these countries remained the top destinations by 2010, with some slight changes. Once again, the countries were, in order: the USA, Spain, Italy, Colombia, Portugal, and Canada. Noticeable is the sharp reduction of Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic and both Spain and Italy overtaking Colombia as top destinations. By 2010, five of the six top destinations were in the Global North.

Table 2: Countries with more than 10,000 Venezuelans by 2020 (1990-2010)

Destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
<i>Major destinations in Europe</i>					
Italy	9,773	9,261	8,748	28,803	48,676
Portugal	14,959	18,220	22,222	23,744	21,323
Spain	32,469	38,704	61,587	108,707	148,147
Germany	1,662	2,306	2,950	5,362	7,329
<i>Major destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean</i>					
Aruba	1,144	2,000	2,856	3,074	3,232
Dominican Republic	14,235	15,811	17,386	11,282	5,155
Trinidad and Tobago	1,337	1,213	1,413	1,516	1,672
Costa Rica	1,030	834	1,054	691	1,362

Mexico	1,460	2,194	3,024	6,528	10,788
Panama	487	715	989	4,276	8,441
Argentina	1,981	2,290	2,600	1,919	1,236
Brazil	1,220	1,694	2,167	2,524	2,845
Chile	2,349	3,197	4,044	6,070	8,095
Colombia	33,123	35,162	37,200	37,353	45,692
Ecuador	2,549	3,120	3,691	4,415	7,032
Guyana	478	768	1,057	1,424	1,116
Peru	2,019	2,021	2,362	2,794	3,504
Uruguay	773	713	659	610	565
<i>Major destinations in Northern America</i>					
Canada	3,339	5,582	7,958	12,434	16,005
USA	42,119	75,572	109,748	142,706	180,905

Source: Data compiled by the authors from the UN International Migrant Stock 2020.

In addition to being countries with higher GDPs and income per capita, their connection with Venezuela and more significantly, with Venezuelans must also be highlighted. As Moslimani, Noe-Bustamante and Shah (2023) argue, in 2021, around 35% of the foreign-born Venezuelans living in the USA were US citizens, and around 150,000 individuals born in the USA had dual Venezuelan nationality. This would mean that more than 300,000 Venezuelans living in the USA held a US passport. Dual nationalities were also common amongst Venezuelans with a number of European countries. Alvarez's (2016) data suggests that in 1990 around 23% of migrants within Venezuela were of Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese origin, most of which had arrived since the 1950s (Derham, 2021). Many of these individuals would have had families in Venezuela, and their descendants would have acquired their citizenship rights in the respective countries. Indeed, this seems to be one of the earliest migration patterns in contemporary Venezuelan migrations. As early as May 2002, The New York Times reported on Venezuelans of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese ancestry leaving the country for Europe (Romero, 2002). This suggests that many of the first Venezuelans to leave the country were likely to be those that had dual citizenship and/or those with strong family connections to these countries. As Derham (2021: 398) argues, many of them were already in a privileged position, which allowed them not only to migrate but also ease their settlement process abroad:

“...the internationalised descendants of recent European immigrants, and those immigrants themselves, have a decided advantage in their superior education, dual nationality and twin nationalities. The older ones have European pensions at retirement and even homes in Europe to go to. Younger ones can emigrate with their often professional qualifications using their European passports and (family) connections abroad.”

This privilege status would correspond to the analysis by Moslimani, Noe-Bustamante, and Shah (2023), who argue that by 2021, 57% of Venezuelans in the US had a university degree, compared to only 20% of US Hispanics. Contrastingly, those less privileged, with fewer connections and without European or US citizenship seem to have emigrated later, and as the figures suggest, elsewhere too.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the number of Venezuelans living abroad, from 2015 to 2021, with data from every two years. The data is clear in showing how the large majority of them, over 4.5 million Venezuelans, were living within South America by 2021, with over three million living just in Colombia and Peru by 2021. The trend shows from 2017, when most migrants were located in Colombia, both Chile and Argentina had overtaken Italy and other European countries in terms of numbers of migrants. Even though there has been an increase in the number of migrants in every single country listed below, the largest increases can be seen primarily within South America, and then generally in Latin America. By 2019, the top destination countries were Colombia, Peru, and Chile, with the USA, Ecuador, Brazil, and Argentina following in the statistics, all with a significant rise in numbers (R4V, 2022). The main destinations of most Venezuelan migrants changed over these years, as the social, economic, and political situation further deteriorated in Venezuela.

Table 3: Venezuelans living abroad 2015-2021

Country	2015	2017	2019-20	2020-21
<i>Americas</i>				
Argentina	1,240	57,127	145,000	173,248
Brazil	3,354	35,000	244,102	261,441
Chile	54,787	119,051	371,163	448,138
Colombia	55,893	600,000	1,630,903	1,842,390
Ecuador	8,901	39,519	385,042	508,935
Mexico	16,491	32,582	71,526	82,976
Panama	9,883	36,365	94,596	121,598
Peru	41,29	26,239	863,613	1,286,464
<i>Major destinations in Northern America</i>				
Canada	20,652	18,608	20,000	27,320
USA	236,264	290,224	351,000	545,200
<i>Major destinations in Europe</i>				
Italy	48,138	49,831	No data	59,400
Portugal	24,174	24,603	27,700	c.30,000
Spain	160,478	208,333	329,827	438,400

Source: Own calculations by authors based on data from the UN International Migrant Stock, RV4, the National Institute of Statistics in Portugal (Portugal 2020-21), and Datadista (Spain 2019-20).

The UN International Migration Stock data also allows us to calculate the percentage increase of the number of migrants. For example, the percentage increase from 2000 to 2020 was 360% for the USA, 428% for Spain, and 579% for Italy. This compares to 4,686% for Colombia, 10,435% for Ecuador, and 39,776% for Peru (data from UN International Migrant Stock 2020). This shows that even though the number of migrants increased across all countries in the tables during this period, over time there have been clear differences between these countries.

In fact, the differences between the earlier and latter groups of migrants are commonly assessed in these accounts, with a variety of demographic characteristics, reasons for migrating, and significantly, large differences in numbers considered. For instance, Páez (2015) supports the idea that early migration waves shared specific defining characteristics and reports that 90% of these migrants had university qualifications. In contrast, Mazuera et al. (2019) argue that the second wave is much more heterogeneous, and while still around 30-40% of the migrants crossing the land border from Venezuela into Colombia had a university degree, a relatively large percentage (see Table 4), it is still much lower than the percentage given by Páez (2015).

Table 4: Skills and Gender in recent Venezuelan migrations (selected countries).

	Peru	Ecuador	Chile	Colombia
Adult men <29	56%	56%	51%	49%
Adult women <29	57%	55%	47%	51%
Men with university degrees	26%	25%	42%	37%
Women with university degrees	38%	38%	44%	47%
Men without school diploma	19%	21%	5%	12%
Women without school diploma	12%	15%	6%	9%
Percentage saying they would like to return to Venezuela	91%	91%	88%	86%

Source: Own calculations based on Mazuera-Arias et Al., 2019. Table compiled by Devis-Amaya and Palma-Gutierrez.

What is clear, however, is that the migration has been neither constant in terms of numbers, nor homogeneous in terms of destinations or demographics. This heterogeneity must also be analyzed in connection to terms we use to define the migration processes and, in particular, the term “Venezuelan migration”.

Terms

A central theme that runs through the Special Issue is the recognition that the term “migration” is a politically constructed category used by governments to develop policies that aim to manage and control human movement across borders, as well as simplify the experiences of those who are able to move. These individuals, and at times their descendants, are often referred to simply as “migrants” and labeled as a distinct “population” for political purposes. They are

grouped, oftentimes arbitrarily, in relation to locals while being categorized in relation to their desirability from the point of view of the local society (see Devis-Amaya, this issue), as well as authorities and ruling institutions. The focus on Venezuelan Migration as a single, observable phenomenon is thus not simply the result of anecdotal evidence or empirically traceable developments. The term is not an objective reality. Rather, it is a political move to (re)produce and reinforce approaches to managing a particular and (over)foreignized group of individuals, who are undergoing diverse, contrasting and often convoluted “life journeys” and “spatial trajectories” (Collyer, 2010; Mainwaring & Brigden, 2016).

From a critical standpoint, a number of scholars have argued that the use of the term “Venezuelan Migration” as a rhetorical device to explain the complexities of these forms of cross-border human mobility reinforces the global proliferation of neoliberal migration policies (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Basualdo et al., 2019). On the one hand, this categorization minimizes the diverse experiences and subjectivities of migrants into a single homogenous category. It groups all individuals together based on their presumed national origin and the ostensible temporal aims of their journeys. This approach simplifies the way in which the issue is dealt with by governments, by organizations at different levels (local, national, and international), as well as by academics. It enables them to enact policies, set courses of action, and analyze data, related to this group of individuals, in a simplified manner. On the other hand, it facilitates the “differential inclusion” of those seen as migrants in their new locations, based on the inherent “fracturing and dividing [of] identities in ways that are not necessarily compatible [while] scattering differences across social and political spaces” (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013: 161). The presumptive homogeneity of “Venezuelan Migration” is thus a precondition for advancing particular dualities, such as the “politics of the Migrant/Refugee Binary” (Abdelaaty & Hamlin, 2022), the clear distinctions between “skilled” and “unskilled” labor (de Haas, 2012), the “foreignization” of specific groups of people (Varela Huerta, 2015), and the “us vs. them” othering rhetoric.

At the same time, different groups such as social collectives, solidarity networks, and migrant activists themselves, have also adopted the term “Venezuelan Migration” to highlight the limitations and constraints of current migration policies. In fact, the use and political mobilization of the term has played a vital role in discussions aimed at improving policies and extending rights for the newcomers and their families. This has also been demonstrated in various ways within the academia, such as when tracing the origins and challenging the criminalization of Venezuelan communities (Freier & Pérez, 2021); when highlighting the need for mobility among Venezuelans during the Covid-19 pandemic (Vera Espinoza et al., 2020); and when evaluating the effectiveness and fairness of national policies towards displaced Venezuelans (Freier & Doña-Reveco, 2022).

Building upon these reflections above, and the insights put forward by the authors in this Special Issue, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discussion on Venezuelan Migrations by using the term in its plural form, emphasizing the diversity of experiences comprising the myriad journeys and trajectories. Even though it may seem like a simple and small change, by referring to the

plurality of migrations, we can highlight the diversity and complexity of the flows and of the experiences of individuals. Moreover, we can also emphasize the subjectivities of individuals who identify themselves as Venezuelan; of those who are perceived as Venezuelan by the dominant power structures; and of those that have multiple, hybrid and/or fluid identities, either already ingrained or developed through their mobility processes. Based on various observations of the heterogeneity of the migration flows, it is apparent that experiential and spatial/contextual trajectories are far from being homogeneous. This is visible with individual factors such as the availability of resources, the distance travelled, and the means of transportation; as well as the political spaces in which mobility takes place, including the adoption and deployment of mechanisms of (ir)regularization and/or (il)legalization of the migration “flows”. In addition, by focusing on the subjectivities and multiplicity of experiences involved in Venezuelan migrations, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of this phenomenon: how migration experiences are endured individually and differentially; what the meanings of migrations are; and what productive effects do such migrations bring to them, their families, and their localities.

Furthermore, assessing the subject under the scope of Venezuelan Migrations allows us to include a space for self-reflection on the structural imbalances crossing these cross-border mobilities, which are subjectively and differentially experienced, politicized, and contested. Such imbalances are built upon migrants’ diverse positionalities in terms of class, race, gender, sexuality, age, and ability, which inform their journeys perennially. Moreover, embracing Venezuelan Migrations constitutes a move to reclaim subjectivity in contemporary “migration management” (Pécoud, 2021), a set of practices enmeshed in cost-effective neoliberal dynamics, nurturing the “punitive turn” crossing border and migration controls in the Americas (Domenech, 2017: 21).

Another common characteristic seen is the use of “waves” as a descriptive heuristic in discovering the nuances of Venezuelan Migrations. However, this approach is not exempt from risks. Even if these “waves” might act as descriptive frameworks for historical analysis, the use of them as a term to differentiate migrants can have a much more negative effect. For example, as more or less deserving of the state’s approval, locals’ empathy, and even of fellow migrants’ recognition as equals (Devis-Amaya, this Special Issue). Indeed, positioning “waves” as an analytical category in an uncritical manner can create artificial barriers between groups of people deemed as more capable, or desirable, or simply “better” than others. This can also have a direct impact on the unfinished Venezuelans’ labor market insertion, as explored in the case of Argentina by Biderbost et al. and in the case of Uruguay by Facal (both this Special Issue).

An example on how “waves” can be used as a device to accentuate and perpetuate differences between and within nationally framed social groups relates to perceived senses of the link between criminality and “Venezuelan migration” in different countries in the Americas. Statistically, in most cases, Venezuelans commit crimes at a lower level than the local population (Bahar et.al. 2020; Freier & Pérez, 2021). Yet, ideas of “newer waves” of migrants are often

intersected by beliefs and assumptions about the predisposition of the newcomers to engage in criminal activities, in what seems to be an extension of the historical, long-standing trend towards the criminalization of poverty in the region (Wacqant, 2021). These beliefs, affirmed through stereotyping and essentialization, have a marked role in affirming senses of greater or lesser degrees of political and social deservingness applicable to communities that are seen as foreign in this context.

Therefore, a superficial engagement with the idea of “waves” could miss the effects of the repeated use of this terminology in accentuating class, race, and gender imbalances between different groups of Venezuelans on the move. Such differences matter in understanding the complexities of Venezuelan Migrations and the political setting of humanitarianism deployed in different locations across the Americas (Ceballos Medina and Castillo Sepúlveda, this Special Issue). Yet, a critical and creative engagement with this typology is also possible, as the notion of “waves” can be reinterpreted in the multiple experiences of Venezuelan migrants (see Devis-Amaya this Special Issue), beyond the use of this typology as a sheer descriptive heuristic.

Today, the destinations of Venezuelan migrations across the Americas continue to evolve and the numbers keep rising (see Table 5). The overland mobilities of Venezuelans, which until recently remained focused within South America, have reached all corners of the Western Hemisphere. Regional governments, international organizations, and scholars have reaffirmed this humanitarian crisis, which is often used with specific political interests, as thousands of Venezuelans, and other migrants, continue moving across geographical spaces. Routes now include crossing the Darien Gap, connecting South and Central America, joining caravans in Central America and Mexico, moving further into the US beyond its Southern border, and even reaching Canada. However, the numbers of Venezuelans reaching North America are still relatively low, compared to those that reach its South American neighbors (see Tables 1 and 5).

Table 5: Venezuelans living abroad, 2023
(Selected locations)

Country	May 2023
Argentina	220,595
Brazil	449,678
Chile	444,423
Colombia	2,477,588
Ecuador	502,214
Mexico	91,359
Panama	147,424
Peru	1,518,102

Source: Calculations done by authors based on R4V Data for Latin America, May 2023.

Meanwhile, the nationalist post-pandemic border regime that evolved throughout the Covid-19 emergency continues to evolve in the region affecting Venezuelans' whereabouts (Palma-Gutiérrez, 2023). The continuity of draconian – yet increasingly normalized – border controls is visible in how the US government initiates and advances its border controls. This has been progressively achieved through a combination of diplomatic exchanges, including top-level dialogues with other regional governments that focused on the subject of “shared responsibility” in the management of migration flows, a salient feature of the 2022 “Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection” (The White House, 2022), the inclusion of AI-run digital tools in the individual processing of asylum claims in the US; and the recently announced opening of ‘immigration processing centers’ in third countries such as Guatemala, Costa Rica and Colombia. This last policy allows the US government to divert from international obligations with the accomplice support of a number of Latin American governments. Such policies are helpful in easing the mobilities of migrants deemed as “skilled”, “deserving”, “worthy” and/or “lawful”, while restricting the movement of those who do not fit such mostly arbitrary characteristics. They work as an extension of the unequal contemporary politics of cross-border mobility.

In sum, this Special Issue on recent Venezuelan Migrations offers an initial standpoint to reflect on the complexities and heterogeneities enmeshed in the process of building a study agenda to approach the migrations, journeys, and trajectories of Venezuelans across the Americas. The notions we introduce here challenge the apparent homogeneity of the migration and serve as an analytical tool to question a number of conceptual and discursive assumptions that have been solidified in the study of this continuous and long-scale mobility of Venezuelans. The articles presented in this Special Issue set out to illuminate the complex dynamics associated with these migrations. They engage in a necessary interdisciplinary dialogue on Venezuelan cross-border mobilities in the Americas. In doing so, we invite scholars and policymakers to keep contributing to this discussion, challenging the norms and assumptions, and assessing the implications that particular terminology and rhetoric can have on groups of migrants.

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