

THE PROTAGONISM OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM HERMANOS, AQUI ESTAMOS (2021) BY JADE RAINHO

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ABSTRACT

The text analyses the elements that make up the reality of Venezuelan migrants, who narrate their stories in the short documentary *Hermanos, Aqui Estamos* (Brothers, Here We Are; 2021). Using thematic analysis as a methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with an inductive and contextualized approach, we identified five narrative groups for the 12 subjects of the documentary short film. We identified three themes and seven sub-themes from the research corpus: introducing the subjects (who are they? how did they get here?); migrating (why are they here? difficult choices; work) and feelings (about the country of origin; about being a migrant). We analysed the documentary short film by articulating it with the concepts of capitalist realism (Fisher, 2020), the relationship between communication and the migrant condition, based on ElHajji (2018), and female subalternity and representation, according to Spivak (1988/2010). Thus, it was concluded that this documentary production is of great importance because it opens up a space for migrant women to tell their own stories and reach other people, including other Venezuelan migrants. In this way, the short documentary *Hermanos, Aqui Estamos* (2021) preserves the memory of these women, working both as a communication tool and as an exposé of the problems that society and the Brazilian state must address in order to properly welcome and include them.

KEYWORDS

Venezuelan migrants, representation, short film, communication

O PROTAGONISMO DAS MIGRANTES VENEZUELANAS NO CURTA-METRAGEM DOCUMENTAL HERMANOS, AQUI ESTAMOS (2021) DE JADE RAINHO

RESUMO

O texto analisa os elementos que compõem a realidade das migrantes venezuelanas, que narram suas histórias no curta-metragem documental *Hermanos, Aqui Estamos* (Irmãos, Aqui Estamos; 2021). Ao utilizar a análise temática enquanto metodologia (Braun & Clarke, 2006),

numa abordagem indutiva e contextualizada, identificamos cinco núcleos narrativos nos quais estão presentes as 12 personagens do curta-metragem documental. Identificamos três temas e sete subtemas oriundos do corpus de investigação: apresentação das personagens (quem são? como chegaram?); migrar (por que estão aqui? escolhas difíceis; trabalho) e afetos (sobre o país de origem; sobre ser migrante). Analisamos o curta-metragem documental ao articulá-lo com os conceitos de realismo capitalista (Fisher, 2020), a relação entre a comunicação e a condição de migrante, a partir de ElHajji (2018), e a subalternidade e representação femininas, segundo Spivak (1988/2010). Assim, foi possível compreender que esta produção documental é de grande importância por abrir espaço para o protagonismo de mulheres migrantes narrarem suas próprias histórias e alcançarem outras pessoas, inclusive outras migrantes venezuelanas. Desta forma, o curta-metragem documental *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021) preserva a memória dessas mulheres, funcionando simultaneamente como ferramenta de comunicação e de exposição dos problemas que a sociedade e o Estado brasileiro devem observar para o devido acolhimento e inclusão das mesmas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

migrantes venezuelanas, protagonismo, curta-metragem, comunicação

1. INTRODUCTION — OR WHERE WE STARTED FROM?

The work analyses the elements that make up the migrant reality, more specifically the Venezuelan migrants in Cuiabá, who feature in the documentary short film *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (Brothers, Here We Are), by director Jade Rainho (2021). This is an ongoing research project¹, which analyses the documentary short film produced in Mato Grosso as a reference for listening to these migrants, establishing what elements are present in the lives of women who have migrated and struggle to survive in Brazil, the country that received them.

As theoretical-analytical tools, we mapped Fisher's (2020) capitalist realism, understood as the feeling that capitalism is the only viable system, from which there is no way out besides capitalism itself, to understand migration and the discourses surrounding the reality of these migrants in Cuiabá; the relationship between discrimination against migrants and the exploitation of their labour, presented as part of an economic-political strategy (ElHajji, 2018); and female subalternity and representation based on the work *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

The research is qualitative, with descriptive objectives, basic in nature (Gil, 2002) and uses thematic analysis as a method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to categorize the elements that recur during the documentary short film, understanding the media narrative patterns about the experience of being a migrant woman in Brazil.

It's worth emphasizing that in this work we see the documentary short film as a fundamental production for the Venezuelan women interviewed to tell their stories directly. At the same time, because it is a communication product, shown at festivals and exhibitions, it makes it possible for more people to hear these women's stories nationally and internationally.

¹ This work is part of a larger study carried out by the Morada research group (Federal University of Mato Grosso).

We believe that the documentary short film, with a strong female presence, affords prominence to the subjects and plays an important role in listening to and communicating the reality of Venezuelan migrants in the capital of Mato Grosso, with their specificities and the (in)ability of the Brazilian state guaranteeing their fundamental rights. Finally, the analysis reveals the perspectives of invisible women, even though they can be seen in various parts of the city. Discriminated against because of their origin, gender, colour and oppressed by capitalist society, which forces them to migrate, create new dreams and leave people behind. In other words, they are often subject to processes of dehumanisation and, despite this, they resist, collectively, with their identities, memories, voices, being the protagonists of their stories, which justifies the relevance of this study.

2. THEORETICAL LENSES FOR UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION

Capitalist realism is “the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it”, as Fisher (2020, p. 10) puts it. The author explains that the term is not new, but its interpretation is.

What is new in my use of the term is the more expansive – and even exorbitant – meaning that I attribute to it. Capitalist realism, as I understand it, cannot be confined to art or to the almost propagandistic way in which advertising works. It is more of an all-encompassing atmosphere, which conditions not only the production of culture, but also the regulation of work and education – acting as a kind of invisible barrier, blocking thought and action. (Fisher, 2020, p. 33)

From what Fisher (2020) presents, it can be seen that capitalist realism becomes more evident with each new problem. For example, with intense migratory flows around the world, whether caused by wars, environmental, social, economic or other issues, people are forced to migrate. Many risk their lives on boats at sea (Peoples Dispatch, 2023) or pay middlemen, also known as coyotes², just to have the chance to [re]exist with dignity elsewhere. But how are those who manage to migrate, cross borders, the sea and the desert received? Is there a difference in the reception according to skin colour of the migrants? The rich and the poor? The Global North and the Global South?

Complementary to this, it is pertinent to present what Faustino and De Oliveira (2022) consider when they question the application of the concept of xeno-racism, coined by Sivanandan (2001), to the Brazilian reality. According to Sivanandan (2001)

if it is xenophobia, it is – in the way it belittles and reifies people before segregating and/or expelling them - a xenophobia that bears all the

² The director of the short film *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021), Jade Rainho, mentioned having had contact with some Venezuelan migrants who arrived in Brazil through middlemen.

hallmarks of traditional racism, except that it is not color-coded. (...) It is racism in substance, but xeno in form – a racism that is distributed to impoverished strangers, even if they are white. This is xeno-racism. (...) a characteristic of the Manichean world of global capitalism, where there are only rich and poor – and poverty is the new black. (p. 2)

However, Faustino and De Oliveira (2022) argue that the concept is “fragile” in the face of the “racialized conditions under which xenophobia manifests itself, especially in (colonial) contexts where the foreigner perceived as white has always enjoyed higher status” (p. 204). In this sense, the authors add:

what we are trying to emphasize is that racialization influences the social markers of difference and exclusion (...). This reality, however, is far from being guided by “racism that cannot be color-coded” (Sivanandan, 2001) and presents itself as a challenge that has not yet been sufficiently addressed by migration studies in Brazil. (p. 205)

However, it is worth highlighting the political and legal denial inflicted on foreigners, which, as Faustino and De Oliveira (2022) point out, based on what Sivanandan (2001) says, “makes it possible, through *demonization* and *hysteria* in the face of their presence, to control, criminalize or manage their transit, despite their basic human rights and their contribution to the national economies that receive them” (p. 196–197).

ElHajji (2018), in turn, points out that “the neoliberal project tries to adapt human movement to its managerial needs marked by the flexibilization of labour relations and the fluidity of the just-in-time workforce” (p. 94). Thus, it is possible to understand that migration and the migrant’s condition as a foreigner in a new country subjects them to discrimination and exploitation, without which capitalism would not exist, as Mezzadra points out (2013, p. 79). This is in line with what Fisher (2020) points out:

we must bear in mind that capitalism is both an impersonal, hyper-abstract structure and something that could not exist without our collaboration. (...) Capital is a parasite, an insatiable vampire, a zombie epidemic, but the living flesh it transforms into dead labour is ours, the zombies it produces are us. (p. 29)

Regarding the figure of the migrant, ElHajji (2018) points out a subversive potential capable of causing strangeness to the observer, either positively, for example, by causing fascination, or negatively by causing repulsion (p. 90). The author also emphasizes the minority nature of migrants who, historically, move to regions that have already been occupied.

In fact, one can only speak of human migrations, in the modern geographical, political, social and economic sense given to the notion, when the place of destination is already under the recognized dominion of a native people

who, in some way, have effective control over its extension. Otherwise, it would be settlement or colonization. (ElHajji, 2018, p. 90)

In addition, ElHajji (2018) points out, based on the exceptional legal and social status of the migrant, presented by Sayad (1998), that the condition of non-national places the migrant in a position of non-subject with minimal human rights, which only guarantee their immediate survival, “without dignity or expectations in the medium or long term” (ElHajji, 2018, p. 92). The author adds that “in the same way that good manners recommend that the guest has a reserved attitude towards the discussions of the host family, the individual or group being welcomed should not disturb the natives, question their social rules or philosophical principles” (p. 93).

In other words, the migrant is placed in a position of not questioning, not claiming and just accepting what is imposed on them, “from the moment the migrant accepts and adopts this ethical position, they find themselves trapped in a spiral of dispossession, discrimination, injustice and their future dehumanization” (ElHajji, 2018, p. 93). So it's important to ask, what can the migrant do?

Spivak (1988/2010), in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, reflects on Indian widows, questioning the idea of representation put forward by Foucault and Deleuze. Considering this idea presented by Spivak, it is possible to make a connection between the condition of these women and the condition of migrants, more specifically, the condition of migrant women. In addressing the issue of representation, the author points out that “if, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern subject has no history and cannot speak, the female subaltern subject is even more silenced” (Spivak, 1988/2010, p. 85).

Similarly, Demartini (2018) points out that “in Brazil, immigrants have always been considered as ‘others’, not always as ‘individuals’. They became numbers, part of economic, sociological and historical studies, but in a way they were not themselves present in this production” (p. 64). Thus, by understanding that the condition of migrant and migrant woman is a position of subalternity and distancing from the possibility of self-representation, the object of this work, the documentary short film *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021), is understood as an important means of representation, resistance and protagonism of these Venezuelan women who migrated to the city of Cuiabá and who, even though with some mediation/intervention by director Jade Rainho, were able to talk about their experiences in their own words.

According to the report produced by the Observatory of International Migration, in 2022 Brazil received 50,355 requests for refuge, of which 33,753 were made by people of Venezuelan origin. This figure represents 67% of all applications for refugee status (Junger et al., 2023, p. 12). Out of 33,000 applications, 45.4% were from Venezuelan women.

For a regional context, according to the *Atlas Temático: Observatório das Migrações em São Paulo – Migrações Venezuelanas* (Thematic Atlas: Observatory of Migration in São Paulo - Venezuelan Migrations; Baeninger et al., 2020, p. 267), between 2000 and 2019, 985 migrants from Venezuela resided in the capital of Mato Grosso. This migratory flow has intensified in the face of the Venezuelan crisis and, as a result, in recent years there

have been a significant increase in the number of visible Venezuelan migrants in the city. At the main traffic lights, roundabouts and overpasses, for example, families, especially Venezuelan women and children, ask for help, work or sell products to survive, as stated by Almeida et al. (2022). The short documentary film analysed in this work also presents data that contextualizes Venezuelan migration in Brazil:

since 2015, Venezuelans have been crossing the border into Brazil, fleeing the political, economic and humanitarian crisis in their country. Since 2018, they have become the largest foreign community in the country, ahead of Bolivians and Haitians. The projection for 2021 is 381,000 Venezuelan immigrants and refugees in Brazil. According to data from the UN Refugee Agency, there are approximately 5,000,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela around the world, making it the largest exodus in recent Latin American history (audiovisual information, *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos*, 2021).

With regard to women's migration, Morales (2007) explains that "women have always been seen as passive agents in migration processes, not as social actors" (p. 24). Costa and Schwinn (2018) add that "the causes of female migration are made up of multiple factors" (p. 202), which, according to Morales are often interrelated (2007), among them: the search for better economic and professional conditions and family reunification (p. 25). In addition, Costa and Schwinn (2018) add that the violence suffered by migrant women is different.

Due to the distance from their origins and references (place of birth, home, family); official indifference, with little or no government protection; abuse (especially sexual abuse) and stigmatization due to their status as women and migrants, there are different dimensions to the violence suffered by women, which has a direct influence on the process of adapting to a new reality. (Costa & Schwinn, 2018, p. 202)

However, despite the violence to which they are exposed, migrant men and women survive in the city, mainly on the streets, communicating in different ways to create communities. As highlighted by ElHajji (2018) "communication is a precious political, social and symbolic resource for the organization of migrant communities and their favourable positioning in the destination country and towards the rest of the host society" (p. 100). Or even as a means of survival, since "many find the busy streets of the city as a possibility to secure food and money and, to do so, create some communication strategies to present themselves as candidates for formal or informal employment" (Almeida et al., 2022, p. 142).

It is therefore possible to see that communication in the format of a documentary short film makes it possible, above all, for the migrant women who feature in this production, to deal with the attempts of dehumanization that they face due to their status as women and migrants. Thus, answering the question posed earlier about what migrants

can do, based on the short documentary *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021), it is possible to say that migrants, or more specifically, Venezuelan migrant women, can be the protagonists of their stories and become “less ‘strange’, more present, part of the same society” (Demartini, 2018, p. 64), thus resisting the constant practices of dehumanization they face in foreign territory.

3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

For this study, we opted for a qualitative analytical approach, defined by Gil (2002) as “a sequence of activities that involves reducing the data, categorizing it, interpreting it and writing a report” (p. 133). We also believe that the research is exploratory, since it “aims to provide a general, approximate view of a given fact” (Gil, 2008, p. 27).

With regard to analysis, we believe that thematic analysis (TA; Braun & Clarke, 2006) is suitable for this research, since the authors point out that this method should be seen as fundamental to qualitative research and that one of its benefits is its flexibility; also, thanks to its theoretical freedom, TA provides a tool “that can potentially provide a rich and detailed, albeit complex, set of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5).

In addition, Braun and Clarke (2006) point to TA as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) from data” and add that “it minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p. 6). Added to this is the fact that TA, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is a more accessible type of analysis, especially for those starting out in qualitative research and this work was produced as part of a scientific initiation program (p. 9). Furthermore, as the authors point out, TA can serve to reflect reality. This characteristic of this method is in line with the main objective of this work, which is to analyse the elements that make up the migrant reality.

Despite its particular characteristics, Rosa and Mackedanz (2021) point out that TA is similar to other types of analysis: “some of the phases of TA are similar to the phases of other qualitative research and are therefore not necessarily exclusive to this type of analysis” (p. 13). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) point to two ways of identifying themes or patterns from TA: inductive or deductive. Inductive analysis differs from deductive analysis in that it is guided by the data and not by theories or epistemologies, although in some way this data is analysed on the basis of the researcher’s previous conceptions, since “data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (p. 12). From this, we understand that this research was carried out with an inductive and contextual approach, since it takes data as its starting point for analysis.

Rosa and Mackedanz (2021) present six phases for carrying out TA, which are: familiarization with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing the themes; defining and naming the themes; and, finally, producing the report (p. 13).

In this process of familiarizing ourselves with the data, the short documentary film *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021) was watched several times and the speeches of the Venezuelan migrant women who feature in the film were transcribed and read repeatedly. In the initial code generation phase, codes were produced that would result in possible

themes, which were then identified, transformed or discarded. The themes were then reviewed and [re]named.

For the analysis, we divided the film into five narrative clusters: firstly, Alexandra's (G1); secondly, Marioly's (G2); thirdly, Maria's (G3); fourthly, Karla's (G4); and fifthly, Maria Antonieta's (G5), as shown in Figure 1 below, which shows the corpus for analysing the text. The subjects in each group have been identified in Figure 1 by the letter S, plus numbers. It can therefore be seen that subjects of group one and five have four subjects each and that all the groups together have twelve characters. The lines of analysis are: the feelings narrated by the subjects, gender, the choices imposed by the condition of migrant, the neoliberal discourse and work.

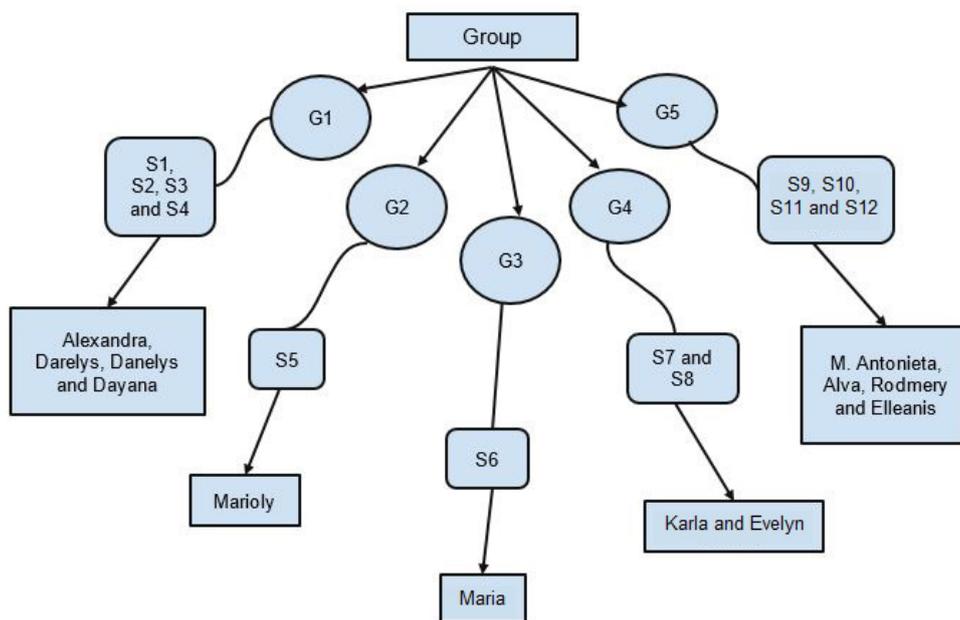


Figure 1. Diagram of the narrative groups and subjects in the documentary short film

4. ANALYSIS

The short documentary *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021) has a running time of 24 minutes and 50 seconds and was produced in Cuiabá by director Jade Rainho with funding from Lei n.º 14.017 (Law No. 14.017, 2020; Aldir Blanc), through the MT Nascentes Public Notice issued by the Secretaria de Estado de Cultura, Esporte e Lazer de Mato Grosso (Mato Grosso State Secretariat for Culture, Sport and Leisure). The synopsis of the film, available on the website of the production company Cadju Filmes (n.d.), presents this production as a “short documentary about Venezuelan immigrants in Cuiabá-MT, refugees from the great economic, social and humanitarian crisis in their country” (para. 7).

The documentary was played at various events in the capital of Mato Grosso, such as the launch event for volume I of the book *Cinema e Audiovisual em Mato*

Grosso (Cinema and Audiovisual in Mato Grosso), held at the Federal University of Mato Grosso, in Brazil, with the presence of director Jade Rainho, and the event Encontro com Cinema – Realizadores de Mato Grosso (Meetings With Cinema - Mato Grosso's Producers Edition), promoted by the Cine Teatro Cuiabá, which was attended by Venezuelan migrants living at the Casa do Migrante. In addition to these events, the short documentary film was also screened at national and international festivals, and even won an award at the Women's Voices Now Film Festival³. The motivation to produce the film, according to the director, came from the normalization of Venezuelan migrants as part of the local landscape and the "prejudiced statements" (Santos et al., 2023, p. 246) she heard. Some questions raised by Rainho, such as "who are these people? What are they doing here? What brought them here?" (Santos et al., 2023, p. 246) address the questions that make up the sub-themes of our analysis: "who are they", "how did they get here" and "why are they here".

It should also be noted that the film, as highlighted in Santos et al. (2023), was filmed at the beginning of 2021, "at the height" of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the vaccine "had not yet been distributed to the population, so when we filmed, no one had been vaccinated yet" (p. 250). The director also says that, because of the pandemic, the border was closed and, as a result, many of the women, "those who had been arriving recently, crossed through the 'trocha' – which is through the jungle, with the coyotes, illegally" (Santos et al., 2023, p. 250).

The director also emphasizes the female protagonism, which for her represented a "commitment" as a woman "to bring these female narratives, to privilege this space so that women can be heard, and seen and listened to, so it was a very important film in that sense too" (Santos et al., 2023, pp. 252–253). The director, Jade Rainho, also explain that the contrast between the realities of the subjects in the documentary was intentional.

Yes, the intention was to show this contrast, in fact, these dualities, these multiple points of view and realities, so that we can create a space for reflection and a confrontation of prejudices and judgments, so that we can also hear from each person what is going on, and from this, in a subtle and sensitive way, generate discomfort, strangeness and questions. (Santos et al., 2023, p. 253)

Thus, when watching the short documentary, it is possible to see that the subjects are Venezuelan women and children who have different stories, but who are marked by their migrant status. Thus, when analysing the film, it was possible to identify five thematic clusters, represented by the letter G, which are: G1. Alexandra and her daughters; G2. Marioly; G3. Maria; G4. Karla and Evelyn; G5. Maria Antonieta, Alva, Rodmery and Elleanis. Table 1 shows the subjects and a summary of the central discourse of each Group.

³ Jade was awarded Best First-Time Filmmaker, Documentary Short for *Hermanos, Aqui Estamos* (2021).

GROUP (G)	GROUP 1 (G1)	GROUP 2 (G2)	GROUP 3 (G3)	GROUP 4 (G4)	GROUP 5 (G5)
SUBJECTS (S)	Alexandra (S1), Danelys (S2), Darelys (S3) and Dayana (S4)	Marioly (S5)	Maria (S6)	Karla (S7) and Evelyn (S8)	Maria Antonieta(S9), Alva (S10), Rodmery (S11) and Elleanis (S12)
DISCOURSE THEMES	What it was like in Venezuela, the difficulties there and why they came to Brazil	Wants to work and doesn't agree with people begging in the street	She's indigenous, doesn't know life in the city and only gets charity when she takes her children out to beg for money on the streets	They arrived with nothing, today they get a little because they beg, but they can't work because they don't have papers	They're working, they've had difficulties too, but they've come to seek a better life for their families in Brazil

Table 1. Summary of interviews

After identifying the groups and the subjects, codes were produced which resulted in the following themes: introducing the subjects, migrating and feelings. In addition to these, other themes were initially established, such as difficult choices, gender, work and dreams. The themes of “difficult choices” and “work” became sub-themes.

The themes of “gender” and “dreams” were reconfigured. Based on the assumption that the presentation of the subjects carried gender topics, but was not limited to them, we opted for a sub-theme that corresponded to the codes produced, so it is understood that the sub-theme “who are they?” implicitly contemplates the topics that could be exposed in the theme “gender”. Similarly, the topic “dreams” was renamed “why are they here?” (Table 2).

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Introducing the subjects	Who are they?
	How did they get here?
Migrating	Why are they here?
	Difficult choices
	Work
Feelings	About the country of origin
	About being a migrant

Table 2. Systematization of interviews⁴

In addition, from the analysis of the data we understand that the sub-theme “how did they get here?” is important for the presentation of the subjects and that the feeling can be divided into those that relate to Venezuela, such as missing their homeland or sadness about the situation in the country, but also those that relate to the migrant

⁴ Attached to this article is a table categorising the interviewees’ speeches with the themes, sub-themes and units of analysis (Annex 1).

condition or the country to which these women migrated, such as the desire to explore Brazil or the difficulties encountered.

As the name suggests, the first theme “introducing the subjects” is made up of excerpts that introduce the subjects or information that has been extracted from the subjects’ speeches which forms part of this presentation. The theme also shows passages in which the subjects explain how they got to the city of Cuiabá, about the journey, about what it was like to arrive in a new place as a migrant.

The “migrating” theme contains excerpts related to migration, whether it’s the reason why the subjects migrated, the choices they made in search for better living conditions, the daily choices they made in order to survive and also excerpts related to work. Finally, the “feelings” theme features passages describing feelings and emotions about the subjects’ country of origin and the country that receives them.

Returning to the first theme, it can be seen in the introduction of the subjects that almost all the adults are mothers and wives. Alexandra, the first character to be introduced in the movie, is the mother of nine children and Alva, the mother of one. Karla and Evelyn are recorded in one of the city’s streets selling water and asking for work with a makeshift poster made of cardboard. Maria, similarly, is asking for financial help. By communicating through messages written on pieces of cardboard on the streets of Cuiabá, Karla, Evelyn and Maria make use of what Almeida et al. (2022, pp. 10–11) call communication strategies.

Karla tells us about her arrival, while Alexandra tells us about the journey to the capital of Mato Grosso. Marioly, Maria Antonieta and Alva tell us what led them to come to Brazil. All three reported similar reasons: the situation in their country of origin, the desire for better opportunities and a better future for their children and families.

On the subject of difficult choices, Alexandra recounts what it was like to be away from her husband for three years and the difficulty of not being able to feed her family, not because of the lack of money, but because of the lack of food in the country. Alexandra and her family’s migration, therefore, is motivated by family reunification and the desire for a dignified life, corroborating Costa and Schwinn (2018) and Morales (2007), who argue that migration is multifactorial and that these factors are often interrelated.

Maria, who belongs to the Warao ethnic group⁵, tells us about the need to ask for money with the children, since without them she can’t receive donations to survive. We understand that Maria’s livelihood in Venezuela was linked to nature, as she says: “We don’t live in the city. We live by the river” (S6, 00:11:55). In other words, their reality in their country of origin did not correspond to the demands imposed by the capitalist system. Although it is not possible to know whether Maria, being indigenous, received any kind of aid from the state when she was in Venezuela, we can see how the condition

⁵ Regarding the reality of the Warao people, director Jade Rainho says that “this is the first time we’ve had a transnational migration process, so they left their homes on the Orinoco River, in the Amazon rainforest, to come to the cities, there they had many things, all this abundance of nature, of being able to harvest, of being able to fish, and here they find themselves confined to the outskirts, having to pay for water, electricity, rent, and they’re in a lot of debt, and there’s an extra challenge because many of them don’t even speak Spanish, so it’s this process, of not speaking another language and yet coming to another country that doesn’t speak that other language either” (Santos et al., 2023, pp. 250-251).

of migrant imposes on her a logic of exploitation that is essential to the existence of capitalism (Mezzadra, 2013). Since Maria needs to have money to pay the rent, buy food, water and other basic items, she is forced to beg on the streets with the children. Still on the subject of difficult choices, Evelyn tells of having to beg for money or work on the streets in order to survive and provide for her son, who is in Venezuela: “either I beg on the streets, or I don’t eat. Or I don’t send anything for my son to eat back in Tucupita, Venezuela” (S8, 00:14:58).

When talking about work, Darelys, one of Alexandra’s daughters, says that her family was lucky when they were still in Venezuela because her father migrated to Brazil to work. Her mother, Alexandra, also says that before the economic crisis in the country, she was an entrepreneur and had her own business, a bakery. In the short documentary, Alexandra tells her story while making a recipe for Venezuelan bread in the kitchen of the Casa do Migrante in Cuiabá.

Marioly, for her part, reproduces the neoliberal logic by saying that she disagrees with the migrants who beg on the streets, but she also says that she wants to work for herself and her children, to have a better life, like the one she had before in Venezuela. In contrast, Evelyn, who had been in Cuiabá for about a month, reports that every day she had to ask for help and join informal work, since she didn’t have the documents to get a formal job.

Following the illusion fostered by the entrepreneurial society pointed out by James (2008, p. 150), Marioly believes that her success depends on her alone, regardless of the conditions, as we can see in this excerpt: “I think that if I have two hands, I have two legs, I believe that I can... do it. However, if I didn’t have legs or hands, I think I could do it too” (S5, 00:10:23).

Regarding feelings, Danelys, also Alexandra’s daughter, says that she doesn’t know many places in her country of origin and that even though she is happy in Brazil, she wants to be happy in Venezuela. Her sister Darelys, on the other hand, says that although she likes living there, in recent years things have become more difficult, as the family often couldn’t afford to buy food or school supplies. She says that she felt sad to see the situation in the country, to see the people she loves going through difficulties and points out that not everyone was lucky enough to come to Brazil like her.

Alexandra also recounts her sadness at having closed her bakery and having fired her employees, who supported their families with their work. In addition, on recalling how she and her family had to share a kilo of food for a week, she points out that she doesn’t miss the country during the crisis, with poverty and hunger, and says that what she experienced doesn’t correspond to a dignified life and diet.

On the subject of being a migrant, Alexandra expresses her desire to get to know Brazil, just as she did Venezuela. She adds that she wants her daughters to be interested in this too and stresses that they should get to know all the country has to offer, as there are no borders for them. At the end of the short film, her daughter Dayana recites a poem she wrote, entitled “We Venezuelans Have no Limits”, which is in line with her mother’s words.

Still on the subject of living as a migrant, Darelys points out that it's not easy to get used to a new country and a new language and culture. Regarding the difficulties, Karla says that it was a shock to arrive in Brazil with nothing and that the little they've managed to survive on since arriving is because they've begged on the streets. Evelyn agrees with Karla and says that those were very difficult days and that she cried a lot, missing her son and having to beg on the streets to manage, albeit precariously, to support herself and her family.

Maria Antonieta, like Darelys, talks about the difficulty with the language, and also reinforces Karla and Evelyn's point when she says that the first few days in Brazil were difficult. Finally, Alva thanks Brazil for accepting Venezuelan migrants and for the opportunity to improve their lives. In her poem, Dayana also shows her gratitude to the country that welcomed her.

What can be seen when analysing the subjects' stories is that, as mentioned above, although the characters have different stories, many have experienced similar situations, feelings, difficulties and decisions, both when they decided to migrate and in the process of migrating and adapting to the new country. It's worth highlighting the powerful perception of Alexandra and her daughters, who don't feel limited by their migrant status; on the contrary, they use it as a potential to explore new places. Another notable factor was Alexandra's daughter's desire to return to her country of origin, which shows her hope that the country will overcome its social, political and economic problems.

5. FINAL THOUGHTS - OR HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

By using TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify the themes that run through the migrant reality of the characters in the documentary short film, it was possible to collect, organize, categorize and analyse data that demonstrates the importance of the role of migrant women as narrators of their own history, as well as being an important source for future analysis. As this is a work in progress on the communication product that is the documentary short film *Hermanos, Aquí Estamos* (2021), we believe that this study achieves what was proposed within the current context of doing research in Brazil. In this sense, the categorization of themes and sub-themes helped us to observe the similarities and differences between the main subjects in the short film, and also to identify the elements that make up the reality of the migrant women who feature in the short film. In addition, it was observed that, in general, the subjects of the short film came to Brazil in search of decent living conditions for themselves and their families, but that, up till that point in time, many had faced precarious situations in order to survive and support their families.

However, despite the conditions imposed, we also saw from the theme of "feelings" that these women carry dreams, expectations, longings, which go beyond the immediate survival to which they are subjected by the condition of non-national (ElHajji,

2018). This shows that these migrants are much more than numbers or mere “backdrops” in the capital of Mato Grosso. They are people with a past, present and future.

Thus, it was possible to observe through this analysis that the documentary short film plays a fundamental role in enhancing the stories of Venezuelan migrants in Cuiabá, by providing not only representation, but protagonism for migrant women, who are often treated as subordinate subjects (Spivak, 1988/2010). The short film also makes it possible for these stories to reach various places, including to other Venezuelan migrants who are going through or have gone through similar situations, and for other research on migration to use material like this, in which migrants are the protagonists.

It is important to mention that this production, as well as opening up an important space for these stories to be told, is essential to highlighting the problems that still need to be faced by society and the Brazilian state, which must welcome these migrants in accordance with the Fundamental Rights laid down in the 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (1988).

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ANNEX 1 — CATEGORISATION OF THE INTERVIEWEES' DISCOURSE

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	UNITS OF ANALYSIS
Introducing the interviewees	Who are they?	S1 says she is married and the mother of nine children.
		S5 has kids.
		S6 is an indigenous woman from the Warao ethnic group. "We do not live in the city. We live on the river. There, on our land, we can't. We can't..." (S6)
		S7 and S8 have children and had been in Cuiabá for a month at the time of the recordings.
		S9 has a husband and two children.
How did they get here?		S10 has a son.
		"My husband picked us up in Venezuela, because he had been working here in Brazil for three years, to save up money to pick us up in Venezuela. He picked us up in Venezuela and took us to Pacaraima. From Pacaraima, we travelled to Boa Vista by bus. There, we spent twelve days living in Boa Vista while we did our paperwork. Then my husband took a plane to Manaus. In Manaus, we took another plane to Porto Velho. And from Porto Velho, another to here, to Cuiabá". (S1)
		"Because we arrived with nothing. We arrived with the clothes we had on our bodies, and we did not know that we were going to be on the street, asking for money on the street, asking for help on the street, or going out on the street like this, with a sign asking for money, asking for work". (S7)

Migrate	Why are they here?	"I came here to rebuild my life, to find opportunities for my children. A school, a chance to work. It does not matter if it is not what I studied for. It does not matter". (S5)
		"I left my country for the same reason, because of the economy, because... because there was nothing". (S9)
		"For Brazilians who do not know, who do not know why we are here, that is why: to help our family. Our country is not in the best condition. As my friend here also said, sometimes they see us in the street and do not ask: 'why are you here? What do you need?' But rather judge the person". (S10)
		"We are (...) fighting for our families who are in Venezuela. Me, for my son. For an improvement, for a good future for him too, further down the line". (S10)
Difficult choices		"Coming here was difficult, very difficult. Because we had to separate our family. My husband came first. We were separated for three years. I stayed with my six girls, because I am the mother of nine children. I do not want to go back. It was... a long, long time of looking at my daughters and them saying they were hungry and not being able to have enough food for them. (...). I might have had money, but I could not buy". (S1)
		"(...) Either we bought food or school supplies. So, we stopped studying to buy food. Sometimes notebooks were more expensive than meat". (S3)
		"You have to put up with the sun, a lot of it. People say: no, do not go with the children, the children get too much sun, the children feel too much, they will get sick. If we do not go out with the children, we do not make it, they do not donate... Brazilians do not donate to us, they do not collaborate". (S6)
		"We do not want to ask for money, but necessity forces us to. Either I beg on the street, or I do not eat. Or I do not send anything for my son to eat in Tucupita, Venezuela". (S8)
Work		"The lucky thing was that my father came here, to Brazil, and he started working for us. He worked and sent money". (S3)
		"When I lived in my country, I worked with this. I had a small bakery. I was... a micro-entrepreneur. I ran the whole business on my own, I worked for myself. We made all kinds of bread. And it was a good thing, because it was... we could cover all our needs, studies, house, material things, car, property. It was very, very profitable for us". (S1)
		"I want to work, I want to have the life I had in Venezuela again. To work, to do something for my children". (S5)
		"I do not like sitting back, waiting for someone else to work for me. No, I do not like that. (...) I do not agree with people who have these signs that say: help me. Yes, they can help you the first time because you are new, but if you have been here for two years, what pride can you give your country? (...) Because to stay on the streets, it would have been better to stay in Venezuela". (S5)
		"And since we do not have documents, we cannot get the documents to work formally, they do not give us any work. It has been a month in which every day we ask for help with a job". (S8)
		"I have got a stable job, I am employed, my husband is too. And here we are fighting every day". (S9)

Feelings	About the country of origin	“There are many places in my country that I have not seen in person, I have only seen them in books”. (S2)
		“On the one hand, I’m happy, because I am getting to know a new world that I did not know before, (...) I am happy here, but I also want to be happy back home”. (S2)
		“It was nice living there, but it has been three years, more or less, since we have been able to get food or school supplies”. (S3)
		“It was always a fight over food. You could even see people eating from the rubbish. I was sad because it is my country, right? And I was very sad because the people I love, my friends, my classmates, they stayed there too. I am lucky enough to have come here, but not them. The ones who stayed are because they do not have the money to leave”. (S3)
		“But we had to close down, we had to shut down the whole business and it is sad, because not only our family depended on it, but also the employees, the employees’ families. Everyone was out of work. We had to lay off all the staff”. (S1)
	“There were seven of us. And during the week, sometimes I could buy a kilo of rice, (...) a kilo of beans, a kilo of pasta. For seven days, seven people. (...) No, it is not fair. That is not life. That is not food. I do not miss my country. I do not miss Venezuela. I do not miss a poor Venezuela, a ruined Venezuela, a Venezuela of hunger, poverty, misery, pain, illness, anguish. I do not miss that Venezuela. I do not want that Venezuela”. (S1)	
	About being a migrant	“Just as I have got to know my whole country, I want to get to know Brazil too. I like travelling, I like to know where I am, to meet people, to experience. I want my daughters to have this motivation too. Since there are no barriers or borders for us, we have to get to know everything”. (S1)
		“It is hard to get used to a new country like Brazil. A new language, a new culture”. (S2)
		“But it was hard. Because we arrived with nothing, no food, nothing. Well, now we can support ourselves a little. Because we walk the streets”. (S7)
		“The first few days were very bad. Very bad. I cried every night, firstly because I missed my son so much. And secondly, because it’s uncomfortable. It’s uncomfortable to ask in the street”. (S8)
“The first few days? Difficult. Firstly, the names of the fruits here are different names that we do not know. They work with codes here. We have to learn a lot of codes. How to communicate with the customer, because we do not speak Portuguese well. Not yet”. (S9)		
“(...) I thank Brazil for the opportunity and for accepting Venezuelans here. Sincerely, thank you very much”. (S10)		
S4 declaims their own poem “We Venezuelans Have no Limits”: “I left my country, it wasn’t easy. The long road I travelled where I met wonderful people and beautiful places. I know a small but large part of this country that welcomed me and helped me. I am very grateful. Although my journey is long, it is about to end”.		

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