

## **VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN BRAZIL: HOST COMMUNITY`S RECEPTIVITY**

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# VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN BRAZIL: HOST COMMUNITY'S RECEPTIVITY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is an important part of human history, but it takes on a different dimension when people are forced to leave their hometown searching for shelter due to human rights violations and persecution. In general, these situations are motivated by wars or crisis, achieving global relevance. According to the UN Refugee Agency's *Global Trends - 2021 Report*, by the end of 2020, 82.4 million people have been displaced from their places of origin. From this total, 5.4 million represent Venezuelan migrants motivated by the severe political and economic disorder in their country. Since 2013, Venezuela has been facing severe problems. Its population finds no state support and have their fundamental rights violated by the lack of access to food, medicine, health services, and escalating violence (Vaz, 2017).

Among the host countries, Brazil stands out as a destination option for these migrants, who leave their homes in search of dignified living conditions and see the chance to rebuild their lives in the Brazilian territory. According to the General Coordination of the National Committee for Refugees - CONARE, from 2011 to 2020, the number of requests for recognition of refugee status was 153,050. Roraima is the main entry route for these people and the state with the highest number of asylum requests, while São Paulo ranks second in requests.

In this sense, one of the critical aspects of rebuilding migrants' lives and restoring respect for human rights in their lives is how they integrate in the host community. Integration can be seen as a two-way process in which both, the migrant and the local citizen, are vital parts of its development (Farrugia, 2009). Thus, the hospitality of individuals in local communities is a crucial pillar in understanding this dynamic (Valtonen, 2001). In addition, other important variables, such as context, must be taken into consideration. This is because the receptivity occurs directly influenced by social, political, and cultural aspects, which may vary depending on the locality (Castle, 2003).

Despite its importance, studies that aim to analyze how this interaction occurs and the factors that influence this process are still recent in the theoretical field. In this sense, this paper aims to describe the elements that impact the Venezuelan refugees receptivity in two different Brazilian's communities, Roraima and São Paulo. To this end, receptivity will be studied as a result of the relationship of individuals with their communities, addressing the constructs of community's identification and commitment. The concepts of xenophobia and the sense of threat associated with the reception of migrants will also be explored. The interaction of these constructs will enable a better understanding of how they affect the contact's intention and, consequently, how reception works. This research is expected to contribute to raise the knowledge of this topic, that is increasing it's importance not only in the academic, but in the practical fields. For future steps, these theoretical contributions may translate into the improvement of public policies for reception and welcoming of refugees in Brazil.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section will be divided into two parts. The first one will deal with how the individuals develop relationship with their communities. The second one will discuss the component and resultant variables of Receptivity, the central object of this study. These are xenophobia, the sense of threat, and contact's intention.

### 2.1 The Communities

Community is, historically, a difficult term to conceptualize. Currently, when interpersonal relationships are becoming more individualized and sometimes taken as consumer relations, the idea of community in the communitarian sense and the prioritization of the collective good seems to go against the phenomenon of globalization, being nothing more than a "relic of the

utopias of the good society of yesteryear," as Bauman (2001) points out. Also, the famous historian, Eric Hobsbawm (1998), comments that "the word 'community' has never been used more indiscriminately than in the decades when communities in the sociological sense have become difficult to find in real life".

However, although these authors suggest some kind of degradation of the communities phenomenon, it's concept has constantly been evolving along with the history of societies. Berger (1978) points out that as a society changes, the intellectual conceptualization of the construct also changes and indicates more than 100 types of conceptualizations of what a Community is. Gusfield (1975), through a constructivist perspective, states that the phenomenon of communities has two major conditioning factors: a homogeneous culture formed by languages, subjective norms, and shared histories that generate a feeling of oneness within a people; and familiar territory, which is identified together with the community relations of which it is the background.

In contemporary society, it is common for neighborhoods to be called communities, even if there are no ties or bonds between the people who live there. Therefore, Berger (1978) points out that traditional concepts of communities are not as apt for modern reality, and it is more beneficial for the concept, to be defined in a more pragmatically way. To this end, he conceptualizes Community according to Warren's (1972) definition, that community "is the combination of social units and systems that perform the major social functions having local relevance." In this more functional perspective, neighborhoods are places that serve as organizations for people to perform functions relevant to its members, and because of it can be considered a community.

With that said, a primary concern of this research is to understand the impact individuals' relationships with their communities have on their intention to contact Venezuelan refugees. To this end, we sought to understand communities as a typical setting or territory where the contact behaviors of such individuals occur. Therefore, the definition of "community" is proposed as a group of individuals who live and interact in a specific place and are affected by the events in that place. In the following topics, the types of relationships people develop with their local communities will be explained in two aspects: Identification and Commitment.

## **2.2 Community Identification**

In the community's literature, a very recurring theme is how people see themselves within their community and what it means to them. In the context of community psychology, Hummon (1986) states that community identification is a crucial factor in the literature, reflecting the degree to which individuals identify with their territorial community, especially their residential areas. On the same construct, Mesch and Manor (1998) demonstrate that people with a more substantial degree of local attachment have more significant social and political involvement within their communities. Communities composed of highly attached people are more likely to protect the social, physical characteristics that define their community.

According to the theory of Commitment in the workplace developed by Klein et al. (2012), commitment is an affective psychological bond based on volitional target-free dedication and responsibility. This concept can be directed to different targets such as communities. Thus, the first hypothesis proposed by this research is: *H1: Identification with the Community generates Community Commitment.*

Although there are several personal benefits for members of communities that have a solid local attachment (Harris et al., 1995), the same attachment can also induce intergroup conflict when new people, who are culturally and ethnically different from the native group, move to a place or Community where there is a high level of local attachment of its members (Fried, 2000). Furthermore, Branscombe and Wann (1994) suggested that people who are strongly identified with a social group feel threatened about their group identity, leading to a rejection of the group

perceived as threatening. Such evidence gave rise to hypothesis H2, linked to the xenophobia construct, which will be discussed further below: *H2: Community identification positively affects xenophobia.*

### **2.3 Community Commitment**

Commitment is a construct that has undergone an exhaustive literature review throughout history (Klein et al., 2012). During the evolution of the concept, Meyer and Allen (1990) proposed the so-called three-dimensional model formed by affective, continuity, and normative bases within the context of organizational commitment research. However, due to criticism concerning the lack of clarity in conceptualizing the multiple elements in the model (Jaros, 1997) and the empirical inconsistency of the model (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2010), the model lost its validity in the attempt to explain the concept.

In turn, Klein et al. (2012) point out that it is necessary to revisit assumptions made during the conceptualization of the term. As Klein et al. (2012) question, "is a commitment a psychological state, an attitude, or a behavior? Is it a commitment if one feels that there is no choice? What does it mean to be committed?". Furthermore, the author (2012) clarifies that this term has undergone theoretical stretching and has reached the point of "conceptual quagmire," that is, a point where such stretching has caused inaccuracies in the definition of the concept (Osigweh, 1989), due to the numerous attempts to decipher the construct of Commitment redundantly (Klein et al., 2012, 2014).

Starting from the premise that the construct composes all organizational bonds, Klein et al. (2014) propose a new, more precise conceptualization of the term with the following definition: "commitment is defined here as a volitional psychological bond that reflects dedication and responsibility to a specific target. In other words, it is a type of psychological attachment to something or someone in which the individual makes a voluntary choice to dedicate and care for that something or someone. The authors (2014) also point out the several advantages of this one-dimensional model; among them, the model's applicability to multiple objects beyond the organizational environment stands out because it is precisely a psychological bond with a free target. This revision of the model has made it possible to apply commitment theory to the study of communities.

Despite the paucity of literature on Commitment to traditional concepts of Community compared to organizational contexts, another way to understand Commitment to local communities is the concept of Grzeskowiak et al. (2003), which refers to the construct as the level to which residents feel responsible for their communities, demonstrating a lack of interest in leaving the Community of their own volition. Also, within the context of cognitivist research in online environments, recent studies (Kang et al., 2007) point out that community-directed Commitment is present when residents of communities possess a sense of belonging to the Community (equivalent to Sarason's Psychological Community Feeling, 1974), affectionate bonds toward other community members, and openness to voice opinions, engage, and participate in community activities.

From the literature, it appears that Commitment to the Community translates into both feelings of belonging and practical attitudes and activities aimed at improving and caring for it, but is Commitment capable of influencing attitudes that are not intrinsic to the Community? In other words, is it capable of influencing attitudes towards objects or individuals outside the Community? Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) conclude that the best predictor of behavior is its intention to perform it, regardless of the nature of the behavioral criterion. Thus, it can be safely stated that the intention to contact individuals from other groups is a good predictor of contact behaviors such as greeting, initiating conversations, and displays of interest. In turn, these behaviors stimulate the likelihood of understanding and cooperation between groups, improve

convivial relationships, and thus facilitate the integration and Receptivity of foreign individuals (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to the meta-analytic study by Armitage and Conner (2001), there is statistical evidence supporting the TAP model for predicting intentions and behaviors. However, there is also evidence that the model has a higher degree of prediction for self-reported behaviors than observed behaviors. Considering that contact intention is preceded by receptivity and this relationship is possibly moderated by commitment to the community, this study sought to prove the theoretical link between behavioral intention and actual behavior since the literature points to a direct relationship between these variables. Therefore, hypothesis eight was elaborated: *H8: Contact intention positively affects contact behavior.*

## **2.4 Xenophobia**

Several theories have sought to explain the origin of xenophobia. In the economic approach, the Realist Group Conflict Theory (Sherif et al., 1961) suggests that group conflict is caused by a dispute over scarce resources, leading to prejudice against the outgroup, as its members come to be seen as a source of competition by members of the in-group. In turn, Reynolds and Vine (1987) stated that xenophobia is a "psychological state of hostility or fear toward strangers." Crowther (1995) emphasized that xenophobia is directed toward individuals who come from other countries and toward whom native individuals have "an intense aversion or fear" (p. 1385). Given this, it is possible to observe the multidimensionality of the xenophobia construct. In order to reinforce the theoretical framework of the phenomenon, Watts (1996, p. 97) hypothesizes that xenophobia is a "discriminatory potential" that is activated when an ideology such as ethnocentrism is connected with a feeling of an individual or collective threat. A classic example of this threat, according to the author, is when there is a personal or cultural perception that foreigners are taking the jobs of native workers. Watts (1996) further suggests that such prejudice reinforces political xenophobia, which in turn encourages the creation of public policies unfavorable to immigrant individuals. However, economic and social data do not support the typical anti-immigrant arguments, as there are economical and crime rate statistics that highlight the lack of support for the claim that immigration is responsible for these economic and social tensions in US society (Lee et al., 2001; National Academy of Science, 1997).

It is clear that the perception of the threat of jobs by immigrants is very present in Brazilian common sense. However, this is nothing more than a prejudice. Souza and Silveira (2018) highlight UNHCR's data that, of the Venezuelan immigrants who have requested refuge from the Brazilian government, 31% hold informal jobs, and many remain unemployed due to the lack of legal authorization to work. Moreover, according to Esses et al. (2001), a robust social domination orientation, which is related to the individual belief in the existence of cultural structures ("world order") and social inequalities as something inherent in human society, represents a strong predictor of anti-immigrant sentiments. Thus, the literature on the topic has concluded that ethnocentrism, nationalism, and the belief in a hierarchical world order are strongly associated with xenophobia.

However, one of the pillars on the origins of xenophobia is found in the research on the sense of threat towards immigrants. It is notable in the literature the Integrated Theory of Threat proposed by Stephan and colleagues (Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan et al., 1998, 1999), which will be discussed in depth in the following topic. Based on this hypothesis, Esses et al. (2005) conducted an experimental study showing that nationalism, as a belief in the superiority of one's nation-state over others, influences more negative views about immigrants than patriotism, defined as one's affective attachment to one's nation.

In this section, attitudinal components of xenophobia were identified as fear, aversion, and concern toward foreigners, precursors of xenophobia. It is important to highlight that these

behaviors manifest themselves through explicit prejudice, to be quantified and measured in this paper, and those sociocultural components, including ethnocentric beliefs and subjective norms, are generally influential in such behaviors. Based on the literature presented, xenophobia is defined in this study as a behavior of explicit prejudice against foreigners originating in a sense of threat. In this sense, the following proposition is elaborated: *H3: The sense of threat positively affects xenophobia.*

## **2.5 Sense of Threat**

*Integrated Threat Theory* (ITT) was proposed by Stephan and Stephan (1996) and further developed by Stephan et al. (1998, 1999). The model defends that attitudes toward outsider groups are guided by a sense of threat arising from the presence of the other group. Before delving into the concept of the theory, it is important to mention the validity of this model to integrate the analysis of host communities. In a meta-analytic study on intergroup attitudes, Riek et al. (2006) pointed out that the feeling of intergroup threat has an essential relationship with attitudes and behaviors toward the external group. According to the same research, ITT proved advantageous in over-analyzing each threat individually, as it looks at the interrelatedness of threat types as an integrated framework, bringing more theoretical consistency to the model.

Furthermore, a recent study (Makashvili et al., 2018) proposed to test ITT, especially in terms of the realistic and symbolic threats, using religiosity and gender as predictors of prejudice. The study, using ITT as one of the theoretical frameworks to identify the triggers of prejudice and, using an experimental design, examined the effects of symbolic and realistic threats on prejudice in undergraduate students in the country of Georgia. The study concluded that threats alone have the potential to explain an increase in prejudice. According to the model, realistic threats consist of threats to the very physical existence, political and economic power, and physical well-being of the receiving group or its members (Ybarra & Stephan, 1994). It can occur either when one group believes that the other group represents a threat to its existence or when the presence of this group generates competition for resources that can eventually harm the first group. It is worth mentioning that what characterizes the sense of threat is the perception of feeling threatened, even if reality does not present concrete threats.

Symbolic threats, in turn, are characterized by subjective differences perceived in terms of morals, values, norms, standards, beliefs, and attitudes and represent threats to the internal group's worldview. External groups that hold different worldviews are seen as threatening to the internal group's worldview and often suffer rejection by the internal group (Esses et al., 1993). Stephan and Stephan (1996) state that symbolic or subjective threats are more relevant to generate prejudice and this idea is supported by several studies (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Stephan et al., 1998). The greater the external group's threat poses to the internal group, the more negative are the expected attitudes toward the external group (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1976). Several studies have shown that intergroup anxiety is related to prejudice; the anxiety generated by these feelings of threat can lead in-group members to reject outsiders (Britt et al., 1996; Stephan et al., 1999).

Previous research on intergroup anxiety suggests that this type of anxiety will be exceptionally high if the groups have a history of antagonism, have had little previous personal contact, are ethnocentric, perceive the outside group as different from the inside group, know little about the other group, have to interact with them in competitive situations, when their group is in the minority, or has lower status than the outside group (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). However, in a more recent study, such as that of Stephan et al. (2000), it was pointed out that intergroup anxiety was not a significant predictor of prejudiced attitudes against Mexicans. In this sense, within the context of ITT, the relationship between intergroup anxiety is equivocal. Even in

light of this, the present study sets out to study how elements of intergroup anxiety affect intention to contact Venezuelans.

Finally, negative stereotypes are implicit threats to the local group member because they fear the negative consequences that they imagine might ensue from intergroup interaction, which can create prejudice. Thus, negative stereotypes generally lead individuals to avoid contact with outsiders, offering backing in presumed negative traits to explain their behavior and justify discrimination against them. Several studies have found that negative stereotypes are linked to prejudice (Esses et al., 1993; Stephan et al., 1994). Bizman and Yinon (2001), classifying intergroup threats (realistic and symbolic) and interpersonal threats (intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes), concluded that intergroup threats would be more influential in determining prejudice of individuals strongly identified with their Community, while interpersonal threats would influence individuals less identified with their Community and group more. To measure the intention to contact Venezuelan refugees, we will investigate the effect of this prejudice on locals' Receptivity to foreigners. To this end, the following hypotheses are formulated: *H4: Xenophobia, as prejudice, negatively affects Receptivity* and *H5: Sense of threat, as an emotion, negatively affects Receptivity*.

## **2.6 Receptivity**

To begin the discussion about the construct of receptivity, Allport's (1954) Theory of Intergroup Contact was used, which states that contact between distinct groups has the potential to reduce prejudice between them, as long as the contact situation occurs under certain conditions: equality of status of the groups in the contact situation; common objectives; cooperation between the groups; and the support of laws, authorities, or customs. From this, it is understood that intergroup contact is essential to favor integration, and its understanding plays a relevant role in studying the receptivity of a host community.

Receptivity is a complex concept that can be approached from a variety of perspectives, and Reitz (2002) separates the host community and receptivity literature into four broad categories: pre-existing ethnic or racial relations in the host population; differences in labor markets and related institutions; government and immigration policies; the changing nature of international borders as part of the globalization process.

In order to pursue the investigation within the context of the relations between immigrants and host communities, it was deemed appropriate to study receptivity from the perspective of the first dimension identified by Reitz (2002). Based on Schwartz et al. (2014), Forster (2020) validated the hypothesis that negative perceptions of receptivity positively correlate with depressive symptoms, anxiety, and perceived discrimination. Further, the study concluded the interethnic validity of the model and concluded that perceptions of host community receptivity should be considered an essential element of immigrant adaptation.

Adopting the perspective of the receptivity "offered" by a host community, it is possible to define receptivity as a reference to the openness on the part of natives of the host community toward outsiders and their intention to integrate them by offering them opportunities to participate in that group or society (Kim, 2001). Moreover, it is expressed through a continuous integration between public and private attitudes of natives and varies depending on factors such as self-confidence, respect, generosity, goodwill, and support of hosts. Briefly, one can define the receptivity of the host society, in general, as the set of attitudes of its members toward newcomers (Kim, 2001).

The author (2001) also states that continuous integration is an associative behavior and a facilitator of the communication process through behavior that increases the probability of understanding. Straightforward attitudes, such as small demonstrations of interest and goodwill, end up improving relationships. On the other hand, according to Kim (2001), dissociative behaviors range from racist and derogatory jokes and name-calling to psychological and

physical violence. These associative and dissociative communication behaviors are concrete indications of the level of openness, acceptance, and supportive disposition of local populations toward outsiders or of their unwillingness demonstrated through rejection and discrimination. Observing the multifaceted nature of Receptivity, we explored the construct by focusing on host communities' attitudes to identify a possible correlation with the intention to contact refugees, leading to: *H6: receptivity, as an attitude, positively affects the intention to contact*. At this point, the literature of the community commitment construct will be rescued. According to the recent study by Moghavvemi et al. (2017), when analyzing the role of the level of Commitment of residents to their communities with attitudes towards the development of the tourism industry, it was shown that community commitment is a significant variable in predicting the model of the attitude. Therefore, community commitment can affect attitudes toward external objects, provided that such an object can mean some present or future benefit to the community. In this study's context, the expected benefit is the economic potential arising from community efforts toward tourism activities. Although tourism is distinct from immigration, the relationship between Commitment to the Community and external individuals may be similar in both cases. Despite this evidence, hypothesis H1 was developed in which Commitment to the Community is positively correlated with community identification. In the topics discussed above, some facts and concepts were established: the first is that there is evidence that very high community identification can generate high levels of xenophobia (Branscombe & Wann, 1994); the second issue is that Commitment is a volitional psychological bond of care and dedication to an object (Klein et al., 2014). Thus, it is inquired here: is it possible that individuals who are highly identified and committed to their communities can have such a strong, caring bond to the point of experiencing a sense of protection from external individuals? In this way, H7 was hypothesized: *Commitment to community moderates the relationship between Receptivity and contact intention*.

## **2.7 Contact Intention and Behavior**

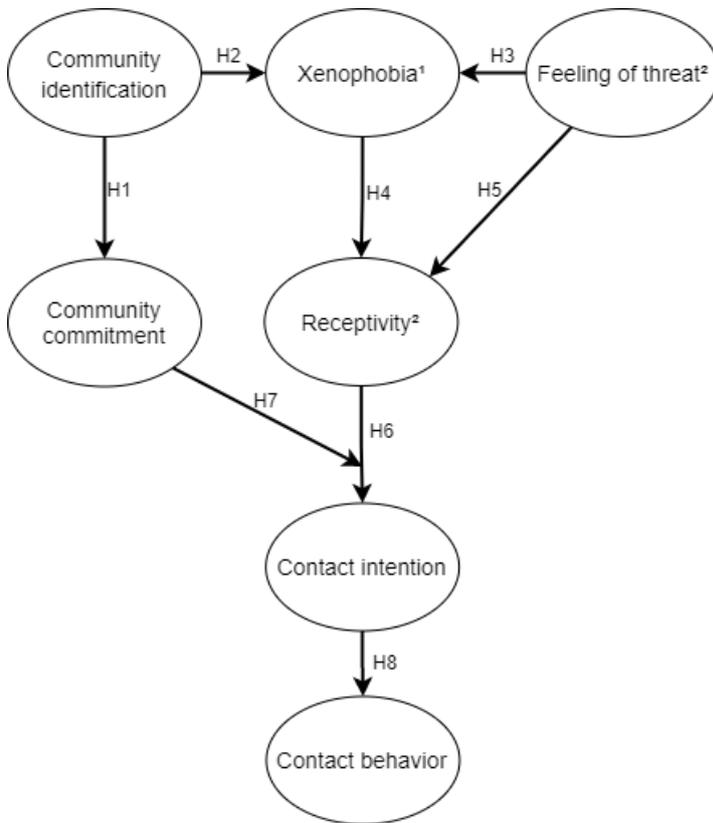
The concept of contact intention applied to the refugee context can be better understood through the Theory of Reasoned Action (TAR) proposed by Fishbein (1963) and later extended to the Theory of Planned Action (TAP) together with Icek Ajzen (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Ajzen, 1985). Such a theory was used because the model successfully applied to volitional behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). TAR seeks to predict and explain human volitional behavior. The theory aims to explain the type of behavior in which there is a conscious and voluntary intention behind its accomplishment. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a person's intention to perform or not perform a behavior is an immediate determinant of that action. Barring unforeseen events, people are expected to act according to their intentions. Since Ajzen and Fishbein were interested in understanding human behavior and not just predicting it, it is crucial to identify the determinants behind intentions. TAR points out that a person's intention is a function of two essential determinants: personal nature (Attitudes) and the other reflecting the influence of the society in which that individual is embedded (Subjective Norms).

In turn, TAP is a refinement of TAR, with additional factors that make up the primary elements of behavioral intention. These are behavioral belief; consequence evaluation; normative beliefs and motivation. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) conclude that the best predictor of behavior, is its intention to perform it, regardless of the nature of the behavioral criterion. Thus, it can be safely stated that intention to contact individuals from other groups is a good predictor of contact behaviors such as greeting, initiating conversations, and displaying interest. In turn, these behaviors stimulate the likelihood of understanding and cooperation between groups, improve social relationships, and thus facilitate the integration and Receptivity of foreign individuals (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to the meta-analytic study by Armitage and Conner (2001), there is statistical evidence supporting the TAP model for predicting intentions and behaviors. However, there is also evidence that the model has a higher degree of prediction for self-reported behaviors than observed behaviors. Considering that contact intention is preceded by receptivity and this relationship is possibly moderated by Commitment to the Community, we sought to prove the theoretical link between behavioral intention and actual behavior since the literature points to a direct relationship between these variables. Therefore, it is suggested: *H8: Contact intention positively affects contact behavior.*

The full conceptual network along with the hypothesis of this study can be better visualized and summarized on Figure 1:

**Figure 1:** Theoretical Model



<sup>1</sup>Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0,87$  (Schweitzer *et al.*, 2005).

<sup>2</sup>Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0,87$  (Britt *et al.*, 1996).

<sup>3</sup>Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0,77$  (Martinez & Vera, 1994).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The present study is quantitative and explanatory. Regarding the research procedures, the *survey* method was used through the elaboration of a questionnaire. The created measures (community identification, contact intention and contact behavior) were developed according to Pasqualli (1999) steps: theoretical, empirical and analytical. A transversal cut characterizes data collection. The object of study was defined in a non-probabilistic way (by convenience), defined by the following criterion: Brazilian college students, aged at least 18. The sample consisted of 359 respondents. In Boa Vista, it was done through physical questionnaires (179 respondents). In São Paulo, it was done virtually, using the *SurveyMonkey*® platform (180 respondents). The data analysis technique chosen was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

with a Maximum Likelihood (MV) estimator, operationalized by the *lavaan* library in RStudio® (Rosseel et al., 2020). The measurement model was evaluated based on the factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ), those with  $\lambda < 0.4$  were removed for lack of convergence with the Latent Variable (LV) - accordingly, the Modification Indices (MI) were also evaluated. The three criteria used to assess the convergence of the LVs are the Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) (Cronbach, 1951), Omega ( $\Omega$ ) (McDonald, 1999), and AVE (Bacon et al., 1995) coefficients. The adequacy of the LVs was also assessed for discriminant validity through the Heterotrace-Monotrace ratio of correlation coefficients - HTMT (Henseler et al., 2015), which need to exhibit HTMT  $< 0.9$  (Voorhees et al., 2016). Finally, the hypotheses ( $\beta$ n, Structural Model) were tested according to three different significance levels and interpreted in light of their direction: whether they were of positive ( $\beta > 0$ ) or negative ( $\beta < 0$ ) influence.

#### 4. RESULTS

In order to better understand the relationships proposed in this study, models with different specifications were generated (Table 1). Model A is the reference to the others and does not have the proper adjustments suggested by the MI. Because its results did not present good levels of adequacy, the addition of some parameters generated a second model (Model B), which had the same hypotheses outlined in its predecessor, but with the adjustments proposed by the MI. However, this still did not present a good fit and new adjustments, based on the IMs, resulted in Model C. In Model D, better adjusted, the non-significant hypotheses were removed from the empirical model, these are: the H5 (Commitment to the community moderates the relationship between Receptivity and contact intention), for being a moderation hypothesis adds many parameters and makes the model less efficient; and, the Contact Behavior VOs, which, for the most part, presented the statistical significance of p-value  $> 0.1$ . With the latter, it was possible to divide the analysis into two complementary models: Model BV, for the Boa Vista sample ( $n = 107$ ), and Model SP, for the São Paulo sample ( $n = 63$ ), in order to evaluate the results of each city and allow a comparison between the different contexts.

Despite the initial sample size ( $n = 359$ ), only a total of  $n = 170$  (Models A to D) were used in the SEM analyses, the main reason being the number of incomplete responses. This is one of the factors responsible for the lack of adequacy observed in the TLI, CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR, best in Model BV. In this work, we opted to preserve the collected information directly, not having the replacement of the lost values by any criterion, such as the mean or mode, responsible for increasing the analyzed sample size.

**Table 1:** Indices of Adequacy of Models

Indicator	Ideal	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D	Model BV	SP Model
$\chi^2$		9529.574	8650.905	1718.938	1534.465	1616.777	2207.029
gl		4857.000	4656.000	1250.000	1150.000	1150.000	1150.000
$\chi^2/gl$		1.962	1.858	1.375	1.334	1.406	1.919
CFI	$> 0.9$	0.728	0.768	0.884	0.915	0.825	0.570
TLI	$> 0.9$	0.694	0.728	0.872	0.906	0.806	0.523
GFI	$> 0.9$	0.877	0.890	0.967	0.970	0.953	0.956
AGFI	$> 0.9$	0.856	0.866	0.961	0.964	0.943	0.948
SRMR	$< 0.1$	0.088	0.087	0.077	0.068	0.089	0.113
RMSEA	$< 0.1$	0.083	0.079	0.052	0.044	0.062	0.121
RMSEA - Lower		0.081	0.076	0.046	0.038	0.054	0.113
RMSEA - Superior		0.086	0.081	0.058	0.050	0.068	0.128

Regarding discriminant validity (Table 2), all coefficients showed HTMT  $< 0.9$ , a strong indication that each LV measures its conceptual aspects more than the competence aspects of another LV. Moving on to convergence, all LVs also showed internal consistency and confirmation of unidimensionality due to  $\alpha > 0.8$  in all cases. The same intensity result was also

observed in the  $\Omega$  coefficients. The results of  $AVE < 0.5$  (most traditionally accepted criterion) are expected due to the choice of  $\lambda > 0.4$  as a criterion. Only Commitment to Community met the most stringent cut-off point. However, the other LVs showed  $AVE \approx 0.5$  in the Sense of Threat and Intention to Contact; and  $AVE \approx 0.4$  in the cases of Community Identification, Xenophobia, and Receptivity.

**Table 2:** Discriminant and Convergent Validity

<b>Discriminant Validity</b>		<b>[1]</b>	<b>[2]</b>	<b>[3]</b>	<b>[4]</b>	<b>[5]</b>	<b>[6]</b>
[1]	Sense of Threat	1					
[2]	Identification - Community	0.154	1				
[3]	Xenophobia	0.750	0.235	1			
[4]	Receptivity	0.765	0.189	0.885	1		
[5]	Commitment - Community	0.086	0.535	0.164	0.136	1	
[6]	Contact Intention	0.449	0.177	0.454	0.525	0.122	1
<b>Convergent Validity</b>		<b>[1]</b>	<b>[2]</b>	<b>[3]</b>	<b>[4]</b>	<b>[5]</b>	<b>[6]</b>
	$\alpha$	0.835	0.858	0.830	0.889	0.888	0.908
	$\Omega$	0.737	0.809	0.842	0.891	0.914	0.861
	AVE	0.454	0.414	0.396	0.394	0.692	0.484

The results presented in the first four columns of Table 3 below are related to Model C, which has the best fit considering all variables theoretically predicted. While Models BV and SP are presented in the last two columns, respectively, and are based on Model D. In the following, the term General Model refers to the data analyzed jointly (Model C), which will be contrasted with the models of the two cities (Model BV and Model SP), in particular.

The H3 plus H1 represents the indirect effect of the Sense of Threat on Receptivity, whereas H2 is the direct effect - consisting of the representation that the two effects exist simultaneously. In the General Model, the higher the Sense of Threat, the lower the Receptivity ( $\beta = -0.353^{***}$ ). However, when decomposing the effects, it is possible to identify that this is mainly concentrated in Boa Vista ( $\beta = -0.564^{**}$ ), to the point of not being different from zero in São Paulo ( $\beta = -0.201^{ns}$ ). On the other hand, the indirect effect is strongly observed in the General Model in association with the homogeneity of the effects in the two cities. So, there is strong evidence (p-value < 0.01) of both H1 and H3.

This paper also constructed the indirect effect of Community Identification on Receptivity by combining H1 and H7. In the General Model it is evident that the influence occurs indirectly, as pointed out in the model (p-value < 0.01). However, a small remnant of evidence points to a direct influence ( $\beta = 0.114^*$ ). In Boa Vista, there is weak evidence of the indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.173^*$ ) and no evidence of the direct effect ( $\beta = 0.076^{ns}$ ). Whereas in São Paulo, both sufficient evidence of indirect effect and weak evidence of direct effect ( $\beta = 0.222^*$ ).

Regarding the Role of Community Commitment and Contact Behavior, in the first moment (H6), it is possible to point out that Commitment is influenced by Identification ( $\beta = 0.480^{***}$ ), both having the Community as a target. This result is also observed homogeneously among the studied cities. Next, Commitment does not present significant results neither as a direct effect nor as a moderator of the relationship occurring between Receptivity and Contact Intention (H4) - which presents strong significance (p-value < 0.01), a little more intense in Boa Vista ( $\beta = 0.653^{***}$ ) than in São Paulo ( $\beta = 0.397^{***}$ ).

To analyze the relationship between Intention and Behavior (H8), both about contact with refugees, a process analogous to *stepwise* was used - when only statistically significant relationships are left in the model. Only two of them showed a minimum level of relationship, and they are: having family or friends in contact with refugees (Behavior 2) and having an affectionate relationship with a refugee (Behavior 11). In both cases, the evidence can be considered weak (p-value > 0.05), although each has a different direction. In the case of family

members or friends, the higher the intention, the lower the probability of contact. In the case of affective relationships, the higher the intention, the higher the probability of contact.

**Table 3:** Structural Model and Hypothesis Test

Hypotheses		$\beta$	p-value	ep	$\beta_s$	$\beta_s$ BV	$\beta_s$ SP
<b>Behavior 2</b>		~					
H8	Contact Intention	-0.057	0.094	0.034	-0.150	*	
<b>Behavior 11</b>		~					
H8	Contact Intention	0.061	0.081	0.035	0.156	*	
<b>Contact Intention</b>		~					
H4	Receptivity	0.318	0.000	0.062	0.590	***	0.653 *** 0.397 ***
H5	Moderation	0.061	0.533	0.097	0.049	ns	
-	Community Commitment	0.072	0.410	0.087	0.066	ns	0.016 ns 0.030 ns
<b>Commitment - Community</b>		~					
H6	Identification - Community	0.547	0.000	0.111	0.480	***	0.502 *** 0.439 ***
<b>Receptivity</b>		~					
H1	Xenophobia	-0.935	0.000	0.213	-0.624	***	-0.434 *** -0.655 ***
H2	Sense of Threat	-0.817	0.002	0.267	-0.353	***	-0.564 ** -0.201 ns
-	Community Identification	0.264	0.066	0.144	0.114	*	0.076 ns 0.222 *
<b>Xenophobia</b>		~					
H3	Sense of Threat	1.123	0.000	0.193	0.726	***	0.728 *** 0.735 ***
H7	Community Identification	0.337	0.006	0.122	0.218	***	0.173 * 0.217 **

## 5. DISCUSSION

One of the elements of great relevance in the receptivity of local communities about the Venezuelan refugees studied in this work was the Identification of individuals with their communities. Identification with the Community demonstrated a high correlation ( $\beta_s = 0.480$ ) with community commitment along the lines proposed by Klein et al. (2012). The application of Klein and colleagues' organizational commitment theory on the object of communities was new to the Identification and commitment literature.

Such novelty makes logical sense as Mesch and Manor (1998) state that people highly identified with their communities possess feelings of protection and care towards them. Considering that Commitment is a volitional bond of care and responsibility toward an object (Klein et al., 2014) intuitively, such variables are correlated. Individuals who possess an identification with a group or Community seek to maintain the qualities of that group and its members.

On the other hand, it was not possible to describe the role of commitment in the relationship between receptivity and contact intention, since the presence of moderation, previously hypothesized, worsened the quality of the models analyzed. It would have been of great interest to develop the literature to identify the role of commitment since the literature on "community" commitment is still scarce. These results light up the idea that Commitment to the Community may directly affect the construct of responsiveness or indirectly through other latent variables not addressed in this study. Moreover, identification with the community showed a high correlation with xenophobia, which may seem counterintuitive and has theoretical support at first sight. Individuals who are highly identified with their communities may demonstrate explicit xenophobic behavior and prejudice against refugees. This can be explained by the fact that these individuals possess a sense of protectiveness toward their communities (Mesch & Manor, 1998) and feel threatened politically, economically, or symbolically by the mere presence of refugees (Stephan & Stephan, 1996).

Concerning the statistical method, and even though there was no hypothesis in the model that considered a direct relationship between identification with the community and receptivity, it was also tested if there was a direct correlation between the two constructs to validate the hypothesized and confirmed mediating relationship that xenophobia exerts between them. The result of this "measurement" was that the direct correlation is almost null, showing no

significance when assessed directly, but maintaining the strength of moderation. Since the commitment literature was - and still is - mainly about organizational Commitment, transforming the concepts to the context of community commitment was a fascinating test that showed positive correlation results.

The other exogenous variable in the model is the sense of threat, whose relationship with receptivity was studied in two ways: directly and with the mediation of xenophobia. The aspect that arouses most interest in these relations is that both directly and mediated, the threat negatively influences Receptivity. However, mediation by xenophobia is unsurprising and consistent with theory, as both constructs are intrinsically linked in the literature, and the measures of both are very similar.

Returning to the relationship between the sense of threat and receptiveness, it is interesting to observe that the more the individual feels threatened by the foreigner, the less receptiveness he will offer. This relationship is also entirely predictable. However, it can be observed in the results that this relationship was strong in the General Model and the Boa Vista model, but it was not very significant in the data obtained in São Paulo. This difference may be due to the different contexts between Roraima and São Paulo since the profile of the respondents was quite similar in both collections. It is worth mentioning that Boa Vista is located near the border with Venezuela and is a city of significantly smaller dimensions than São Paulo. Therefore, the presence of refugees in the context of Roraima is much more perceptible than in São Paulo, possibly being one of the causes of this difference in correlation. Xenophobia, in turn, showed the same type of correlation with Receptivity in all contexts studied, both in the general model and in Boa Vista and São Paulo analyzed individually. With a correlation  $\beta_s = -0.624$ , it is evident that the higher the xenophobia, the lower the Receptivity, a predictable finding based on the literature discussed throughout the construction of the study.

Receptivity showed significant relationships with the LV of Sense of Threat and Xenophobia, besides being strongly correlated with Intention to Contact ( $\beta_s = 0.590$ ), evidencing that a local group's higher receptivity attitudes, the higher their intention to contact external individuals. Such a result was predicted by the theory proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) since the LV of Receptivity was taken as an attitude proposed by the TAP model. It is worth noting that the observable Receptivity variables were derived from the prejudice scale used by Martinez and Vera (1994). Since the relationship found between Receptivity and contact intention is promising, adopting the Receptivity construct as an attitude to perform contact behavior may mean a good definition for the construct. It is concluded from this attempt to integrate these two models to investigate the relationship that it was successful. This marriage between the models worked well, resulting in well validated constructs, allowing clarity in observing the elements that make up and derive Receptivity.

As described earlier, the LV of Contact Intention was conceptualized in Fishbein, and Ajzen's (1975) TAP and its observable variables were constructed in light of the same theory. Although the correlation of these variables with Contact Behavior variables are predicted in the literature, the results revealed that many Contact Behavior measures did not show statistically relevant relationships in the model. Only two showed a minimal level of relationship with weak evidence ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). Moreover, both measures presented different directions despite being written in the questionnaire in the same direction as the elaborated scale of the survey, evidencing that only part of the variables was able to measure the behavior.

It is possible to estimate some explanations for why the intention of contact has not revealed itself as behavior. One of them is the possibility that, although there is an intention to have contact and participate in the integration of refugees in local communities, Brazilians end up facing daily difficulties that prevent them from seeking interaction. The lack of information or proximity to the refugees is a relevant element in this case. Although some NGOs and associations welcome and support refugees, it is also possible that a person who does not

actively seek these institutions, as well as other forms of integration, may spend a lifetime without having any contact with refugees, especially in São Paulo, with its megalopolis dimensions and so many different facets.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

There is pertinent evidence indicating the validity of the variables used to measure the receptivity of the host community; the hypotheses that xenophobia and the sense of threat, which are measures of prejudice, compose receptivity and affect it negatively were also confirmed. It is interesting to note the difference in the pattern of responses observed between São Paulo and Boa Vista when measuring the correlation between the sense of threat and Receptivity since in São Paulo, the measure did not show significance Boa Vista, the negative correlation remained. This seems to be an addition to the investigation of the role of local context in receptiveness, one of the objectives of this study.

Of even greater value was the perception of the correlation between community identification and xenophobia, which was the link between community and prejudice studies. This relationship was hypothesized based on evidence previously pointed out in theory and was tested in this work to integrate the two studied fronts, whose connection was precisely the central point of the investigation. Also, it is important to highlight the conclusion of strong correlation between community identification and community commitment. This aspect is valuable mainly because the literature on commitment primarily deals with organizational commitment, not community commitment. In contrast, this measure needed to be adapted to meet the interests of this research, and it accurately fulfilled its role, adding to and strengthening Klein and colleagues' (2012) model and expanding it to other areas.

Although the hypothesis was not confirmed, it is understood that the assumed moderation between Commitment to the Community and the relationship between Receptivity and intention to contact was influential in the study because it was possible to conclude that moderation, in this case, was not a positive measure since it added error to the model. It is worth noting that there is no literature dealing with relating such constructs, and for scientific relevance of this attempt.

This paper has produced some conclusions and relationships between understudied theories, such as the concept of community commitment and its link to community identification. The relationship between the role of Community in xenophobia and then in Receptivity is also presented. The entire theoretical review and the empirical evidence played a role in strengthening the literature about the concepts covered in the research. It is believed that these new interactions between constructs, applied to the context of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil, can be helpful for the construction of knowledge and future development of more efficient public policies for the reception and integration of these and other migrants who may arrive in the country seeking refuge.

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