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Jubilut, Liliana Lyra (ed.), Vera Espinoza, Marcia (ed.) and Mezzanotti, Gabriela (ed.), *Latin America and Refugee Protection. Regimes, Logics, and Challenges*. – Oxford: Berghahn, 2021. – 434 p. ISBN: 978-1-80073-114-1

- 1 For a long time, studies on forced migration in Latin America have been focused on country case studies and the major crises underway (in Central America, Colombia, and more recently in Venezuela). While this geographical area handles about 18% of the world's forced migrations, mainly from intra-regional flows (UNHCR figures, 2021), it remains largely unknown. The crisis of managing the Venezuelan influx in 2018 renewed the production of analyses, gradually leading to the emergence of this multidisciplinary field of study in Latin America. Until then, there was no reference book on the issue in English.
- 2 The book by Jubilut *et al.* (2021) fills this gap, reconstructing the emergence, development, and effects of regimes for the management and protection of forced migrants in Latin America, focusing on refugees. This book is a very accessible and highly pedagogical work, leveraging historical and geographical facts to provide a panorama focused on the complex functioning and challenges of the region. This work is an excellent introduction to forced migration studies in this geographical area, which offers good access to the international literature. It provides a precise vision of general works and existing case studies, mainly in English and Spanish. The different chapters

seem to be accomplished syntheses of the institutional literature on the subject matter, also mentioning the international academic literature. This book results from the collaboration between authors from different backgrounds across academia, expertise, and aid organisations. It proposes a “top-down” analysis, which is normative and closer to expertise than critical analysis.

- 3 This research’s great merit lies in the presentation of the complex architecture of the region by focusing on attractive multilevel governance based on the interweaving of different protection spaces. It successively analyses the Cartagena regime (founded in 1984), the inter-American human rights regime, regional responses to the international refugee regime by studying the Brasilia process and other forms of protection such as the Mercosur visa, naturalisation and, more recently, humanitarian visas. The contours of the main categories of migration management (refugees, asylum seekers, persons in need of international protection, vulnerable persons, Mercosur residents, stateless persons) contrasts with the contextual salience of regional and national issues. Specialists will appreciate the chapters that present the history, the institutional setup, and the contemporary issues. Thus, chapter 7 by Juan Ignacio de Montelli on statelessness in the Brasilia Declaration and Plan of Action concerns the issues involved in constructing and promoting the category of statelessness, focusing on the emergence of public issues and the evolution of their construction, right up to the development of dedicated policies at a regional level and national adaptations. Similarly, chapter 9 by Leiza Brumat concerns the Mercosur residence visa as an alternative to the basic protection regime. The author details the history of this mixed status that is specific to the member countries of this regional international organisation, the related negotiations, and the repercussions in terms of regional migration governance. In several chapters, the panoramic and comparative approach allows for a detailed assessment of the appropriation in legal terms of these migration categories by national migration administrations and their evolution. Finally, the last part presents the current crises in the region.
- 4 However, the book’s strength is also its weakness. Many chapters may be presented as a standalone, but as a whole piece, the book may be repetitive, especially when it comes to inter-American human rights regime. In terms of the book’s study and theoretical construction, several lines of research are not or hardly addressed.
- 5 The result is a lack of deconstruction of several critical cross-cutting themes in the argument. The book concerns reports and legal sources; hence the substantial domination of the institutional approach tends towards expertise. In a few rare cases, qualitative interviews with actors involved in the management of the issue supplement the study. These qualitative elements that tend to be presented in an illustrative perspective and not as support material for the analysis explain the often disembodied nature of the investigations. Despite their significant resources, the authors of the chapters did not study the circulation of institutional knowledge. Unequal attention is being paid to the issues of appropriation of legal categories by the actors, which testifies to a weak epistemological reflection and a lack of mobilisation of other areas of the social sciences. Latin America abounds with exchange spaces, whether they are institutionalised, regularly organised or theme rise results in response to needs. Beyond the historical facts presented in a relatively linear description, the construction of these meeting places is poorly documented, making it difficult to study the effects of institutionalisation and bureaucratisation of these policies on relations between

institutions and with civil society organisations, or even the international UN organisations that are very involved in the issue. The uneven *continuum* between institutional expertise, the academic sphere and the milieu of practitioners involved in aid organisations is present in the identities of the several authors of this book. It is not used enough as an entry point for studying the training and institutional circulation of professionals working on this theme.

- 6 The work gives little insight into the making and evolution of the institutional black boxes of the region, mobilising the theoretical apparatus of social science in a reduced way.
- 7 Beyond the discrete observation that state actors in the area articulate security questions with the human rights approach in an ambivalent manner, the research does not address the policies orientations determinants concerning, for example, nationality and citizenship regimes. On the paradigm of the orderly and controlled management of migratory flows, the book lacks analysis of the debates between stakeholders about the regional institutions' strategies. It also fails to put into perspective the possible appropriations of North American or European practices and mentions only a few details on the ad-hoc national mechanisms for regularising forced migrants.
- 8 Even though the book focuses on the policy "from above", the legal and institutional analysis would have benefited from being completed and made more complex by the contributions of the sociology of mobilisations. The latter could have allowed us to see the issues of training, the circulation of professionals (spaces, professional worlds, careers), and the daily interpretation of the norms mentioned within the administrations involved (the effects of appropriation in both international spaces and much more local ones). Thus, it would be fascinating to study the differences in the practical management of border posts and national asylum administrations (centralisation or decentralisation).
- 9 Finally, the great absentees of this book are people in situations of forced migration and need of international protection. Chapter 11 by Luisa Feline Freier and Marta Luzes is the only one to mobilise migrants' testimonies as an illustration. The categories construction never questions the migratory careers of these people. The book addresses the forced migrants as migratory subjects who are able to create margins of actions and strategies to improve their existence in difficult contexts, and who often struggle to survive.

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