
PENSAMIENTO
PROPIO

“Venezuela at a Juncture”
Special Issue

Call for Papers

Guest Editors

Andrés Cañizález (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)
María Puerta-Riera (Valencia College, USA)

Towards this special issue of **Pensamiento Propio**, we have adopted the definition for ‘juncture’ in the Oxford Dictionary, as “a particular point or stage in an activity or a series of events”. Therefore, “Venezuela at a Juncture”, as the title of this call, seeks to be an umbrella term for multiple academic approaches and insights on this country, immersed in a generalized crisis.

Throughout 2019, a significant portion of the Western international community held the expectation that Venezuela would head towards a democratic transition. This did not happen because of several factors worth addressing in the papers of this issue. Instead, we have recently witnessed an erosion of the democratic alternative within the country, concurrently with the strengthening of the authoritarian model having Nicolás Maduro as a reference of power.

Owing to a reshaping of global affairs in 2022, along with domestic developments in Venezuela, we are witnessing an institutionalization of sorts within the authoritarian regime. Domestically, the electoral processes held previously, albeit not posing a risk to hegemonic power, show a varied political landscape in mayoral and gubernatorial offices. Likewise, there has been an international reinsertion of Maduro's rule after a period of isolation and “maximum pressure” seeking his departure, promoted from the White House by then-U.S. President Donald Trump. Likewise, changes of government in key countries of the region such as Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Chile, and more recently Colombia, have opened the doors for Chavismo to diplomatically reconnect across the continent, without such ties being conditioned by its authoritarian nature or questioning its legitimacy.

In the economic realm, after a series of years in which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) experienced a major setback, in this year 2022, a slight improvement has been noticed. Although the country has not recovered, at least the decline has been halted. Growth is modest and profoundly uneven. The import economy, with the so-called *bodegones*

(imported goods stores) as its main symbol, boasts full supply in large cities, but with a very limited capability of people to meet their basic needs. For 2022-2023, UN specialized agencies forecast that a quarter of the Venezuelan population will require international humanitarian aid to support itself. Approximately a similar percentage of families within the country survive thanks to remittances from relatives in other nations. However, amid a generalized crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with direct impact on migrants, the flow of money has diminished in every household.

Without reliable official figures on the total population of the country – the last census dates from 2011 – and without government stats on emigration, it is necessary to resort to the data released by receiving countries, in some cases consolidated by international organizations, to have an estimate of the Venezuelan migration crisis. According to the R4V platform, in which UN agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) participate, by July 2022, 6.1 million Venezuelans had emigrated, a revealing fact about a migration crisis that is far from over. According to official figures from Panama, by June 2022, every hour on average, 22 Venezuelans crossed the dangerous Darien jungle.

The word ‘crisis’ is arguably the one that defines Venezuela in its many different facets: The country is experiencing a political and institutional crisis that has not found democratic solutions; there are no substantial answers to the socio-economic crisis; and, consequently, amid a generalized lack of opportunities, Venezuelans in working age are choosing to flee from their country. Venezuela is also synonymous with a silent and unstoppable migratory crisis.

In this juncture facing Venezuela, we propose these possible non-exhaustive, non-(mutually) exclusive lines and themes for this issue:

- Profile of the Venezuelan socio-political crisis
- Approaches to Chavismo as a political process
- Role of the international community in the Venezuelan crisis
- Review of the different dialogue and negotiation processes
- Process of democratic erosion since before 1999 and in the 21st century
- Insights on the Venezuelan migration crisis and its impact on the region

One of the purposes of CRIES, along with the guest editors for this issue, is to gather academic output and reflections around this topic rendered **in English**, so this will be an essential requirement. In our view, it is necessary that the outlook on Venezuela that we propose reaches beyond Spanish-speaking audiences and thereby has an impact on other communities and realities.

Submissions will undergo double-blind peer review, according to editorial guidelines available at <http://www.cries.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/027-Normativas.pdf>
The deadline for submissions is November 18, 2022, at pensamientopropio@cries.org.