



**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES: THE CASE OF
VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES**

by

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September 2020

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE September 2020	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES: THE CASE OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Hadder Rendon			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) The <i>2020 World Migration Report</i> by the International Organization for Migration recognized that Colombia has accepted more Venezuelan migrants than any other nation in Latin America. Additionally, a December 2019 article by The Brookings Institution identified Venezuela's migratory crisis as the second largest in the world, trailing only the Syrian refugee crisis. The sheer size of Venezuela's migration crisis is affecting all neighboring countries on economic, political, and humanitarian fronts. Despite Colombia's delicate socioeconomic landscape and struggle to care for its own citizens, it has welcomed Venezuelans, in particular, with open arms. However, in other countries that neighbor Venezuela, like Peru and Ecuador, the response to this immigration has varied significantly. Some countries have all but closed their borders, showing signs of fear and xenophobia. This research found that stronger historical ties between two nations enable a more welcoming reception of the sending country's migrants. When two nations have not interacted much, however, the solidarity toward immigrants fades faster. Ultimately, understanding the influential factors can help shape policy, debunk misconceptions about immigrants, and better equip governments to handle large influxes of people.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS migration, refugee, attitudes, acceptance, reception, rejection, Venezuela, humanitarian, crisis, Colombia, Peru, welcoming, solidarity, historical ties		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 99	
		16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

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MIGRANTS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(WESTERN HEMISPHERE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

The *2020 World Migration Report* by the International Organization for Migration recognized that Colombia has accepted more Venezuelan migrants than any other nation in Latin America. Additionally, a December 2019 article by The Brookings Institution identified Venezuela's migratory crisis as the second largest in the world, trailing only the Syrian refugee crisis. The sheer size of Venezuela's migration crisis is affecting all neighboring countries on economic, political, and humanitarian fronts. Despite Colombia's delicate socioeconomic landscape and struggle to care for its own citizens, it has welcomed Venezuelans, in particular, with open arms. However, in other countries that neighbor Venezuela, like Peru and Ecuador, the response to this immigration has varied significantly. Some countries have all but closed their borders, showing signs of fear and xenophobia. This research found that stronger historical ties between two nations enable a more welcoming reception of the sending country's migrants. When two nations have not interacted much, however, the solidarity toward immigrants fades faster. Ultimately, understanding the influential factors can help shape policy, debunk misconceptions about immigrants, and better equip governments to handle large influxes of people.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I thank God for giving me the strength to get through this thesis during these challenging times. I would like to thank my wife, Sarah, who is my biggest motivator and my rock. I thank my kids, Julian, Sophia, and Selena, for their patience while I spent countless hours dedicated to research and writing. I love you all immensely.

I want to thank my parents, Hadder Sr. and Noralba, who forged the path for me and my brother to be where we are today. Through their hard work and sacrifice, I learned to persevere and to always keep the faith. I love you and greatly appreciate your prayers and support.

Finally, it goes without saying that I could not have done it without my amazing advisors. Dr. Mariana Giusti Rodriguez, your guidance and in-depth knowledge bridged the initial thesis idea to the final product. Dr. Anne Baylouny, your feedback and encouragement pushed me forward when I needed it most. I am grateful to the Naval Postgraduate School, Matt Norton for his coaching sessions, the Thesis Processing Office, my editors, the faculty, and the friends I made at this outstanding institution.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Though it was a flourishing country in the 1980s and 1990s, a humanitarian crisis is now going on in Venezuela that is affecting the rest of Latin America. In the last twenty years, the nation has shed large portions of its population. In 1999, many students and middle-class citizens left amid fears about the election of socialist Hugo Chavez. In 2012, more middle- and lower-income citizens departed, following a drop in growth of Latin American commodities. The largest exodus, however, started in 2015, when Venezuela economically collapsed under its new leader, Nicolas Maduro.¹ This last wave has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, trailing only the Syrian refugee crisis in its impact; over five million Venezuelans have fled in the last five years alone, with most settling in Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador and others fleeing to Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. Unfortunately, the exodus is not slowing; millions of remaining Venezuelans have also expressed their desire to leave the country.²

As they have settled throughout Latin America, however, the reception of Venezuelan migrants has widely differed depending on the receiving country. A recent study by Javier Corrales, a political science professor, captured six Latin American countries' attitudes toward receiving immigrants.³ Through its scoring system—which measured countries' “welcomeness” toward Venezuelan immigrants and refugees by assessing their legal facilities, survival services, popular response, and military response to

¹ Luisa Feline Freier and Nicolas Parent, “The Regional Response to the Venezuelan Exodus,” *Current History*, Latin America, 118, no. 805 (February 2019): 56.

² Cynthia J. Arnson, “The Venezuelan Refugee Crisis Is Not Just a Regional Problem,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 30, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/venezuela/2019-07-26/venezuelan-refugee-crisis-not-just-regional-problem>; “Millions of Venezuelans Say They Would Leave if They Could,” Gallup, January 29, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/246323/millions-venezuelans-say-leave.aspx>.

³ Javier Corrales, “Responses to the Venezuelan Migration Crisis: A Scorecard,” *Americas Quarterly*, July 9, 2019, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/responses-venezuelan-migration-crisis-scorecard>.

immigration⁴—the study found that Colombia had provided the most welcoming environment. To date, Colombia has opened its borders to 1.5 million Venezuelan migrants, which is more than any other nation in Latin America and the rest of the world. Moreover, the Colombian government implemented an exception to its citizenship policy that led to the naturalization of 24,000 children born of Venezuelan parents.⁵ Colombia’s warm reception is not limited to political support; its border-town citizens also share their homes with migrant families at no cost, even when accommodations are tight.⁶

While the initial reception to immigrants in nations like Peru and Ecuador was similarly positive, over time over time these countries have become tepid and even antipathetic, fearful, xenophobic, and restrictive toward migrants.⁷ Peru and Ecuador have accepted 800,000 and 360,000 immigrants, respectively, but their bonhomie expired approximately four years into the crisis. In 2019, for instance, Ecuador enacted passport and visa guidelines for Venezuelans that made it practically impossible for them to enter legally.⁸ Following suit, Peru also established strict entry requirements, which almost immediately resulted in a 91 percent decrease in immigration, leading to a surge of refugee

⁴ If the first three factors were conducive to benefitting the immigrants, the score was higher, while decreased military presence was more positively rated. Additionally, countries were given an increased score if their national burden was greater. This score corresponded to both the percentage of accepted Venezuelan immigrants with relation to the receiving nation’s population and the percentage of accepted immigrants compared to the total number of Venezuelan migrants. Thus, researchers demonstrably presented variation in welcomeness and highlighted evidential differences in how six neighboring nations have responded to the influx of Venezuelan immigrants.

⁵ Anatoly Kurmanaev and Jenny Carolina González, “Colombia Offers Citizenship to 24,000 Children of Venezuelan Refugees,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/world/americas/colombia-citizenship-venezuelans.html>.

⁶ Vox, “Why Colombia Has Taken in 1 Million Venezuelans,” November 27, 2018, YouTube, video, 8:29, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NU0RqwwuWY>.

⁷ Megan Janetsky, “Fears Stoke Backlash against Venezuelans in Peru,” BBC, August 1, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-49156814>.

⁸ “Ecuador Visa Rules for Venezuela Refugees Violates Human Rights Obligations,” WOLA, August 27, 2019, <https://www.wola.org/2019/08/ecuador-visa-venezuela-migrants-refugees-human-rights-obligations/>; “Venezuelan Migrants Flood into Ecuador Ahead of New Visa Restrictions,” Reuters, August 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-colombia-idUSKCN1VG1SX>.

camps at the Peru–Ecuador border.⁹ This political sentiment has also been expressed at the social level: in August of 2019, 73 percent of Peruvians stated they opposed Venezuelan immigration, with more than half believing that the migrants were engaged in crimes—a misconception refuted by official statistics.¹⁰

What explains this significant variation in attitudes toward mass migrants and refugees? Why do some countries welcome them compassionately while others reject them? In the Venezuelan case, why has Colombia—that has often struggled to care for its own citizens and has taken in the greatest number of migrants—continued to embrace Venezuelans with open arms while Peru has backtracked on its initially welcoming reception?

The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that shape the variation in attitudes toward immigration that, in turn, may affect the duration of migrant acceptance within a receiving country. To address this puzzle, this thesis examines the two largest and most contrasting recipients of Venezuelan migrants: Colombia and Peru. It argues that although individual categorical theories partially explain the attitude variation, a historical examination of relevant interactions between two nations is required to fully explain the outcome. Specifically, this thesis argues that differences in historical social interactions between these countries have produced different patterns of social ties. Where the ties have been strong, a greater sense of reciprocity has increased citizens’ solidarity toward Venezuelan refugees. In contrast, where ties have been weaker, reciprocity has been limited and welcoming attitudes have easily eroded.

Uncovering the factors that determine a country’s receptiveness toward immigrants and refugees is important for several reasons. Violence, famine, state collapses and wars, have caused prominent mass migrations around the world, including the Syrian humanitarian crisis and the case of Africans fleeing to Europe. There has also been a rise

⁹ Dánae Rivadeneyra, “Así es como Perú cerró sus puertas a los migrantes venezolanos [This is how Peru closed its doors to Venezuelan migrants],” *The Conversation*, November 28, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/asi-es-como-peru-cerro-sus-puertas-a-los-migrantes-venezolanos-127975>.

¹⁰ Janetsky, “Fears Stoke Backlash against Venezuelans in Peru.”

in global nationalism, often blamed for the outcomes of immigration attitudes,¹¹ though this correlation excludes the historical context between two nations. Still, these international trends highlight the importance of investigating immigration attitudes throughout the world. Moreover, although mass migration has caused worldwide catastrophes, there has been little sociological emphasis in the study of immigrant reception attitudes; current studies often focus narrowly on abstract, individual ideas, such as nativism, xenophobia, racism, and discrimination. Because these theories may not capture comprehensive explanations that account for environmental and historical variables, they have limited application to real-world scenarios.

Other, more systematically oriented investigations have analyzed the mechanisms by which state and institutional policy is shaped by focusing on causes of migrations and immigration control, integration of new populations, and reasons for xenophobia, but they have not attempted to identify the underlying causes for variation in citizen and state attitudes toward immigration. These studies generally assume that the negative effects of mass migration on a receiving nation have made the migrants a scapegoat for that nation's troubles. Thus, through a historical lens, this research explores the reasons for variation in attitudes by looking at the reception of Venezuelan migrants entering Colombia and Peru, which could reveal the key factors that enable a persistent welcoming demeanor, indifference, or even a rejection of newcomers in Latin American and other parts of the world.

Although much scholarly literature addresses attitudes toward immigrants within the last ten years, Latin American cases have been largely ignored. Most studies have focused on North America, particularly the United States, as well as Europe and the Middle East, where Syria and its neighbors lead the discussion. Though these cases provide insight, Latin America offers a unique setting and a new perspective on historical migratory interactions between nations. Additionally, this regional context allows for control of cultural diversity and proximity, variables that are often assumed to drive variation in

¹¹ Giovanni Peri, Riccardo Turati, and Simone Moriconi, "The Impact of Immigration on EU Countries' Nationalistic Sentiments," *The Conversation*, last updated May 28, 2019, <http://theconversation.com/the-impact-of-immigration-on-eu-countries-nationalistic-sentiments-117632>.

reception attitudes. Examining Colombia's acceptance of Venezuelan immigrants, despite the tremendous economic and social burden, can help us identify the conditions that may help other countries solve immigration crises.

In addition to providing regional context, an understanding of historical rapprochement between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries may help place a global emphasis on similar phenomena. Unfortunately, though the Venezuelan exodus is poised to overtake the Syrian refugee crisis as the greatest humanitarian migration issue in the world, this region has not received nearly as much attention, making it the "largest and most underfunded" refugee crisis in modern history.¹² The current Venezuelan diaspora therefore provides a chance to explore attitude variation that, were it not for the present circumstances, would likely remain unexplored.

Ultimately, it is imperative to explain the differences in Latin American countries' reception of Venezuelan migrants because this crisis represents the largest intercontinental migration in South American history.¹³ The magnitude and speed of this diaspora is straining Latin American countries' weak economies and inadequate infrastructures and is testing the patience of the receiving nations' citizens. Furthermore, the enormous burden in the region is exacerbated by these states' limited capacity to respond to such a phenomenon, which makes time an enemy. Exploring the differences in reception attitudes can provide crucial insights to help shape policy, debunk misconceptions about immigrants, and better equip governments to handle large influxes of people in both the short and long term. The results of this study may transform potentially catastrophic trends into constructive responses for regional states and other nations in comparable situations. Furthermore, examining relevant historical ties between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries should yield a more accurate basis for predicting the behavior of a receiving nation during migratory phenomena.

¹² Dany Bahar and Meagan Dooley, "Venezuela Refugee Crisis to Become the Largest and Most Underfunded in Modern History," *Brookings* (blog), December 9, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/12/09/venezuela-refugee-crisis-to-become-the-largest-and-most-underfunded-in-modern-history/>.

¹³ Feline Freier and Parent, "Regional Response to the Venezuelan Exodus." 56

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis broadly reviews scholars' approaches to the study of attitudes toward immigration. Migration and immigration involve complex, intertwined factors that can affect each other. Exploring different areas of study reveals the salient conversations within migratory reception attitudes. Additionally, to understand current phenomena, we must investigate how these factors have historically functioned together. Some of the most prominent literature attempts to explain nativist or extreme nationalist attitudes toward immigrants, and is spread across disciplines including psychology, sociology, economics, and political science, to name a few. In an effort to reconcile these findings into a comprehensive and cohesive argument, the major explanations are segregated here into economic, social, and political frameworks.

The economic theories focus on how citizens' concerns about the fiscal impact of migrants affects attitudes. In general, economic theories investigate the tangible effects of immigration on the economy and the resulting attitudes. Sometimes economic fears are substantiated by labor-market competition; other times, however, they are speculative and make citizens less receptive to refugees. The misconception that immigrants are taking jobs away from citizens motivates this theoretical approach. Economic theories related to migration can be driven by data but also by perceived financial fears.

A separate set of theories focuses on personal behavior, using social frameworks to explore the marginalization of external groups and offering individual explanations and sociological conclusions. These findings look at how differentiation toward others develops and manifests in groups and individuals. Furthermore, this literature scrutinizes preconceived notions, group dynamics, cultural factors, and perceptions of identity, among other topics, to uncover factors that shape human behavior in the context of migration and immigration. These theories adapt general, applicable hypotheses to the context of immigration dynamics to draw predictable outcomes.

Lastly, political arguments probe the influence of rhetoric on a population and political positions of elites. Scholars in this debate identify how politicians use nationalism to manipulate attitudes toward immigrants. Although not always the case, fear can be

encouraged or downplayed by political elites and the media, and political messages can mobilize national sentiment against mass newcomers and refugees. Findings may reveal whether the feelings of a population were influenced by external forces, and whether these responses were preexisting or created by political actors.

1. Economic Theories

Variation in attitudes toward immigrants can be explained economically by factors, such as material self-interest and fiscal burden on the state.¹⁴ These economic theories drive citizens' fears and their socioeconomic perceptions of how refugees impact the national economy. If economic factors are responsible for people's attitudes toward refugees, then the expectation is that citizens respond to job losses, increased taxes, scarcity of public goods, and class stratification by blaming refugees. Thus, material self-interest theory seeks to determine if immigration poses a real threat to a citizen's earnings by examining the labor market.

On the other hand, the theory of fiscal burden examines the financial strain that an external population imposes on a state by looking at quantifiable data, such as taxes. However, qualitative data may also play a role, such as natives' expectations about migrants' effects on the economy, which influences their attitude toward immigrants. In some literature, socioeconomic principles are used to evaluate an individual's function on his or her broad economic environment. Because of the complementary relationship between social and economic variables, these theories can fall somewhere between the economic and social frameworks, so they may appear in either theoretical approach.

Regarding labor-market competition, Kenneth Scheve and Matthew Slaughter studied a model in which immigrants could seamlessly substitute a native citizen's labor position. With this model, they found that an inflow of low-skill laborers would hurt labor opportunities for natives of the same skill level because the market would be flooded with extra labor, would produce a surplus of available workers, and would lower natives' wages.

¹⁴ Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J. Hopkins, "Public Attitudes toward Immigration," *Annual Review of Political Science* 17, no. 1 (2014): 227, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-102512-194818>.

Thus, the study predicted that low-skill natives are more likely to oppose immigration due, at least in part, to material self-interest. This research identified a citizen's fear of being replaced by an immigrant with a similar skill set as central to the attitude variation.¹⁵ In cases of either low- or high-income immigration, the benefactors would be groups on the opposite social stratus in the receiving nation because the supply and demand of available laborers would create an imbalance favoring workers in lower supply. Therefore, if high-skilled immigrants were arriving, low-skilled citizens would benefit most, and vice versa. For these reasons, among others, the Venezuelan case should reveal key factors in reception attitudes, since those who have crossed into neighboring borders have come from various income levels. Taking these variables into consideration and looking into each nation's labor market may reveal how equipped the country is to welcome immigrants and how this affects variation in attitudes.

Within the economic theories, one socially collective approach focuses on the financial burden immigrants place on society. This theory holds that attitudes toward immigration are based on the belief that immigrants bear a net burden on society, particularly on the welfare system.¹⁶ This view departs from the labor-market competition theory and is also based on the premise that citizens think the welfare system will be strained by migrants. Consequently, the stronger the belief that the system will be strained, the more likely citizens will reject immigration. This is a particularly interesting perspective considering the frailty of the Latin American states that have absorbed these populations. With current reactions ranging from welcomeness to xenophobia, there seem to be some correlations between this theory and Peru's immigrant-rejecting attitude.¹⁷

In supporting research, Giovanni Facchini and Anna Mayda identified that wealthier natives are more likely to show decreased support for immigration of unskilled

¹⁵ Kenneth F. Scheve and Matthew J. Slaughter, "Labor Market Competition and Individual Preferences over Immigration Policy," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 83, no. 1 (2001): 133–45, <https://doi.org/10.1162/003465301750160108>.

¹⁶ Christian Dustmann and Ian P. Preston, "Racial and Economic Factors in Attitudes to Immigration," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 7, no. 1 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-1682.1655>.

¹⁷ Rivadeneyra, "How Peru Closed its Doors."

laborers because they are perceived as a net burden.¹⁸ However, the same study found that, in some instances, young, unskilled immigrants are seen as the solution to aging populations in countries where the welfare systems are fractured. Additionally, a 2003 European Social Survey found that high-skilled workers favored all forms of immigration without rejecting an inflow of same-skill-level immigrants.¹⁹ This view pits immigrants and natives against each other in the economic sector, assuming there is direct competition. Although economic theories of attitudes toward immigrants tend to focus on individual-level variation, they offer potential insights for examining differences in reception across countries. In particular, they suggest that attitudes might be a function of the structure of the economy of the receiving country, or of the economic configuration of the immigrants. Therefore, nations with strained economies or those that have larger low-skilled labor sectors might be more unwelcoming of immigrants.

In a sociological lean toward the economic approach, Jack Citrin et al. found that there is no substantial evidence that citizens' economic situations influence their attitude on immigration. Instead, the study treats the national economy and national identity as social constructs, pointing to scapegoating as a possible trigger for spite toward a new group of immigrants, on the grounds that citizens believe the national economy or the national identity is in peril.²⁰ Additionally, Rima Wilkes, Neil Guppy, and Lily Farris show that while restrictions on immigration increase in times of economic downturn, the correlation between economic self-interest and immigration is weak.²¹ Ultimately, their findings suggest that citizens are not responding to self-interest but rather to their social perceptions, be it national social constructs or misinformed statistics, under which they

¹⁸ Giovanni Facchini and Anna Maria Mayda, "Does the Welfare State Affect Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants? Evidence across Countries," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 91, no. 2 (2009): 295–314, <https://doi.org/10.1162/rest.91.2.295>.

¹⁹ Hainmueller and Hopkins, "Public Attitudes toward Immigration," 228.

²⁰ Jack Citrin et al., "Public Opinion toward Immigration Reform: The Role of Economic Motivations," *The Journal of Politics* 59, no. 3 (1997): 858–81, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2998640>.

²¹ Rima Wilkes, Neil Guppy, and Lily Farris, "'No Thanks, We're Full': Individual Characteristics, National Context, and Changing Attitudes toward Immigration," *International Migration Review* 42, no. 2 (2008): 302–29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00126.x>.

formulate various attitudes.²² These responses tend to be rooted in fear rather than in substantiated, data-driven statistics.

2. Social Theories

Approaches that examine reception attitudes using social theoretical perspectives focus on citizens' concerns regarding their interactions with the social and cultural environment. These studies examine ethnocentrism, nativism, education, national identity, and cultural proximity. Although these theories cater to social observations, economic and political circumstances sometimes breed a social environment in which the receiving nation's citizens perceive immigration as a threat to their way of life. More specifically, scholars have looked at natives' culture, ethnicity, and identity as factors that are threatened by immigration. Therefore, these theories explore the boundaries outside the individual citizen to find correlation between attitudes and cultural elements. These theories show that, rather than relying on quantifiable evidence, citizens are more likely to personally reject immigration if they believe the nation, or an aspect of it, will be disrupted. In Peru, this theory helps explain widespread fears that Venezuelans increase delinquency, even though statistics show that they commit less than 1 percent of the country's crimes.²³

Keeping with social observations, research from Paul Sniderman, Louk Hagendoorn, and Markus Prior found that cultural factors—such as speaking a different language—were a bigger factor in shaping attitudes than immigrants' economic status. These cultural differences were evident across diverse countries in which the study identified a strong sense of prejudice against immigrant groups. In Venezuela's case, its neighbors speak the same language, Spanish, albeit with a different accent, which may explain immediate degradation in some cases, even when physical appearances are indistinguishable from native citizens. Additionally, the prejudicial sentiment was equally distributed against multiple external groups, calling attention to the prominence of ethnocentrism as a source for attitudinal influence. This research also found a strong sense

²² Citrin et al., "Public Opinion toward Immigration Reform."

²³ Janetsky, "Fears Stoke Backlash against Venezuelans in Peru."

of national identity and a population that felt its culture was threatened in different ways.²⁴ It was acknowledged that because cultures are indeed different, misperceptions cannot be the sole culprit of attitude differences. In one example, Robert Ford found that immigrants with greater cultural similarities were consistently preferred in Britain, meaning groups with comparable skin color and race.²⁵ This observation is particularly interesting because Venezuela shares a strong heritage with Colombia and Ecuador but not as strong a heritage with Peru. These dynamics may be influential, but a proper analysis requires a deeper understanding of cultural linkages that transcend singular events.

Despite shared characteristics between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving nations, there are differences in social perceptions that play a prominent role in defining attitudes toward refugees. Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn identified survey questions in which Americans' attitudes toward immigration policy varied significantly depending on the survey-taker's race or identity. They recognized through surveys that, in America, there is a hierarchy with white citizens at the top, followed by Asian citizens, and with Latino and Black citizens at the bottom.²⁶ These racial groupings were based on the historical context in which the United States developed into a nation. Similarly, though Venezuelans could be generally characterized as more homogeneous to regional neighbors, historical ethnic and racial divides have carried over from colonial times based on perceived cultural superiority, which may factor into attitudes toward immigrants.

Although cultural supremacy may still be present in some fashion, higher native education seems not to play a role in this calculation. In one study, education levels were positively correlated to increased tolerance levels, even when there are existing negative

²⁴ Paul M. Sniderman, Louk Hagendoorn, and Markus Prior, "Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 1 (2004): 35–49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305540400098X>.

²⁵ Robert Ford, "Acceptable and Unacceptable Immigrants: How Opposition to Immigration in Britain Is Affected by Migrants' Region of Origin," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37, no. 7 (2011): 1017–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2011.572423>.

²⁶ Natalie Masuoka and Jane Junn, *The Politics of Belonging: Race, Public Opinion, and Immigration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 188.

feelings about an out-group.²⁷ In contrast, another study found that the correlation between education level and immigration attitudes depends more on cultural values and the perceived impact of immigration on social life.²⁸ In addition to the capacity of a social landscape to influence perceptions, immutable, individual characteristics, such as race and ethnicity play a prominent role in migration dynamics for both the citizens and the immigrants. More recognizable, innate traits, such as skin color or accent, present an opportunity for external mobilizing forces, such as politics or media to propagate racism and xenophobia. In Venezuela's refugee case, noting ethnic and racial compositions of receiving nations may help identify which of these visible traits can lead to a more welcoming environment, especially given prevalent social tensions stemming from race and ethnicity throughout the world.

As important as it is to recognize the role of inherent physical traits, some relevant socioeconomic variables are often neglected, such as factor mobility,²⁹ the size of the country, and the education level of native workers.³⁰ These variables, although not directly correlated at times, provide insight into how attitudes are formed. For example, in some cases the citizens affected by immigration are elites, and therefore have the power to control the salience of immigration as a societal issue. This dynamic gives a small segment of the population disproportionate power over the native poor and most immigrants. Still, comparing the number of migrants with the number of citizens in receiving nations will paint a more accurate picture of the social landscape that these nations are dealing with. These social factors all influence receiving attitudes in an integrated manner and scholars

²⁷ Lawrence Bobo and Frederick Licari, "Education and Political Tolerance: Testing the Effects of Cognitive Sophistication and Target Group Affect," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1989): 285–308, <https://doi.org/10.1086/269154>.

²⁸ Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox, "Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 1 (2010): 61–84, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055409990372>.

²⁹ In this context, factor mobility refers to the feasibility and capacity of the receiving country to absorb human capital (immigrants) and successfully integrate them into the labor force. Countries with a higher Factor Mobility should yield higher economic prosperity.

³⁰ Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox, "Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe," *International Organization* 61, no. 2 (2007): 399–442, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818307070142>.

suggest that they should not be ignored, even when looking at a strong correlation between two independent variables within migratory phenomena.

3. Political Theories

Political theories focus on explaining how and if the intentional manipulation of societal perceptions and conditions by external actors can lead to negative attitudes toward refugees. For example, a poor labor market may fuel political rhetoric that incites a discriminatory sentiment in the receiving country. These agendas can adapt to any available social or economic factors to achieve a desired end. Thus, in exploring political perspectives, it is important to recognize that although certain socioeconomic factors can form attitudes, it is the capability of political actors to sway citizens that distinguishes these theories from those in the previous two categories. In Colombia's case and seemingly against all odds, the government has been sending favorable messages about the Venezuelan immigrants—with the president referring to them as “brothers”—and it appears to have had a positive effect on the citizenry's attitudes.³¹

Anthony Smith recognizes ethnicity as an “instrument” that can be used by the powerful to advance their agendas.³² For this reason, political influence must be taken into account when examining citizens' attitudes. Masuoka and Junn found that, through political mechanisms, citizens can be made to feel superior to immigrants, which can lead them to reject qualitatively different newcomers. In England, for example, some political parties have a strong tie to antiimmigration attitudes.³³ This appears to be the case in Peru as well, where antiimmigration rhetoric has been accepted by many citizens and manifests in, for instance, use of derogatory terms. Consequently, Venezuelans in Peru are called

³¹ “Migración venezolana es por dictadura y no para promover ideología [Venezuelan migration is due to dictatorship and not to promote ideology],” *El Tiempo*, May 4, 2019, <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/duque-dice-que-la-migracion-venezolana-se-debe-a-la-dictadura-357308>.

³² Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 20.

³³ Jeannette Money and Miriam Feldblum, “Fences and Neighbors: The Political Geography of Immigration Control,” *SAIS Review* xx, no. 1 (2000): 205–13; Bhikhu Parekh, “The Politicization of Race Relations,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 02 (1990): 256–60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017257X00016687>.

Veneco, a term that ensures their marginalization in society.³⁴ These theories are relevant regionally at the moment, since right-wing governments in South America have recently implemented restrictive immigration policies.

Even when there is no outward display of animosity, political factors can be used to influence emotion by drawing on a native's sense of national identity. Matthew Wright, Jack Citrin, and Jonathan Wand explored Americans' perception of national identity in civic and ethnic terms to determine if it correlated with favoring immigration, according to whom the natives perceived were in fact "American."³⁵ Their study concluded that civic conceptions of national identity led to a higher acceptance of immigration. In another American case, Ted Brader, Nicholas Valentine, and Elizabeth Suhay showed that Americans react more negatively to news of Latino immigrants than European immigrants, proving there is a clear difference depending on migrants are from.³⁶ In Europe, a study proved the same case in Switzerland, as Turks and Yugoslavs were rejected more frequently than European naturalization applicants.³⁷ These cases indicate that Latin American countries are more likely to accept immigrants who are most culturally and ethnically similar and less likely to accept those with ethnic and national differences, or who do not share a race and history with the receiving nation.

³⁴ Janetsky, "Fears Stoke Backlash against Venezuelans in Peru"; "In Latin America, Fears of Rising Discrimination, Xenophobia against Venezuelan Migrants," NBC News, October 18, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/latin-america-fears-rising-discrimination-xenophobia-against-venezuelan-migrants-n1068536>.

³⁵ Matthew Wright, Jack Citrin, and Jonathan Wand, "Alternative Measures of American National Identity: Implications for the Civic-Ethnic Distinction," *Political Psychology* 33, no. 4 (2012): 469–82, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2012.00885.x>.

³⁶ Ted Brader, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay, "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (2008): 959–78.

³⁷ Jens Hainmueller and Dominik Hangartner, "Who Gets a Swiss Passport? A Natural Experiment in Immigrant Discrimination," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 1 (2013): 159–87, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000494>.

B. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

For several years, Peru hosted the second largest number of Venezuelan immigrants; recent policies, however, have more clearly differentiated Peru's current response from Colombia's.³⁸ Although the Peruvian and Colombian governments are both considered right wing, their political messages have diverged. Likewise, economic explanations seem insufficient, given the unwavering commitment with which Colombia has received its neighbors. An overlooked variable may lie in the historical interactions between migrant-sending and migrant-receiving nations. In the 1970s and 1980s, when Colombia was ravaged by drug wars and violence, many Colombian refugees were welcomed by Venezuela. This reciprocity seen between Colombians and Venezuelans is not echoed in Peru's migratory situation.

In this thesis I argue that—beyond social, economic, and political factors—several decisive historical interactions between Colombia and Venezuela generated rapprochement, making it possible for reciprocity to exist during catastrophes in which one nation's citizens depended on the neighboring country for asylum. This reciprocity has dampened the catastrophic effect of the current large-scale migratory disaster, resulting in greater acceptance and tolerance compared to nations that do not share historical ties, such as Venezuela and Peru. This hypothesis deviates from common theories because it looks comprehensively at the historical events that solidify bonhomie between the citizens of two countries, particularly at the border. Thus far, most studies have disregarded the historical connections between two countries; this hypothesis seeks to prove that these interactions are an overarching mechanism that transcends social, economic, and political frameworks, and gives them direction.

Theoretically, studies cover reasons for feelings of acceptance, though there is a timeless, overgeneralized aspect to these explanations. In one study, empathy was found to be an important component of acceptance of immigrants, especially as information is disseminated through the media. The study showed evidence that public opinion could be

³⁸ Feline Freier and Parent, "Regional Response to the Venezuelan Exodus."

positively affected by media coverage, giving weight to the political theories.³⁹ Early research in the present case supports this hypothesis, as Peru's media have been disseminating restrictive and fearful immigration messages while Colombia's communication platforms have remained positive and accepting.

While Colombia has a higher population than Peru, Peru is geographically larger.⁴⁰ Each nation could substantiate reasons for rejecting immigration based on numerical statistics, limited resources, and claims of land scarcity. However, at the heart of this dilemma is more than geography, politics, systems, and mechanisms—it is people. Because of the power of public opinion, governments have a much stronger say in their citizens' attitudes toward immigrant and immigration-related issues. Recent protests and riots indicate the citizens' true feelings of discontent. It would be naïve to say that Venezuelans have been the root cause of these sentiments, but it would also be naïve to discount their effect on the receiving populations. In Brazil, for instance, more than one thousand Venezuelans who had settled across the northern town of Boa Vista were forcefully removed by locals who were outraged at a crime committed by an immigrant.⁴¹

Ultimately, arriving at the most accurate conclusion requires careful identification of the historical factors that have led to a welcoming reception and tolerant attitude toward immigrants. Available data notwithstanding, migration is an organic and dynamic phenomenon with multiple dimensions and evolving characteristics. Therefore, the key in explaining variation lies in considering each of the aforementioned theoretical approaches when examining historical data, and it is possible that these frameworks may overlap. Finally, one should not expect a monocausal explanation; human interactions are

³⁹ Benjamin J. Newman et al., "Easing the Heavy Hand: Humanitarian Concern, Empathy, and Opinion on Immigration," *British Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 3 (2015): 583–607, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123413000410>.

⁴⁰ "Population Density," World Bank, accessed February 16, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST>; "Peru Size Comparison: How Big Is Peru?" How to Peru, May 30, 2010, <https://www.howtoperu.com/peru-size-comparison-how-big-is-peru/>.

⁴¹ Jo Griffin, "'The Strain Is too Much': Venezuelan Exodus Has Brazil at Breaking Point," *Guardian*, December 24, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/dec/24/venezuelan-exodus-brazil-at-breaking-point>.

complicated, and the explanations behind human attitudes can be attributed, to varying degrees, to each framework.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The theoretical explanations surrounding varied attitudes toward immigrants suggest that this topic is best addressed by exploring relevant historical interactions between the sending and receiving nations, examining internal and external environmental factors, and investigating the states' responses to the current immigration crisis. This will help avoid simultaneity bias, which makes it difficult to know the difference between the dependent and independent variables.⁴² This research therefore focuses on identifying the factors that affect the acceptance of immigrants and the historically relevant circumstances within the Venezuelan case. The working paper by Corrales is used as a guide for measuring reception attitudes in Colombia and Peru.

In Corrales's study, the six Latin American countries investigated were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago. These nations were selected because of their varying degrees of receptivity toward immigrants, enabling the research to display a wide range of variation. The factors that were measured used data sets, such as overall immigration policy, ease of availability of legal and social assistance, and public opinion. Using this data, the countries were rated favorably if their policies facilitated immigrants' access to essential resources, while public opinion captured the direct response of a nation's citizens toward the new population. The results of this ongoing study have shown that Colombia and Argentina have been the most welcoming nations; Trinidad and Tobago earned the lowest score, followed by Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil, and Chile. Peru, which has the second most Venezuelan immigrants, was excluded from Corrales's research.⁴³

While Corrales's study shows that there is measurable variation in receptive attitudes toward immigrants, the reasoning behind the attitudes is only speculative.

⁴² Hainmueller and Hopkins, "Public Attitudes toward Immigration," 243.

⁴³ Corrales, "Responses to the Venezuelan Migration Crisis."

Although the research did not explore causal mechanisms, the study acknowledges nativism, security issues, economic hardship, and xenophobia as explanations for the Venezuelan mass migration crisis. These unfortunate occurrences are all worth an investigation that goes beyond mere correlation and that, instead, attempts to establish a basis of causation by building upon Corrales's initial study. Even with identifiable data, the historical context of Venezuela's migratory response has been largely ignored, with only a few articles characterizing Colombian attitudes as a reciprocal response. For this reason, this research also examines state interactions between the sending and receiving nations, starting from the mid-nineteenth century, a pivotal period for migration between Colombia and Venezuela.

1. Case Selection

For this research, Colombia and Peru were chosen as the case studies for several reasons. First, these countries are the nearest Spanish-speaking nations that have taken in the greatest number of migrants. Second, Colombia and Peru are different in land size, ethnic composition, and population density, but share the same language and colonial origins, and a comparable border crossed by migrants. These national similarities provide more control over variables that could affect attitudes. Whereas traditional case studies would require controlling multiple elements, exploring these two contrasting receiving nations should yield more observable results.

Another reason for the selection of these countries is that current polls and studies, such as Corrales's study, regard Colombia as the most friendly to Venezuelan immigrants. In other sources, Peru could be qualified as indifferent or hostile toward the refugees. Additionally, current evidence shows that though Peru initially welcomed immigrants, it gradually began to reject them. This variation allows the study to consider the factors surrounding these changes and compare them against Colombia's response. Additionally, although these two nations have been chosen for observation, other neighboring and nonregional countries may inform the discussion when their responses help to clarify attitudes and attitude formation.

Finally, the national identities in Colombia and Peru are strongly rooted in the development of modern South America. For example, less than two hundred years ago Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador were part of a unified country called Gran Colombia, even if just for eleven years. Conversely, Peru currently holds more indigenous populations, as well as a large sector of citizens of Chinese and Japanese descent, making it more culturally distinct from Venezuela. These relevant differences may help explain attitude variation.

2. Research Elements and Timeframe

This research considered political response, public opinion, media dissemination, and policy changes over time. The timeframe of the current migratory response, and therefore of the data collected, was from 2015, when the crisis began, through 2020, when this thesis was written. The timeframe for the historical analysis began in the mid-twentieth century, investigating relevant interactions between Venezuela and the two receiving nations. Additional information was drawn from public opinion surveys, newspaper articles on government and public responses, country reports, and official immigration data from national and international organizations. The products of these sources were categorized into social, political, economic, and historical contexts; the case studies examined these four main aspects of society within each country and comparatively between the two countries.

D. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is organized into two empirical chapters. The first considers Colombia's welcoming reception and the second turns to Peru to evaluate its deviation from an initially positive response toward Venezuelan immigrants and refugees. Each chapter begins by describing the central defining features of the country's reception toward Venezuelan immigrants and refugees, and then considers economic, social, political, and historical explanations for these attitudes. The final chapter then analyzes how and why the responses varied, summarizing the findings and leading explanations, considering implications, recognizing applicability to other regions, and offering policy recommendations.

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II. COLOMBIA: BUILDING TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE THROUGH HISTORICALLY ESTABLISHED RECIPROCITY

In 2015, the most recent wave of Venezuelan refugees started fleeing their economically devastated homeland. Once the wealthiest country in the region, Venezuela witnessed a steady rise in poverty in the years prior to the exodus but was still inhabitable by the non-elite population. Now, the nation is experiencing an unprecedented crime wave and a shortage of food and necessities, and 96 percent of its people live in poverty, making it arduous for the average citizen to survive. Consequently, by early 2020, Colombia had taken in 1.5 million Venezuelan migrants, amounting to 30 of the five million total displaced persons.⁴⁴

Through this chaos—the worst migratory catastrophe South America has ever seen—Colombia has a steady and reliable neighbor, offering shelter, hosting Venezuelan refugees, and enacting laws that have eased the gravity of the situation. Most Latin American nations have now virtually closed their borders to the Venezuelan refugees; why has Colombia been so welcoming? And why does Colombia continue to allow Venezuelan immigration five years into the crisis even when all economic, social, and political indicators point to the seemingly devastating consequences of flooding a struggling state with desperate migrants?⁴⁵

Initial generosity notwithstanding, the welcoming demeanor in countries, such as Peru and Ecuador wore off a few years into the crisis. By mid-2019, these countries had enacted regulations that made it nearly impossible for Venezuelan migrants to cross their

⁴⁴ “Venezuela Poverty Rate Surges amid Economic Collapse, Inflation—Study,” Reuters, July 7, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/venezuela-poverty-idUSL1N2EE1MG>.

⁴⁵ Vali Nasr, “Don’t Let Venezuela’s Crisis Take down Colombia Too,” *Foreign Policy*, October 25, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/25/dont-let-venezuelas-crisis-take-down-colombia-too-refugees/>.

borders.⁴⁶ However, amid declining support for the refugees, Colombia remained steadfast in its sympathy for its neighbor. Instead of continuing the regional trend of focusing inward and bolstering security at the border, Colombia's response went contrary to logic: it opened its entry points, offered citizenship to twenty-four thousand Venezuelan children and newborns, and propagated a message of fraternity with the new immigrants through President Iván Duque.⁴⁷ In addition to a warm welcome from Colombian citizens, the government also maintained a message of solidarity without regard for how or why the Venezuelans had to flee.

It is puzzling that Colombia has been so accommodating and has remained consistently benevolent on social, political, and economic fronts. To understand why Colombia has been so hospitable and receptive, this research turns to the past in search of influential historical ties. A superficial glance into Colombia and Venezuela's historical interactions suggests linkages created during pivotal events in each nation that strengthened the social fabric that unites them. The historical migratory patterns between Colombia and Venezuela show that their strong rapprochement has, thus far, facilitated an unwavering commitment toward the welfare of the refugees by enabling conditions, especially at their shared border, that have generated a reciprocating bonhomie toward each other's struggling and disadvantaged migratory citizens. Moreover, this reciprocity seems to transcend political, social, or economic explanations. As nations like Peru and Ecuador have now increased restrictions for additional Venezuelans to cross their borders, Colombia's counterintuitive response warrants investigation.

⁴⁶ Reuters, "Venezuelan Migrants Flood into Ecuador"; "Venezuelan Migrants Face Tougher Border Policy in Peru," Deutsche Welle, June 15, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/venezuelan-migrants-face-tougher-border-policy-in-peru/a-49218905>; "Peru Is Unlawfully Turning Away Venezuelans Seeking Protection," Amnesty International, February 4, 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/peru-rechazo-ilicito-de-personas-venezolanas-que-buscan-proteccion/>.

⁴⁷ Kurmanav and González, "Colombia Offers Citizenship."

A. COLOMBIA'S HISTORICAL RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA

1. The Foundations of Bonhomie

The historical relations between Colombia and Venezuela began when they were experimentally unified, along with Ecuador, into a country named Gran Colombia. Initially consolidated by “The Liberator,” Simon Bolivar, in 1819, the experiment failed in 1830 after just eleven years.⁴⁸ Even though Bolivar’s project country dissolved into three independent nations (see Figure 1), they maintained the same flag colors and many cultural aspects, but more so at the Venezuela–Colombia divide. Through time, immigration at this border had gone mostly unnoticed because of the focus on wars, the lack of statistical data, and the political indifference by those in power.⁴⁹ However, these migratory flows started gaining significance around the mid-twentieth century with Venezuela’s economic boom and Colombia’s 34 percent population increase over a short span, growing from 11.5 million people in 1951 to 17.5 million in 1964.⁵⁰ The historical relations between these nations could be described as interdependent, though not necessarily by intentional design. While both countries have had periods of downturns and prosperity, they have provided each other with some balance and stability, especially beginning in the second half of the twentieth century.

⁴⁸ Roberto Arana and Héctor Galeano David, “The Colombia-Venezuela Relations,” *Memorias*, no. 24 (December 2014): 76–97.

⁴⁹ Susan Berglund, “The ‘Musiques’ in Venezuela: Immigration Goals and Reality, 1936–1961” (PhD diss., UMass Amherst, 2014), 32.

⁵⁰ David Bushnell, *Colombia: Una nación a pesar de sí misma [Colombia: A nation in spite of itself]*, trans. Claudia Montilla V., 1st ed. (Bogotá, Colombia: Ariel, 2017), 443.



Figure 1. Gran Colombia 1821–1830, and the lands it split into.⁵¹

Colombia has suffered catastrophic periods of violence and uncertainty from the mid-1940s until recently. Consequently, the nation has been mostly an exporter of immigrants, and an importer to a much lesser extent. Throughout the twentieth century, the devastating effects of political violence, the various guerrilla groups, and narcotraffickers have kept the country in an unceasing state of chaos. The most prominent cataclysm occurred after the assassination of Colombian presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1947, which led to a ten-year period of extreme violence known as *La Violencia*.⁵² As the nation recovered from that chaos, communist groups, such as FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (the National Liberation Army) waged a civil war in the mid-1960s that lasted fifty-two years; the war claimed over 220,000 people and

⁵¹ Source: “Civilization: The West and the Rest with Niall Ferguson,” PBS, accessed August 2, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/civilization-west-and-rest/killer-apps/property/map-american-expansion-u-s-a-and-gran-colombia/>.

⁵² David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 205.

displaced 7.6 million more.⁵³ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, narco trafficking empowered drug kingpins and violent organizations, placing ordinary citizens at peril.⁵⁴ As a result, within the last forty years approximately one-million Colombians have migrated to Venezuela.⁵⁵ These sociopolitical afflictions have resulted in a steady stream of continuous emigration. Throughout these hardships, Colombian citizens have endured the brunt of the brutality and have grown strong, numb, and wiser, often with the unheralded help of Venezuela.

During these rough times for Colombia, Venezuela, though not without incident, experienced great economic growth mainly because of its oil reserves. Consequently, the nation became the wealthiest South American state and the preferred destination for regional immigrants, with Colombians leading in numbers (see Figure 2). Venezuela's affluence enabled Colombian immigrants to fill jobs in various sectors of the economy, but mainly agriculture, construction, domestic services, and industry.⁵⁶ Ultimately, the Colombian difficulties, coupled with Venezuelan prosperity, created opportunities for both neighboring nations to test receiving attitudes and display reciprocity.

⁵³ Dayra Carvajal, "As Colombia Emerges from Decades of War, Migration Challenges Mount," Migration Policy, April 12, 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombia-emerges-decades-war-migration-challenges-mount>.

⁵⁴ Carvajal.

⁵⁵ Carvajal.

⁵⁶ A. Lauricella Flores, "Venezuela," in *Impact of Migration in the Receiving Countries*, ed. Leszek Antoni Kosiński (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 1996), 77.

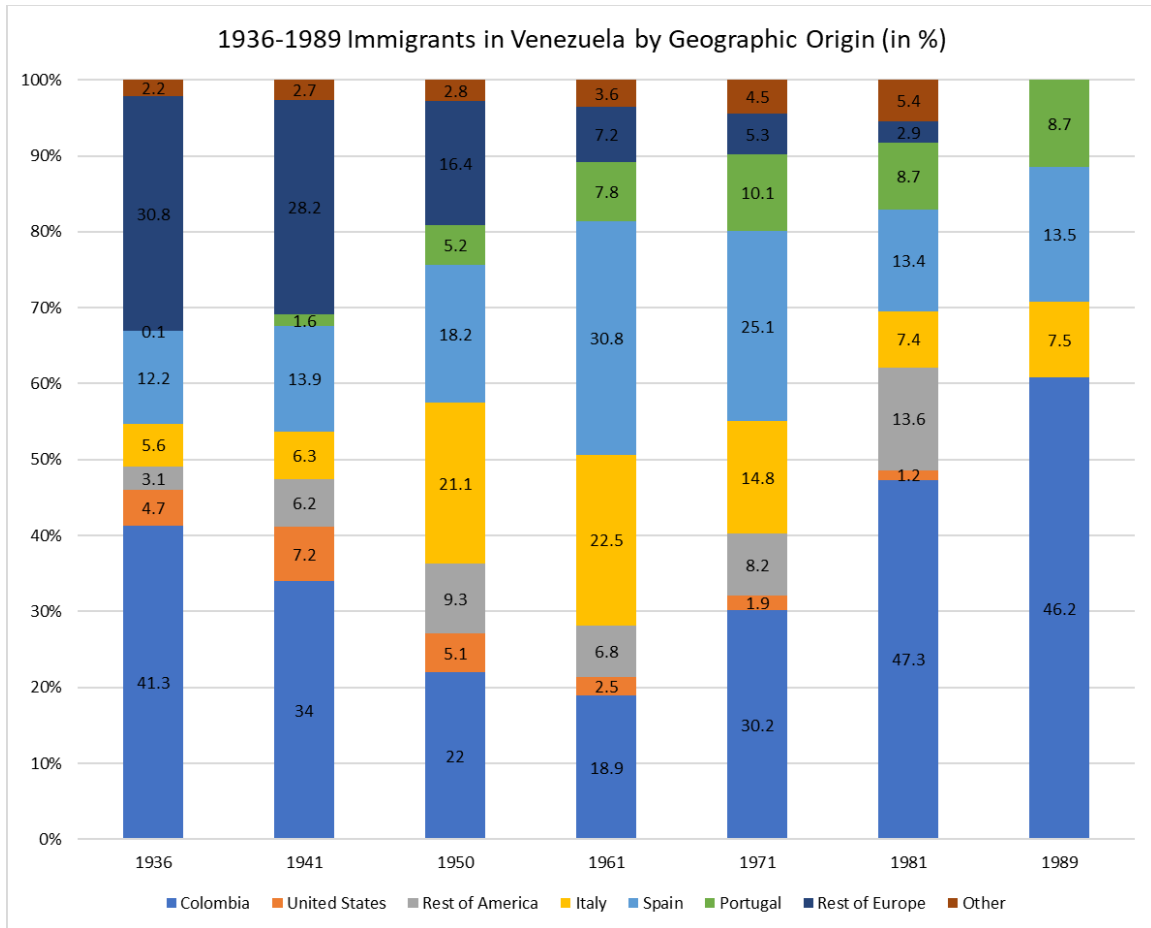


Figure 2. Immigration to Venezuela by geographic origin.⁵⁷

2. Economic Facilitation

By 1945, when Colombia was dealing with agrarian reforms,⁵⁸ Venezuela was prosperous because of demand for petroleum, an industry that required a large labor force. The most motivated and economical personnel available to fill this void happened to be Colombian workers, who then relocated mainly to the Venezuelan states of Táchira,

⁵⁷ Adapted from Flores, 12.

⁵⁸ Bushnell, *Colombia: Una nación a pesar de sí misma [Colombia: A nation in spite of itself]*, 276.

Merida, and Zulia.⁵⁹ Seizing on the opportunity to improve their quality of life and escape *La Violencia*, Colombian laborers rushed into neighboring Venezuela. Once in place, they were considered guest workers, and established a seasonal migratory routine to satisfy job vacancies. This recurring labor cycle was the beginning of a social amalgamation that would bolster familiarity between residents of towns on both sides of the border. This dynamic is elaborately captured by the description of Mexican braceros in the United States in that “[t]here is nothing more permanent than temporary foreign workers.”⁶⁰

Venezuelan leaders noticed the strong economic growth and the increase in migratory movements even though the country was, in fact, experiencing internal political turmoil. Thus, despite a coup d’état in 1948 that led to a decade-long military dictatorship, the Venezuelan government passed a large-scale open immigration law, making it significantly easier for undocumented workers to legally integrate into the economy.⁶¹ In addition to favorable immigration policies, the receiving population was accepting of foreigners. As a result, Venezuela’s “first scientifically organized public opinion poll” showed that Colombians were seen as “brothers” and not foreigners; 77 percent of respondents believed immigration would improve their financial situation.⁶²

The combination of Venezuela’s governmental support and its citizens’ approving disposition toward its national neighbors in the mid-twentieth century helped establish an identity in which Colombians and Venezuelans were practically indistinguishable. In fact, some Colombian workers would even pass as Venezuelans, enabling many of them to

⁵⁹ Mary M. Kritz, “The Impact of International Migration on Venezuelan Demographic and Social Structure,” *The International Migration Review* 9, no. 4 (1975): 526, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3002345>; Megan Janetsky, “Here’s Why Colombia Opened its Arms to Venezuelan Migrants—Until Now,” *Foreign Policy*, January 14, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/14/heres-why-colombia-opened-its-arms-to-venezuelan-migrants-until-now/>.

⁶⁰ Philip L. Martin and Michael S. Teitelbaum, “The Mirage of Mexican Guest Workers,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 28, 2009, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/mexico/2001-11-01/mirage-mexican-guest-workers>; “There Is Nothing More Permanent than Temporary Foreign Workers,” Center for Immigration Studies, accessed August 2, 2020, <https://cis.org/Report/There-Nothing-More-Permanent-Temporary-Foreign-Workers>.

⁶¹ Kritz, “Impact of International Migration,” 517

⁶² Berglund, “The ‘Musius’ in Venezuela,” 35–36.

unlawfully remain within the country.⁶³ Still, by the 1950s, most of these migrants were simply seeking opportunities in the oil, farming, and domestic services industries. In Colombia, *La Violencia* had altered the rural landscape and caused many farmers to lose their lands and experience “political manipulation.”⁶⁴ It follows, then, that the disenfranchised of the era took their skills to a place where they were safe from persecution and insecurity. In many ways, this same dynamic is in effect with the Venezuelan exodus today, as refugees are escaping their state of poverty, violence, and political corruption to make a living in Colombia. The historical correlations with the current crisis are evident even from these early interactions, but, although they provide a strong foundation for the current Colombian neighborliness, more happened between then and now explain the current response.

3. Government Cooperation

It was not only the increased number of interactions between foreigners and citizens that facilitated a favorable immigration environment—it was also border dynamics. Although the journey to Venezuela required crossing an international boundary, these migrations were largely considered internal because they were short-distance and enabled low-skill workers to pursue geographically accessible opportunities across the border. These workers were largely illegal because they lacked the wherewithal to acquire the proper documents for legitimate work.⁶⁵ Even so, they fulfilled vital economic roles and thus were not pressured to return home, encouraging many to stay permanently (see Figure 3). By treating these migrations as internal, each nation was mitigating alienation and fostering bilateral relations. Once both nations recognized this working relationship and identified the need to address immigration, each government did its part to facilitate the smooth continuation of migratory patterns through partnerships and agreements of solidarity, setting a precedent for decades to come.

⁶³ Kritz, “Impact of International Migration,” 527.

⁶⁴ Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia*, 328.

⁶⁵ Adela Pellegrino, “Venezuela: Illegal Immigration from Colombia,” *The International Migration Review* 18, no. 3 (1984): 749, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2545896>.

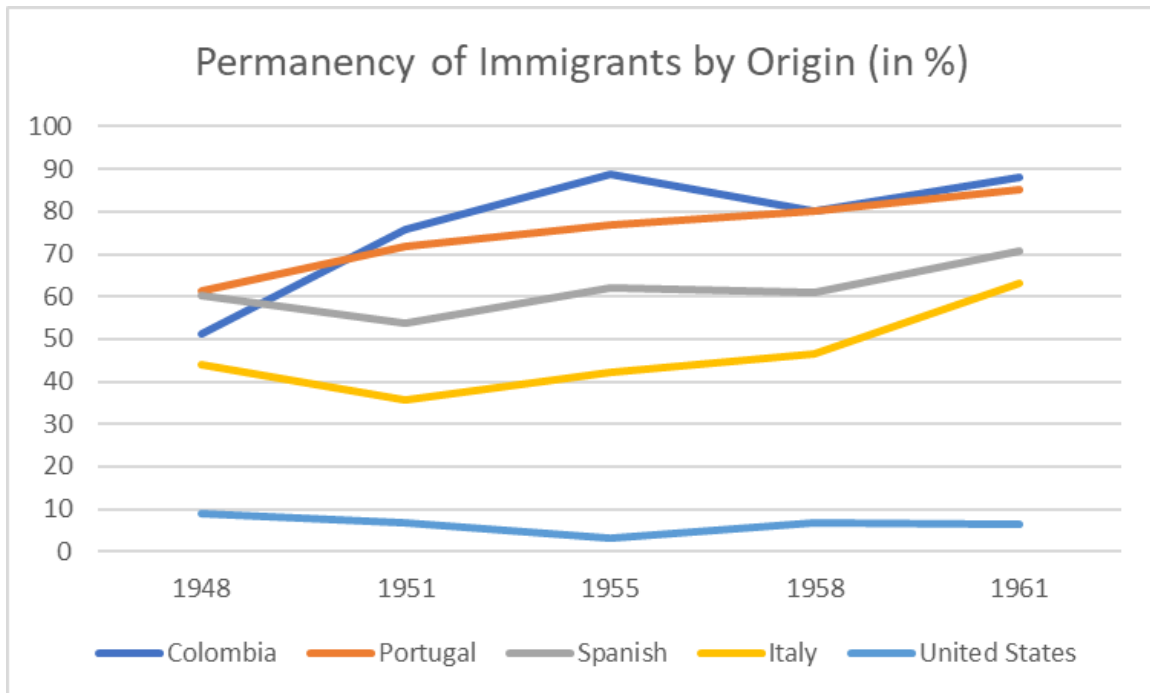


Figure 3. Permanency of immigrants in Venezuela, by origin.⁶⁶

Building off a cordial political relationship with Colombia at the time, Venezuela maintained a policy of open borders from 1947 to 1958.⁶⁷ As a growing country, it needed workers and immigrants in different sectors of its economy at a time when its population was around five million. In addition to the large number of Europeans that arrived, an estimated one million Colombians made their way to Venezuela, though a great part returned after some time—a seasonal pattern that continued until the current migration started. As this mid-century border migration dynamic was producing favorable economic results, Venezuela’s policies were forging a resilient sociopolitical bond with Colombia’s government and the migrant workers. Venezuela not only opened its borders without any restrictions, it also espoused a pro-immigration political environment. As a result,

⁶⁶ Adapted from Berglund, “The ‘Musiques’ in Venezuela,” 110.

⁶⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Venezuela—immigration and ethnic composition,” accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela>.

Colombian presence in Venezuela increased dramatically, jumping from 41,000 in 1950 to 88,000 in 1961.⁶⁸

By the end of the decade, both governments had signed a reaffirmation of friendship, with the intent to better track the border population and maintain a census. Although some of the terms of the agreement were not effectively or consistently employed, the nations were able to create a pact and emphasize a population in an area that had, until then, been largely disregarded. It was a deliberate attempt to formalize border relations, which established very permissive migratory conditions. Even after stringent measures were implemented to curb immigration in 1958, Colombians maintained a steady flow, filling farming jobs vacated by rural Venezuelans relocating to city centers. Thus, by 1961, 18.1 percent of Venezuela's immigrant population was composed of Colombians, making up the greatest number of Latin Americans in the country.⁶⁹ Figure 4 shows the major events that affected migration between Colombia and Venezuela during this period.

⁶⁸ Berglund, "The 'Musiques' in Venezuela," 200.

⁶⁹ Kritz, "Impact of International Migration," 12.

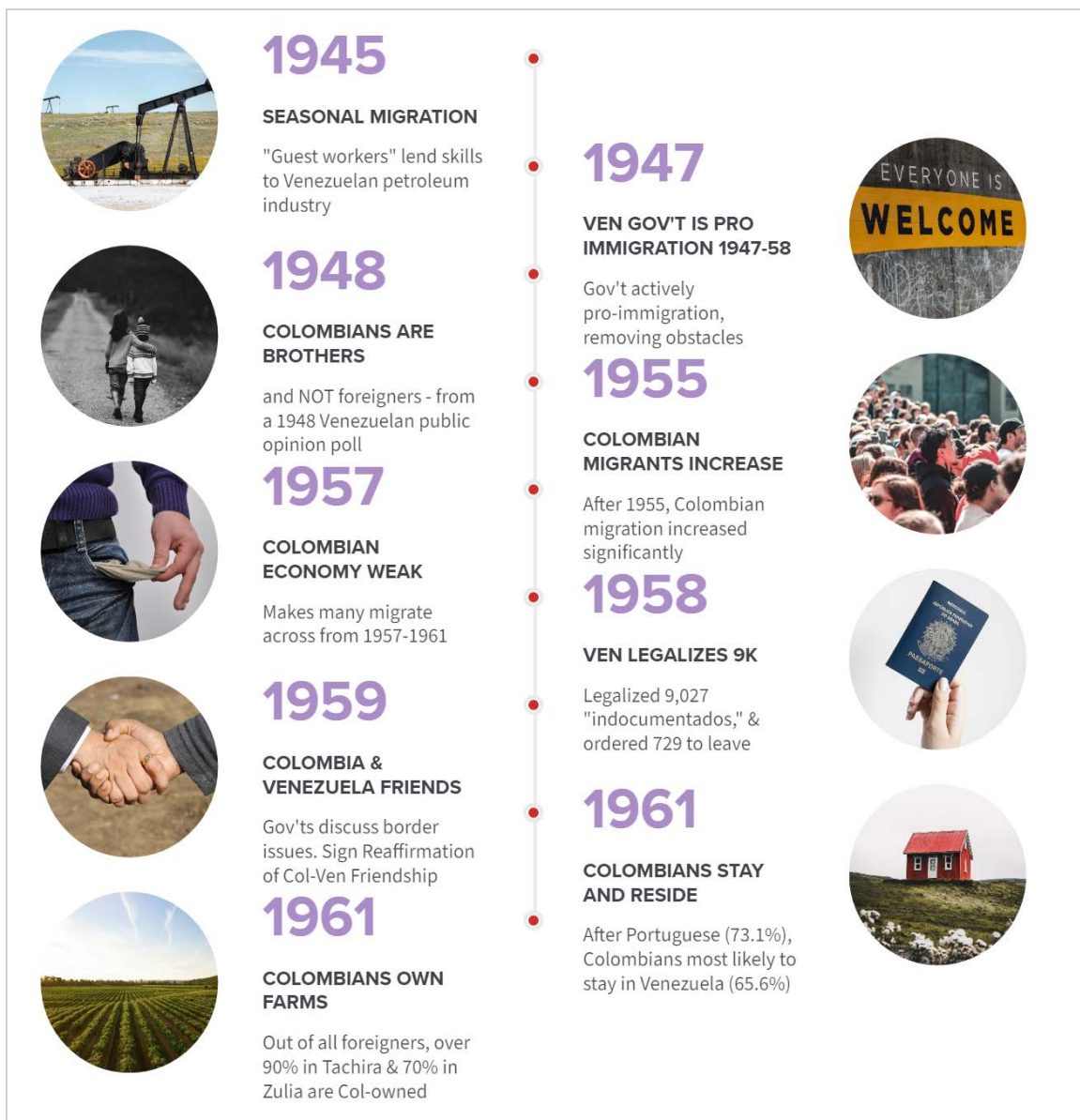


Figure 4. Colombia–Venezuela significant interactive events, 1945–1961.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Adapted from Berglund, "The 'Musius' in Venezuela"; Kritz, "Impact of International Migration."

The 1960s and 1970s brought more prosperity to Venezuela thanks to its oil boom. The country produced the second strongest gross national product in South America, and second in all of Latin America (see Figure 5). Colombia was not economically anemic, but financial stability for average citizens was implausible due to income inequality, the beginning of the drug trade, and a surge in radical political groups. Consequently, farmers and laborers left; in 1960, 117,377 Colombians officially lived outside the country, whereas by 1973 the total number was 556,683, most of whom resided in Venezuela.⁷¹

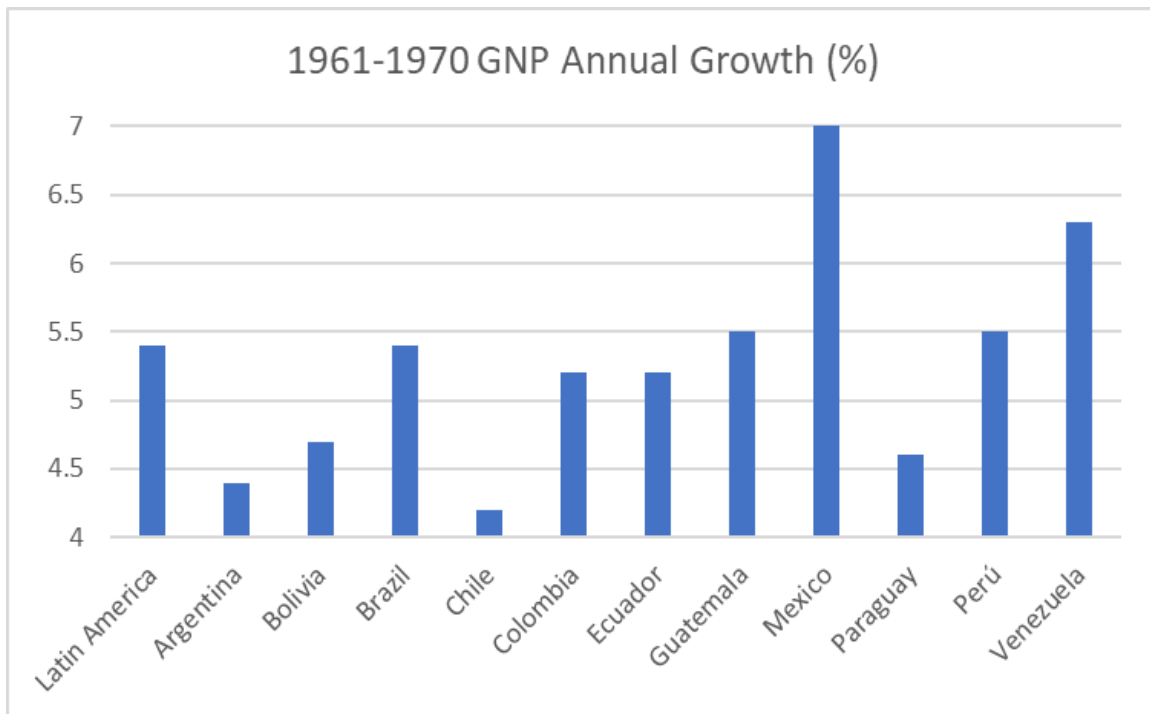


Figure 5. GNP growth in Latin America, 1961–1970.⁷²

⁷¹ Orlando Cesar Deavila Pertúz, “Lazos transnacionales: La migración colombiana a Venezuela y el desarrollo de la vivienda popular en Cartagena, 1973–1983 [Transnational ties: Colombian migration to Venezuela and the development of popular housing in Cartagena, 1973–1983],” *Palabra*, no. 18 (2018): 66–82.

⁷² Adapted from Chiara Pagnotta, “Latin American Migration within the Continent between 1980 and 2000: A Historical Perspective,” *Nuevo Mundo—Mundos Nuevos*, October 9, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.67174>.

4. Transnational Factors

The 1970s also brought the rise of narcotraffickers, which placed Colombia as a global leader in the illegal drug trade. The illicit activities brought more violence while cartel kingpins gained power. The country became more dangerous, providing yet another reason for middle- and low-income citizens to flee. During this time, there was at least one city in Colombia in which migration to Venezuela was studied—Cartagena. Many of the 300,000 Colombian residents that migrated to Venezuela in the 1970s hailed from Cartagena.⁷³ One study captured that they greatly bolstered ties between both countries by productively contributing economically in both nations. In Venezuela, these workers were productive contributors to the local economy, enriching the host nation through the fruits of experienced laborers.⁷⁴ Colombia benefitted, too, through remittances, which helped build cities, strengthened the local and national economies, and cemented a social rapport between the host and origin cities. National border lines blurred as the migrants formed a new intercultural community created by organic social translocations instead of political demarcations. Governments on both sides did remain involved in the synthetizations between their people by communicating with each other and prioritizing certain policies. Consequently, they continued to address the new social dynamic through joint declarations by their foreign ministers and a joint commission to study immigration. Figure 6 tracks the significant interactions between Colombia and Venezuela during this time period.

⁷³ Deavila Pertúz, “Transnational Ties,” 67

⁷⁴ Pellegrino, “Venezuela,” 748

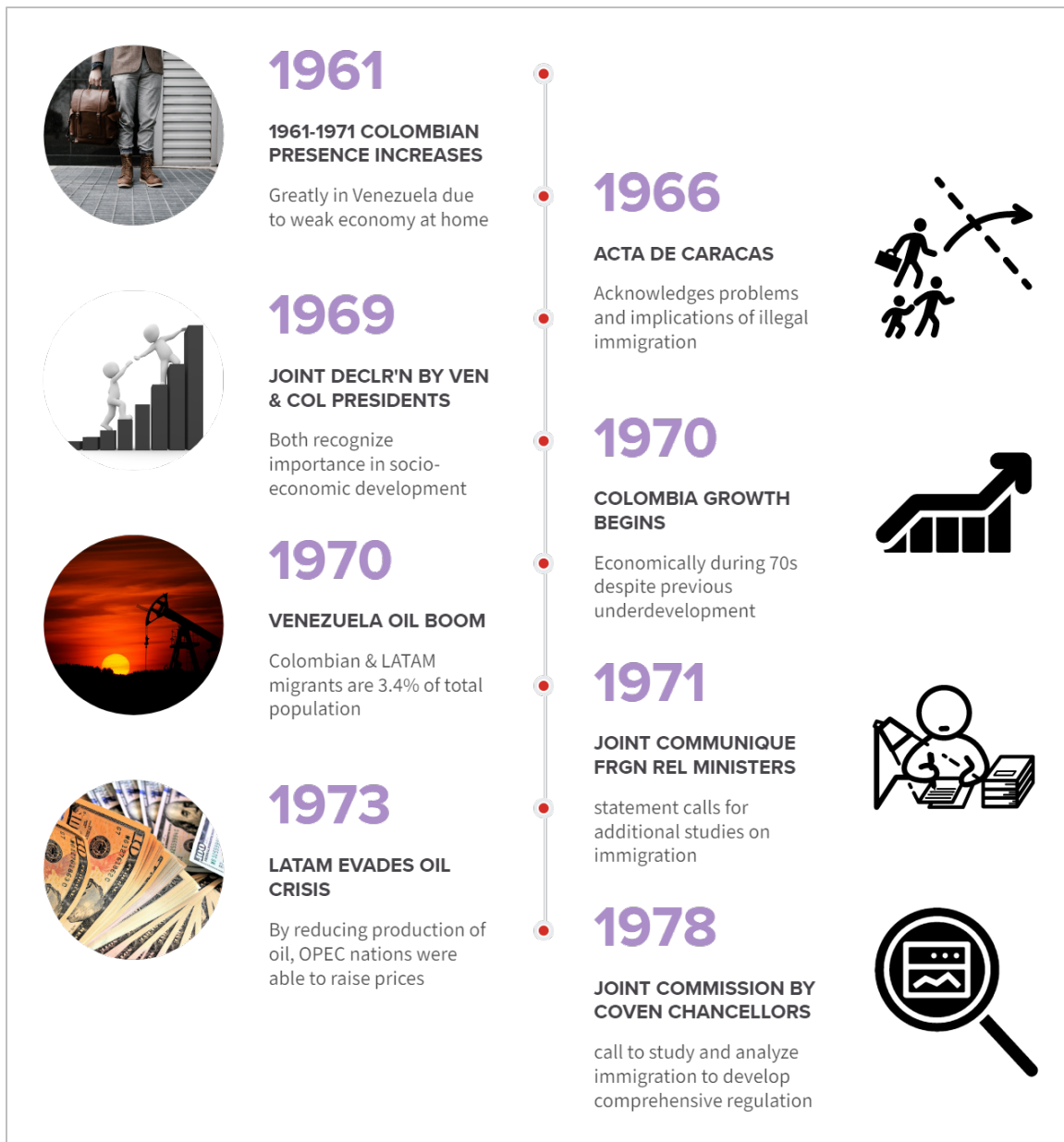


Figure 6. Colombia–Venezuela significant interactive events, 1960s–1970s.⁷⁵

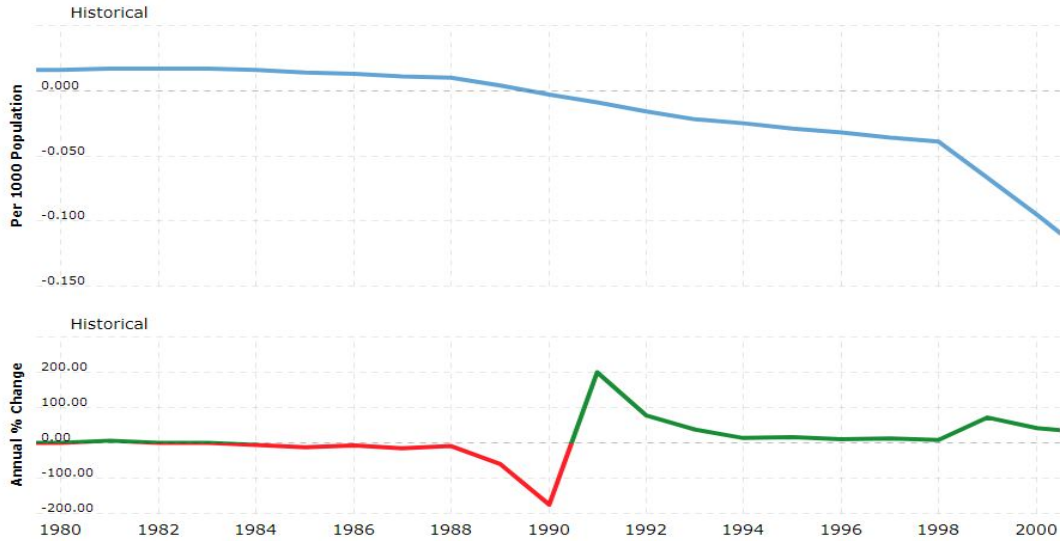
⁷⁵ Adapted from Berglund, “The ‘Musius’ in Venezuela”; Ivy D. Hanchett, “Immigration and Economic Integration Case Studies: United States—Mexico and Venezuela—Colombia” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1994), 85.

While it has been mostly a one-sided migration flow, the so-called lost decade of the 1980s hurt Venezuela financially particularly hard because of a downturn in Latin American commodities. With plummeting oil prices, unemployment skyrocketed. To make matters worse, in 1989, the newly elected Venezuelan president, Carlos Andrés Pérez, implemented an economic model to replace industrialization by imports substitution, which provoked riots and violence due to the high cost of gas and transportation.⁷⁶ As a result, Venezuela experienced a spike in emigration; the data suggests that Venezuelans sought Colombia for refuge, though they returned shortly after (see Figure 7). While it is difficult to trace exact destinations for migrants during this period, the known statistical data for previous years suggests that the same ebbs and flows continued, making Colombia the go-to nation for Venezuelans in hardship. Additionally, much of this migration was never captured in the receiving countries, and there were also Colombians returning home.

The continuation of these migratory patterns between 1980 and 2000 kept a high level of interaction between Colombians and Venezuelans (see Figure 8). Toward the end of the 1990s, Venezuela turned toward socialism, from which some Colombian migrants benefited in the 2000s, until the Bolivarian state economically collapsed. By 2011, 70,000 residents from the Colombian department of Arauca fled to due to armed conflict, arriving in a steady stream to the Venezuelan states of Zulia or Táchira.⁷⁷ They were given housing and safety as Colombia grappled with more of the same violence due to armed groups, such as FARC. These benefits and the prospect of a peaceful life led migrants to see Venezuela as their permanent home. Thus, while Colombians were seasonal workers in the mid-twentieth century, from approximately the 1970s onward they have made Venezuela their permanent home.

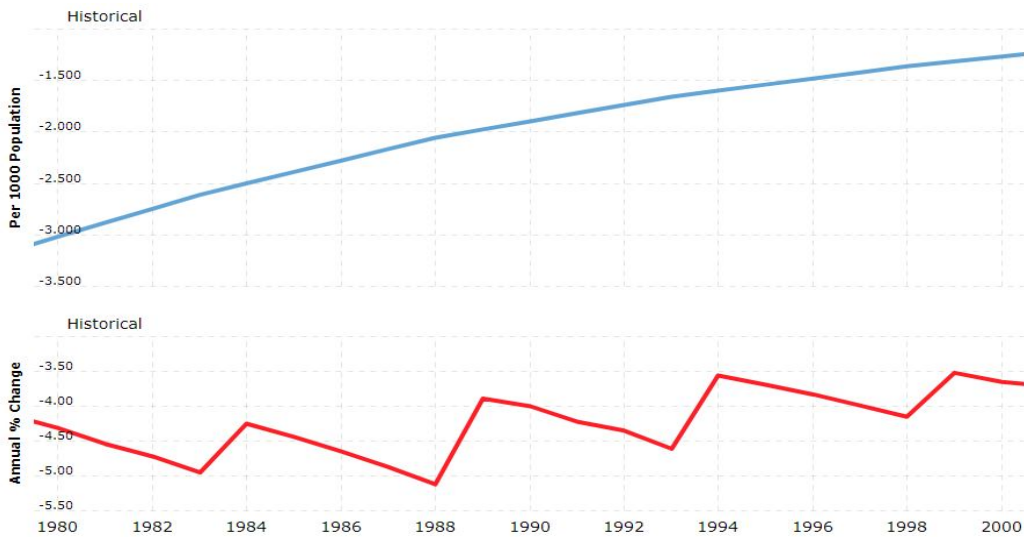
⁷⁶ “30 Years Ago, Venezuela Exploded,” Caracas Chronicles, February 27, 2019, <https://www.caracaschronicles.com/2019/02/27/30-years-ago-venezuela-exploded/>.

⁷⁷ Arturo Wallace, “Desplazados en Colombia, refugiados en Venezuela [Displaced in Colombia, refugees in Venezuela],” BBC, January 8, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/01/121227_refugiados_desplazados_colombia_venezuela_arauca_apure_aw.



Net migration is red when the country has more emigration, and green if more immigration. Percentage change each year based off previous year.

Figure 7. Venezuela net migration, 1980–2020.⁷⁸



Colombian net migration was cyclical but stable until 2000.

Figure 8. Colombia net migration, 1980–2000.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Source: “Venezuela Net Migration Rate 1950–2020,” Macro Trends, accessed August 5, 2020, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/VEN/venezuela/net-migration>.

⁷⁹ Source: Macro Trends.

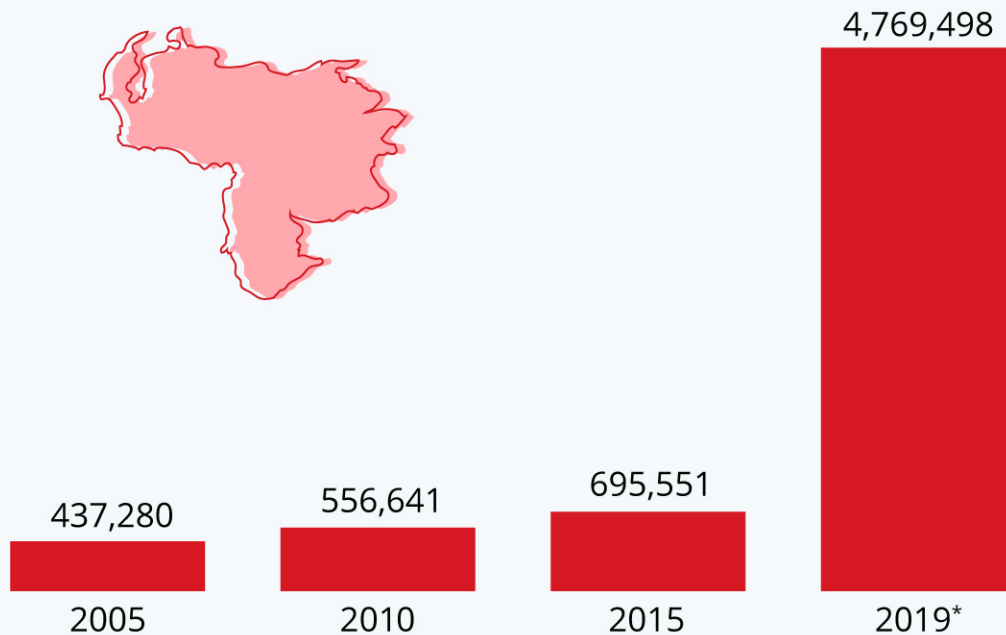
B. HISTORICAL TIES, SOLIDARITY, AND THE VENEZUELAN MIGRATION CRISIS

The current migration wave is the culmination of a downturn that began in the early 2000s. However, the ongoing crisis dwarfs any previous crisis (see Figure 9). Prior to this era, Venezuela had been the main migrant-receiving country in South America thanks to its affluence and prosperity. Due to the most recent diaspora, the region experienced a wave of migration unlike ever before, as the countries that typically sent immigrants were now on the receiving end.⁸⁰ Out of all nations, Colombia—historically the highest emigrant country in South America—became the primary destination for Venezuelan migrants. This was not unintentional; it was an organically forged path, grounded in historical roots. Thus, after half a century of mostly one-way migration, Colombia opened its borders to Venezuelans seeking opportunities.

⁸⁰ Naciones Unidas and Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, *Panorama social de América Latina 2019 [Social panorama of Latin America 2019]* (Santiago: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2019), 174.

Escape from Venezuela

Global Venezuelan migrant stock from 2005 to 2019



* As of December 5

Source: International Organization for Migration



statista

Figure 9. Current migration numbers by waves.⁸¹

Venezuela's political landscape and economic downturns in the twenty-first century caused a reversal in a migration flow that had been established for sixty years. As a result, several waves of migrants have left the country, the latest of which has impacted Colombia. While it was initially the educated and middle-income citizens who departed, the most recent diaspora is characterized by poverty and desperation of the poorest

⁸¹ Source: "Infographic: Escape from Venezuela," Statista, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/chart/16766/venezuela-migration/>.

Venezuelan citizens. It is this exodus, which started in 2015, that is the focus of reception in this thesis.

Colombia welcomed immigrants into an already strained economy, and its government pledged \$228 million for health services in its border areas.⁸² Additionally, Venezuelans called the Colombian people “generous,” enabling their integration into society; however, beyond social amity and compassion, the Venezuelan dictatorship is seen by many, including Colombia, as an enemy of the people, though its citizens are not seen in the same light.⁸³ The clear differentiation between the political and social structures makes it possible for welcoming attitudes to transcend eras, governments, economies, and transnational organizations. The Colombian people and the government seem to have recognized the maturity of the ties that had been formed over six decades because their response has been empathetical. The Colombian president has made statements of solidarity, including this one from Duque:

It hurts us deeply to witness migrant brethren arrive into our territory with hunger, lacking vaccines, with chills in their bones and illnesses. They are victims of the dictatorship and not promoters of the dictatorship’s ideology.⁸⁴

Though some may see it as diplomacy, the specific language used by the president says a lot about the characterization of this phenomenon. What started as seasonal migration to Venezuela in the early to mid-nineteenth century has now formed into a deeply rooted identity, especially at the border, in which inhabitants see no territorial lines.⁸⁵ This dynamic between the people of both nations has formed a metaphorical bridge that has withstood the test of time and the weight of the millions who have crossed it. Structurally

⁸² “New Research: The Venezuelan Migration Crisis in Colombia,” International Republican Institute, September 11, 2019, <https://www.iri.org/resource/new-research-venezuelan-migration-crisis-colombia>.

⁸³ Janetsky, “Here’s Why Colombia Opened its Arms.”

⁸⁴ El Tiempo, “Venezuelan Migration.”

⁸⁵ Ana Marleny Bustamante de Pernía and Edixon J. Chacón G., “Formas identitarias en la región fronteriza de Táchira (Venezuela)—Norte de Santander (Colombia) [Identity forms in the border region of Táchira (Venezuela)—Norte de Santander (Colombia)],” *Desafíos* 25, no. 1 (June 30, 2013): 167–205.

aided by government and political reforms over the years, the bridge is now being crossed in the opposite direction, en masse, and it has not collapsed.

While this reception may have been initially reciprocal, the Colombians in Venezuela have been historically stigmatized and marginalized due to their associated labors. Occupying mostly the lower economic sectors, *Colombian* has been synonymous in Venezuela for *poor*, and opportunities across the border have been limited. Despite a patronizing environment, Colombians have indeed thrived and been able to reach a level of stability not available back home. It is also true that Venezuelans have not always wanted Colombians as immigrants, but evidence overwhelmingly indicates that both nations and their citizens have benefited from the socioeconomic dynamic that resulted from these interactions. Ultimately, these migrations have had a stabilizing feature in an otherwise chaotic environment.

Furthermore, even though the border between Venezuela and Colombia is socially amalgamated, there is not a single identity or culture that dominates these migratory patterns. Evidence from as early as the 1970s shows that while the border states are the primary destinations during migrations, Colombians have settled in regions that are more culturally similar to their origin.⁸⁶ The reinforcement of similar cultures joining together has strengthened the ties between both peoples and nations. Thus, borders have been characterized as an “artificial division” of people that were already united.⁸⁷

To summarize, multiple factors have historically strengthened ties between both nations at economic, political, and social levels, but it has been the border identity that has transcended the challenges of all eras, including the Venezuelan migration crisis. Beginning with an economic perspective, both Colombians and Venezuelans benefited from seasonal and permanent migration. Colombia’s unemployed and mostly underprivileged workforce was able to find opportunities abroad, and many sent remittances. Moreover, necessitous Colombians were replenishing Venezuela’s labor market in key sectors of the economy, such as oil, farming, and domestic jobs, which were

⁸⁶ Pellegrino, “Venezuela,” 748

⁸⁷ Pagnotta, “Latin American Migration,” 51.

in high demand during a time of urbanization.⁸⁸ The fulfilment of these market necessities by Colombians enabled Venezuelan citizens to ascend the socioeconomic ladder at a time when internal diasporas favored metropolitan areas. Consequently, Colombian migrants played a pivotal role in Venezuela by enabling it to economically capitalize on the labor gains. Likewise, Colombia was able to grow its localized and national economies.

Politically, both Venezuela and Colombia have directly addressed immigration challenges head-on, even if at times citizens themselves may have not welcomed low-skill migrants. These policies were able to provide a framework from which migrants could benefit, though millions of illegal workers have also benefited. The positive declarations and demeanor with which migrants have been viewed at the state level have facilitated long-lasting migrations, as well as integration of refugees into Venezuelan society. The same trend is true today, within the current crisis. In 2018, Venezuelans in Colombia were given a “special stay” permit that allowed them to be legally employed.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the Colombian government estimated the migrants would remain in the country at least three years, though they suspected it might be longer. The anticipation of a prolonged stay suggests that even if the nation was not fully prepared to handle the inflow, it at least had realistic expectations about the situation.

When the Venezuelan exodus began, the initial political and social consensus among Latin American states and regional reports was that this downturn was going to be temporary. Even though the current Venezuelan sociopolitical environment indicates that this catastrophe is nowhere near subsiding, countries that believed stability would return within a few years should not be faulted. Since at least the 1950s, Venezuela has over-dependended on its oil supply for its financial growth; though it has suffered setbacks when prices in commodities have dropped, the country’s economy has typically rebounded

⁸⁸ Adela Pellegrino, “La migración internacional en América Latina: tendencias y perfiles de los migrantes [International migration in Latin America: trends and profiles of migrants],” presented at the Hemispheric Conference on International Migration, 2002, http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/11362/34008/1/S2002562_es.pdf.

⁸⁹ Andrew Selee and Jessica Bolter, *An Uneven Welcome: Latin American and Caribbean Responses to Venezuelan and Nicaraguan Migration* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2020), 16, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/latam-caribbean-responses-venezuelan-nicaraguan-migration>.

within a few years. Therefore, offering help to Venezuelan refugees seemed feasible under the assumption that conditions back home would improve within a few years and that migrants would then be able to return. However, five years into the crisis, repatriation is far from reality. Based on historical trends, it is understandable that Latin American states would treat this crisis as a transient economic issue rather than a lasting regional disaster.

Considering the perception that this dilemma would be episodic upon the beginning of the catastrophe in 2015, most regional countries reacted promptly and acted generously in their efforts to assist fleeing Venezuelans. Furthermore, the majority of Latin American states remained consistent with the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees—an agreement urging each partner to contribute in assisting refugees and providing asylum—that undoubtedly had a significant role in the cordiality of the initial response. Consequently, the two largest migrant recipients, Colombia and Peru, opened their borders and facilitated documentation, eased entry requirements, provided job opportunities, and propagated a welcoming message across their populations. The situation was largely understood by each receiving nation’s citizens, and, even though there were isolated xenophobic incidents, the reception was largely positive at the political, social, and individual levels.

Thus, in direct comparison to regional neighbors and despite its internal fiscal limitations in accommodating such a sudden and large increase of migrants, Colombia’s enduring warm reception defied expectations. Economically, the country has never been considered developed and, though there are some affluent metropolitan areas and major cities, there is still a significant poverty rate. Additionally, the nation has been historically plagued by social inequality since its creation, and elites have long governed without producing significant advancement to the rest of the population. The combination of these factors strongly indicates that Colombia is not set up to succeed through this migration crisis. However, in this case, the history of migration between Colombia and Venezuela has cemented an identity that is keen on continued support of refugees. Ultimately, the bonds that have existed in this region predate and transcend borders, governments, and economies, and have generated solidarity amid the ongoing Venezuelan exodus.

III. PERU'S INITIAL ACCEPTANCE OF VENEZUELAN SHIFTS TOWARD REJECTION

A. INTRODUCTION

Following in the South American welcoming trend, Peru received Venezuelans early on with a sense of solidarity, enabling 860,000 immigrants to settle in the country. By providing working opportunities and spreading a positive political message, Peru became the second highest immigrant-receiving nation amidst this crisis. Furthermore, its capital, Lima, currently holds the greatest concentration of Venezuelans in the world.⁹⁰ However, as the exodus entered its fourth year in 2019, Peru's reception changed from a hospitable attitude to one of hostility and rejection. In this chapter, I argue that the lack of strong historical ties between Venezuela and Peru lowered the tolerability that Peru had with the new immigrants. In addition, I also argue that certain socioeconomic and political factors play an important role in shaping how the reception developed.

Initially, practically all South American countries were open to receiving immigrants, and Peru was no exception. Staying true to the 1984 Cartagena Accord,⁹¹ the nation has done its part to ease a migratory crisis that shows no signs of ceasing. Additionally, because the majority of Venezuelan immigrants are now leaving to survive, the receiving countries are taking in the poorest migrants. Recognizing this, regional states opened their borders, and facilitated entry to the more than five-million fleeing Venezuelans. However, just as the welcoming trend caught on initially, so did the turn toward rejection, and now most regional states, including Peru, are turning vulnerable migrants away for multiple reasons, making it very difficult for them to enter.

By examining Peru as the most welcoming nation that turned against receiving more migrants, I seek to uncover the cause for why there was a sudden and unforeseen shift

⁹⁰ José Luis Bacigalupo and Patricio M. Goldstein, "The Venezuelan Exodus in Peru: A First Approximation," *Latin America Policy Journal*, Spring 2019.

⁹¹ Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, "The Helping Clause of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration," *Caracas Chronicles* (blog), July 6, 2019, <https://www.caracaschronicles.com/2019/07/06/the-helping-clause-of-the-1984-cartagena-declaration/>.

in attitude. It is not because of a lack of necessity, since the Venezuelan exodus continues to wreak havoc in the region, so the need is still there for neighboring countries to maintain solidarity with the fleeing migrants. Therefore, it is puzzling that Peru would go from being accepting and accommodating, into a nation that Venezuelans are willingly choosing to leave. Hence, because this issue is complex, finding the reason for Peru's shift in attitude should be explored from various angles. Therefore, this chapter examines historical, social, political, and economic factors to uncover the drivers of the shift toward rejection. Understanding that some elements are more important than others in shaping attitudes, Peru's case may offer clarity showing which variables play a bigger role in causing changes in reception.

Thus, what made Peru initially so welcoming? Could it be that historical ties were sufficient enough to warrant hosting the second largest number of migrants overall? Or, was it the fact that Peru wanted to be diplomatic and wanted to follow through on regional and international pacts to protect migrants? Initial evidence suggests that at least some cultural ties between immigrants and citizens allowed Peru to give Venezuelans a warm welcome. Yet then, why did Peru change its initially welcoming stance on the migrants? While there may be official reasons from the Peruvian government and its media why it was necessary to stop the migrant flow, the shift appears to be driven by social tension and political rhetoric against specific types of migrants: the poor ones.

B. PERU AND VENEZUELA LACK STRONG HISTORICAL TIES

Due to their historical development and colonial influence, Peru and Venezuela have the Spanish language and Roman Catholicism in common. Ethnically, these two nations have over sixty-percent mestizo population, though Peru has more Indian heritage whereas Venezuela maintains a larger European-based demographic. Despite some of these cultural similarities, Peru and Venezuela have not interacted much as either states or a people throughout their history. Indeed, the hardships Peru had to endure made it largely an emigrating country, while Venezuela experienced prosperity due to its oil supply, resulting in increased immigration during the same time periods.

Thus, following World War II, Peru experienced turbulent politics due to its ethnic divisions. The country also saw its share of political turmoil related to corruption and communist movements, such as the notorious and brutal Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), especially during the 1980s and 1990s, making those decades very difficult for Peru's growth (see Figure 10). This violent period caused a steady outflow of citizens, and one of their destinations was Venezuela, which by 2005 had received 150,000 Peruvians.⁹² Still, even though Peru struggled socially and economically throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century, there was never a mass exodus that could cement the relationship between these two nations.

Peru has experienced a significant amount of internal migration, with 6.5 million inhabitants moving domestically by 2010.⁹³ These relocating citizens moved mostly toward city centers, and as of 2017, the ratio of urban to rural population was approximately eighty-percent to twenty-percent.⁹⁴ This internal migration toward urban areas is a phenomenon Venezuela also experienced slightly after Peru. This urbanization, while common throughout the world, seems to be the reason that Lima, Peru has attracted over 600,000 Venezuelans in this migration, the greatest number out of all capitals.⁹⁵ Besides these general patterns, there are not many linkages historically uniting both nations, nor were there significant and lasting opportunities for them to cement solidarity with each other.

⁹² Ayumi Takenaka, Karsten Paerregaard, and Ulla Berg, "Peruvian Migration in a Global Context," *Latin American Perspectives* 37, no. 5 (September 1, 2010): 10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X10379102>.

⁹³ "Peru Migration Profile Confirms that Peruvians Continue to Migrate despite Economic Crisis," International Organization for Migration, October 19, 2012, <https://www.iom.int/news/peru-migration-profile-confirms-peruvians-continue-migrate-despite-economic-crisis>.

⁹⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Peru—Colonial Patterns," accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Peru>.

⁹⁵ Bacigalupo and Goldstein, "The Venezuelan Exodus in Peru," 64

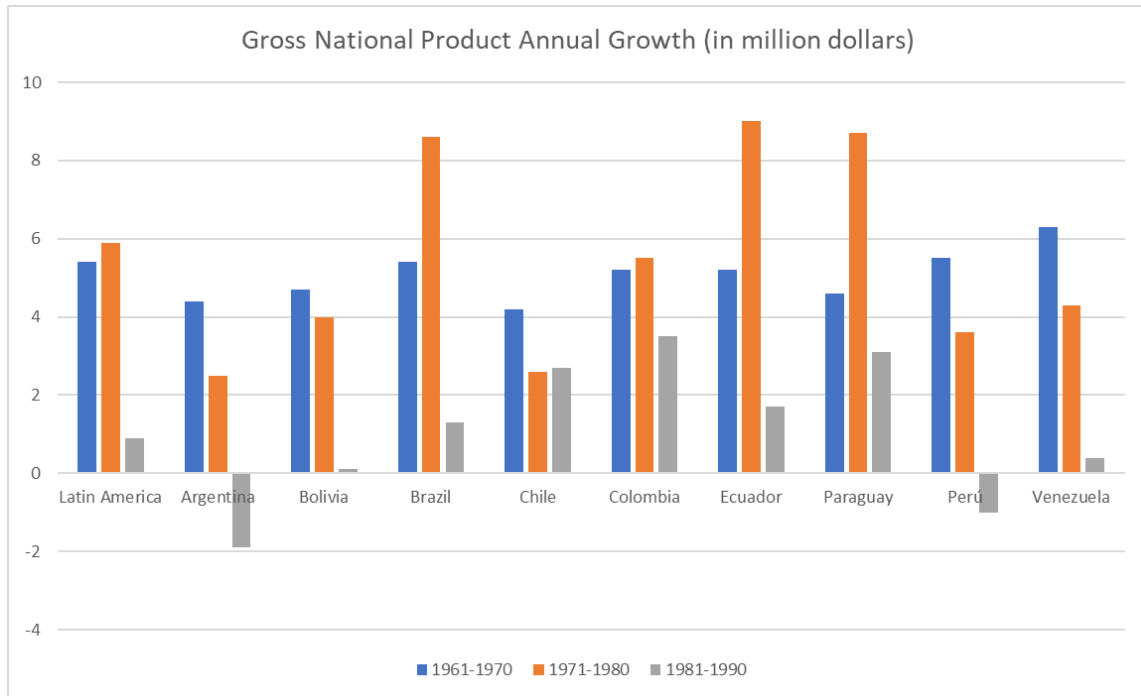


Figure 10. GNP growth throughout three decades.⁹⁶

Out of all the countries that Peruvians emigrated to until 2006, Venezuela was the second most-favored destination in South America, with 6.1 percent of Peru’s total migrants (see Figure 11). This data shows that suggests that while this migratory pattern is not particularly large, its occurrence may still be a factor in Peru’s reception attitudes toward Venezuelans. It is also notable that even though Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Brazil are geographically closer to Peru, Venezuela has been favored as a destination. However, this migratory pattern could be explained by the affluence of the Venezuelan state throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, especially because it held lucrative job opportunities for migrants.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Adapted from Pagnotta, “Latin American Migration within the Continent between 1980 and 2000.”

⁹⁷ Jorge Durand and Mariana Ortega Breña, “The Peruvian Diaspora: Portrait of a Migratory Process,” *Latin American Perspectives* 37, no. 5 (2010): 21.

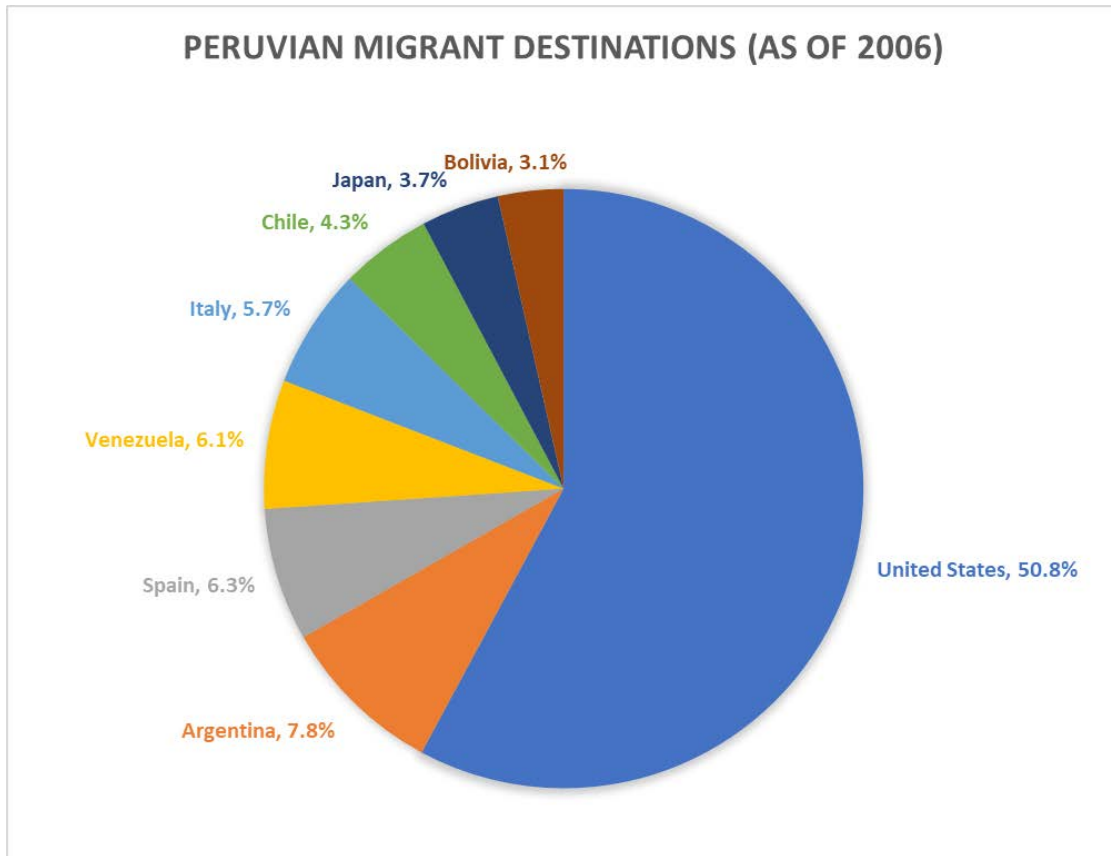


Figure 11. Main destinations for Peruvians as of 2006.⁹⁸

Ultimately, Venezuela and Peru have historically endured similar hardships until about the 1950s due to regional events, but they have lacked significant interactions with each other as states or as a people. Outside of continental and multilateral accords that have also involved other neighboring countries, there have not been significant events between Venezuela and Peru to allow solidarity to develop. Additionally, Peru was not a major receiver of migrants in the period just prior to the 2015 exodus (see Figure 12). This dynamic has led to a relatively weak migratory relationship between Peru and Venezuela. Still, beginning in 2015, Peruvians greeted Venezuelans with a welcoming attitude until 2019. Thus, while historical relations do not seem to explain Peru's reception of refugees, other factors contributed to the warm welcome.

⁹⁸ Adapted from Aída García Naranjo Morales, *The Peruvian Migration Phenomenon* (Lima: Gender and Development Program, Centro de Asesoría Laboral del Perú, 2007), 10.



Figure 12. Average number of yearly refugees per country from 2006–2010, prior to Venezuelan crisis.⁹⁹

C. WHY WAS PERU INITIALLY WELCOMING?

1. Peru’s Historical Experience with Other Migrants

As shown, Peruvians and Venezuelans did not migrate to each other’s countries in large numbers. Peru did receive a large wave of Asian migration during the nineteenth century. In fact, in 1876, Chinese immigrants made up ten percent of Lima’s urban population.¹⁰⁰ Even though they were brought over to fill a labor gap created by the abolishment of slavery, the struggle of integrating the Chinese workers into the local culture enabled Peru to gain experience dealing with migrants. In addition, Japanese laborers soon joined the work in Peruvian plantations, adding to the amalgamation of

⁹⁹ Source: “NatGeo Mapmaker Interactive,” National Geographic, accessed August 25, 2020, <https://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org/#/>.

¹⁰⁰ “Chinese in Peru in the 19th Century, Modern Latin America,” Brown University Library, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-6-the-andes/moments-in-andean-history/chinese-peru/>.

cultures.¹⁰¹ These immigrants were joining the European settlers and indigenous inhabitants living in the country.

Even though the new wave of Japanese migrants gave Peru an economic boost, there was a lot of racial tension because the citizens of European descent viewed many other races as inferior.¹⁰² Still, Japanese workers thrived even in the face of adversity, and they went on to start small businesses, becoming part of a foreign minority middle-class in the 1930s.¹⁰³ Their success brought on the animosity of locals, who imposed discriminatory measures as a way of equalizing job opportunities. Throughout much of the twentieth century, Asian minorities were seen as outsiders, even leading to racial riots in 1940. Despite so much adversity, Asian culture became engrained in Peruvian life.

By the 1990s, Japanese-Peruvians felt more included following the election of the ethnically Japanese President Fujimori, but their experiences as foreigners encouraged them to become a tightly knit and somewhat exclusive community. As of 2010, Peru had approximately 600,000 Asian born or Asian-descendant people, or between one- to three-percent.¹⁰⁴ While the process has not been smooth, the nation has had over one-hundred years of experience with integrating migrants, which could be seen as a slow but successful feat and one that should be considered in understanding Peru's handling of the Venezuelan diaspora.

Ultimately, Peru's integration of people from far-east countries, such as China and Japan, gave it an advantage in handling the current immigration crisis, as it was able to witness the development of foreigners within its society for an extended period of time. The influence of Asians in Peru is significant, and, though it has been many years since

¹⁰¹ Ayumi Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru: History of Immigration, Settlement, and Racialization," *Latin American Perspectives* 31, no. 3 (2004): 77–98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3185184>.

¹⁰² Takenaka, 82.

¹⁰³ Takenaka, 91.

¹⁰⁴ "A Surprise for Travelers to Peru: Asian Influences in Peru," Kuoda Travel, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://www.kuodatravel.com/surprise-travelers-peru-prominent-asian-influences/>; "Peru Population 2020 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)," World Population Review, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/peru-population>.

this integration began, the visual and cultural diversity is still easily recognizable. The challenges brought about by these very distinct cultural clashes between locals and foreigners in Peru suggest that the country looked at its own history when it initially welcomed Venezuelans in 2015. While not the sole explanation for initially welcoming attitudes within the current crisis, Peru's previous experience with Asian immigration was a contributing factor.

2. Peru's Observed International Accords and Implemented Policies

Although these historical—and often chaotic—amalgamations of Asians in Peru helped generate an initially welcoming reaction in the current Venezuelan crisis, they also acted as a warning to how current migrants would be treated by local society. The lack of historical ties with Venezuela suggests that Peru's political intervention and implementation of immigration policies played a large role in a favorable migrant reception. As a result of the accelerated integration of immigrants from 2015 to 2019, Peru required political influence to enable a welcoming reception. Although the country had over a century to integrate more than half a million Asians, it received 860,000 Venezuelan migrants in just four years.¹⁰⁵ While this is not the first time the state deals with newcomers, the current Venezuelan exodus has been particularly overwhelming because of the rapid onset of arrivals, which placed a heavy strain on local resources in a very short period of time. Peru's Venezuelan population grew from approximately 7,000 before the migration to 700,000 by early 2018.¹⁰⁶ Despite the lagging economy, Peruvians were initially generous in their reception of migrants. The unfavorable socioeconomic environment was alleviated through political messages, Peru's observation of international immigration accords, and the policies it put in place to aid the arriving migrants.

With the exception of Venezuela and Argentina, all other South American countries had been largely migrant-sending countries without immigration experience, including Peru. As a result of Venezuela's economic collapse, regional countries were placed in the

¹⁰⁵ "Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis," International Organization for Migration, October 10, 2019, <https://www.iom.int/venezuela-refugee-and-migrant-crisis>.

¹⁰⁶ Bacigalupo and Goldstein, "The Venezuelan Exodus in Peru," 66.

international spotlight, as they sought to alleviate the effects of the migration by offering very welcoming receptions. Peru's desire to observe the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Cartagena Declaration of 1984, and other regional agreements encouraged it to be a hospitable host in its first wave of immigration. Therefore, the nation stepped up and not only did it receive the second-most Venezuelan migrants, it received the most asylum requests, increasing from 33,100 in 2017, to 190,500 in 2018.¹⁰⁷ By working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),¹⁰⁸ Peru was one of the nations facilitating safety, resources, shelter, and maintaining solidarity with the migrants by fighting xenophobia.

As a sign of its pledge to the refugees, the Peruvian government implemented four measures to ease the Venezuelan integration. First, it granted Temporary Permanence Permits (PTP) in early 2017, enabling Venezuelans to work and reside legally in the country for one year.¹⁰⁹ In addition, it also implemented the resident worker visa, a foreigner identification card, and a humanitarian visa.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Peru's relaxed informal sector allowed more opportunities and a less-stringent labor market for migrants than that of Colombia's. The implemented policies and tangible acceptance of almost a million refugees classified Peru as one of the most welcoming in Latin America.

Even though it has historically been an emigrating country, Peru played a major part in alleviating the impact of the Venezuelan crisis by granting residency and processing the highest number of asylum-claims in South America (see Figure 13). This large number was driven not by chance, but because the favorable policies implemented by the Peruvian government. Thus, several waves of Venezuelans have chosen Peru as their destination

¹⁰⁷ "Venezuela Situation," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/venezuela-emergency.html>.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹⁰⁹ Bacigalupo and Goldstein, "The Venezuelan Exodus in Peru," 66.

¹¹⁰ World Bank, *Una oportunidad para todos: Los migrantes y refugiados venezolanos y el desarrollo del Perú* [An opportunity for all: The Venezuelan immigrants and refugee and the development of Peru] (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019), 87, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/107621574372585665/Una-Oportunidad-para-Todos-Los-Migrantes-y-Refugiados-Venezolanos-y-el-Desarrollo-del-Per%C3%BA>.

even though other options are situated geographically closer. Ultimately, the adherence to international regulations and innovative local measures made Peru one of the most welcoming nations, and host to the second largest number of Venezuelans in South America (see Figure 14).

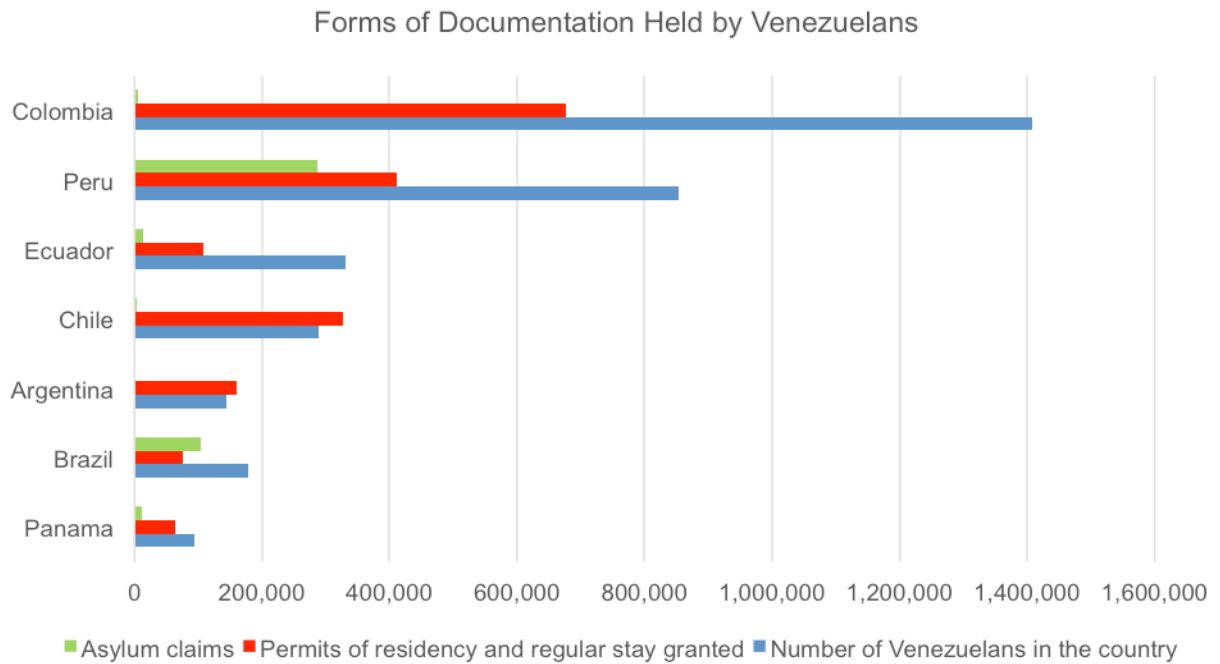


Figure 13. Forms of documentation held by Venezuelans per country.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Adapted from “Understanding the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis,” Wilson Center, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/understanding-the-venezuelan-refugee-crisis>; “Situation Response for Venezuelans,” RV4, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>.



Data current as of 5 August 2020. Author’s representation of data from the IOM.¹¹²

Figure 14. Venezuelan-receiving nations and figures.¹¹³

¹¹² Due to the organic nature of the migration, figures may vary slightly depending on source. In some cases, Peru is reported to have 861,000 migrants, while others official sources show slightly lower figures. This is true of other countries as well, which may also be due to the deportations and of the migrants’ continued journey southbound.

¹¹³ Adapted from “R4V Response for Venezuelans—Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform: Situation Report—November/December 2019—Colombia,” ReliefWeb, accessed March 21, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/r4v-response-venezuelans-regional-inter-agency-coordination-platform-situation-3>.

Ultimately, Peru's welcoming demeanor seemed to indicate that the country would always be a safe refuge for migrants. The state's dedication to international accords and regional agreements were effective, as was the Peruvian government in encouraging solidarity with Venezuelans. However, the tide turned. Peru's swing toward migrant rejection was abrupt, and the country's patience with migrants expired. Thus, even though there is an aura of hostility toward immigrants, this research is, by no means, meant to characterize the receptive country's population with a broad brush in a negative manner but it does seek to identify the root cause of receptive attitudes. As a result, there may be negative connotations related to how the migrants have been treated.

D. WHY DID PERU MAKE A 180-DEGREE TURN IN ITS ACCEPTANCE OF VENEZUELANS?

1. Understanding the Three Waves of Venezuelan Migrants

The large number of migrants arrived in the form of three distinct waves of Venezuelans. In 2000, the first wave was made up of a wealthier base who disagreed politically with the regime of the time, and these migrants were able to choose their destinations without many obstacles. However, the 2015 crisis is made up of both, the second wave, which ended in about 2017–2018, and the third wave, which is still ongoing.¹¹⁴ During the second wave, Peru was experiencing economic growth, and ninety-percent of Venezuelans between the ages of 25 to 45 arriving in the country were motivated by working opportunities because most of them were highly qualified.¹¹⁵ Among these migrants, many were engineers, professional sports players, oil experts, and medical workers.¹¹⁶ Therefore, one of the major reasons Peru was a top migrant destination was job opportunities. With such a high degree of expertise, this wave of migrants was highly

¹¹⁴ "Venezuelans on Foot: An Insight into the Last Wave of Venezuelan Migration," Xchange, June 19, 2018, <http://xchange.org/reports/Venezuelansonfoot.html>.

¹¹⁵ "Management & empleo: Migraciones: 9 de cada 10 Venezolanos Que arriban al Perú son profesionales, [Migrations: 9 out of 10 Venezuelans who arrive in Peru are professionals]," Noticias Gestión Perú, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://gestion.pe/economia/management-empleo/migraciones-9-10-venezolanos-arriban-peru-son-profesionales-232267-noticia/>.

¹¹⁶ Noticias Gestión Perú.

desirable to Peru. Thus, the available labor opportunities, coupled with the types of migrants arriving during this time, created a favorable environment for immigrants in Peru.

2. The Third Wave: The Undesirable Walkers

Despite the job opportunities for the middle- and upper-class Venezuelans, the third wave drastically changed reception attitudes. Arriving around 2017 and later, this group was mostly made up of the desperate migrants seeking survival. Peru's reception of middle-class workers provided hope for third-wave migrants, spurring even more migration. In 2018 alone, approximately 500,000 Venezuelans arrived in Peru.¹¹⁷ This group of migrants held the most vulnerable persons—children, women, disabled, and the elderly—many who sought safety from raging violence or needed medical care and basic resources not available back in Venezuela. These travelers are so poor, they cannot afford any other way to relocate but by walking; thus, in Spanish, they are known as the “Venezuelan walkers.”¹¹⁸

At times, people from this wave of migrants had family members or friends who had found some success, motivating this vulnerable group to join them. However, the reception was not the same for the newest arrivals. In a group of interviewed migrants from the third wave, a Venezuelan whose brothers had made it to Peru was arrested upon arrival in 2019, and deported back almost immediately.¹¹⁹ This trend is all too common as of late as more migrants have found it difficult to enter Peru. Although it is clear that Venezuelan migrants initially chose Peru as one of their main destinations, the reception for these types of migrants vastly changed from how previous arrivals were treated.

Thus, after a favorable reception, evidence suggests that Peru turned away from the Venezuelan crisis and its people, after the arrival of the third wave. As the poor migrants

¹¹⁷ Brian Winter, “The Backlash to Venezuelan Migration Is Here,” *Americas Quarterly* (blog), April 20, 2020, <https://live-aqimportwithimages.pantheonsite.io/article/the-backlash-to-venezuelan-migration-is-here/>.

¹¹⁸ Xchange, “Venezuelans on Foot.”

¹¹⁹ Xchange; “Venezuelans on Foot—An Insight into the Last Wave of Venezuelan Migration,” September 5, 2019, YouTube, video, 25:53, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=592&v=XZhw7nnErNw&feature=emb_logo.

crossed the border in greater numbers, fear and xenophobic occurrences went from being isolated incidents to almost being expected in daily life. This type of reception was not evident during the first two waves, when upper- and middle-class migrants arrived until early 2018. However, by 2019, the reception attitudes started to change and a poll conducted within Peru shows the deterioration of attitude toward Venezuelans (see Figure 15). The Peruvian responses indicated that there was a significant shift in those two years, even though the crisis had been going on for nearly four years. Therefore, the media likely played a large part in shifting attitudes because it spread anti-immigrant messages on-air while many politicians took the stage to promulgate an anti-Venezuelan approach.¹²⁰ The combination of these factors changed Peru's stance from one of the most welcoming nations to a considerably hostile environment. This assessment is not all-encompassing but it does capture the effect of sociopolitical influences on reception attitudes.

¹²⁰ “Ricardo Belmont: ‘Los venezolanos están casi como dueños de casa,’ [The Venezuelans act like they own the place],” *La República*, May 29, 2019, <https://larepublica.pe/politica/1302942-ricardo-belmont-inmigracion-venezolana-duenos-casa/>.

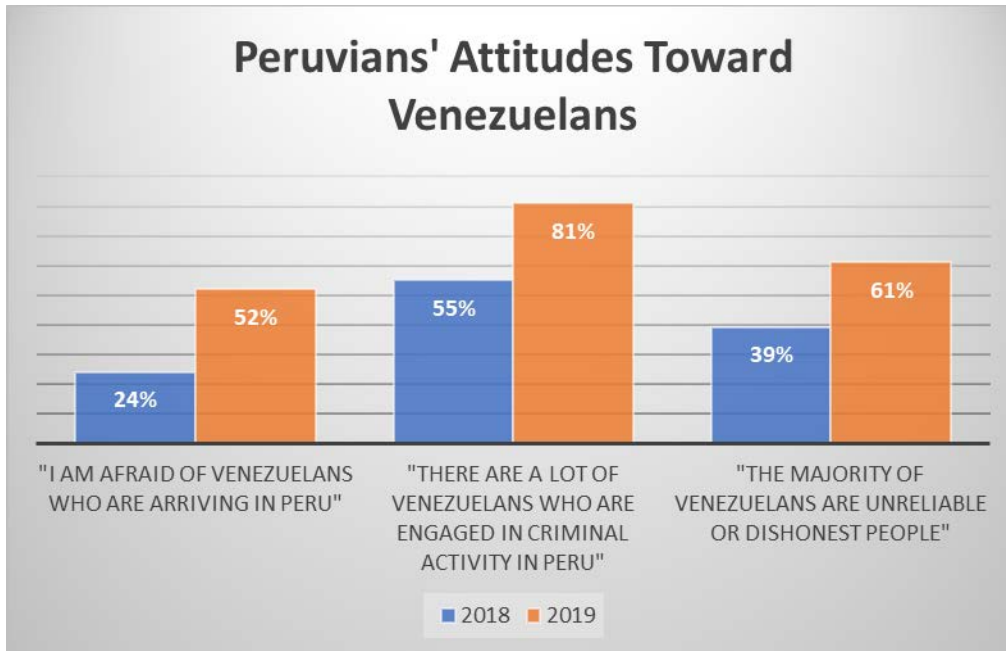


Figure 15. Poll showing increase in xenophobic sentiment toward Venezuelans 2018–2019.¹²¹

Beginning with Peru’s political rhetoric, Venezuelans were being blamed for crimes, even though official statistics refuted such claims.¹²² Moreover, Peru’s media has, at times, participated in spreading out certain fears about the migrants’ role in reducing job opportunities for Peruvian citizens. These fears are rooted in the fact that, according to Venezuela’s ambassador in Peru, ninety-percent of Venezuelans are performing jobs without any formal contracts.¹²³ This economic landscape is of significant concern because seventy percent of Peruvian workers are employed in the informal sector, so they see Venezuelans as competition.¹²⁴ In spite of the lingering fears, claims about stealing jobs have been studied in detail in many cases throughout the world, and they have been proven to be baseless theoretically and empirically, though they have still affected native’s

¹²¹ Adapted from Winter, “The Backlash to Venezuelan Migration Is Here.”

¹²² “Mounting Venezuela Exodus Sparks Fears of Rising Xenophobia,” AP News, October 17, 2019, <https://apnews.com/86af47e8a2ed47a2b80576c7e925c754>.

¹²³ Winter, “The Backlash to Venezuelan Migration Is Here.”

¹²⁴ Winter.

reactions. Hence, politicians and the media played at least a partial role in shortening Peru's period of solidarity with the Venezuelan immigrants.

One of the measures Peru implemented in June 2019 was a requirement for Venezuelans to provide a humanitarian visa to gain entry.¹²⁵ While in theory this visa would grant essential rights to the holder, this requirement made it extremely difficult for the remaining migrants to come into Peru because they have no way of acquiring such documents. As a result, net migration fell to zero by the middle of 2019.¹²⁶ Moreover, this tactic produced a domino effect in the neighboring countries, with Ecuador establishing similar measures soon after.¹²⁷ The situation is aggravated by the unceasing economic downturn that continues to drive people out of Venezuela, people who were once well off at home but are now confined to begging on the streets. These implementations by the Peruvian government have not only failed to work, they have exacerbated the situation and forced desperate individuals to seek desperate measures. Thus, violence has risen both, in Venezuela, as well as in Peru. Consequently, citizens have reinforced their negative views of the refugees, though evidence shows that crime caused by Venezuelan immigrants in Peru is extremely low when compared to the natives.

Although Peru did grant arriving Venezuelans permits to work and live in the country, they were largely inadequate given the severity of this crisis. These temporary rights provided only limited documents that provided a short-term solution. The problem seems to stem from a misinformation of rights being promulgated to the refugees, who do not fully know what avenues they are able to legally pursue. One such legislation that goes hidden is from 2003, and provides a more lasting solution for those seeking a permanent home.¹²⁸ However, because most migrants take advantage of the temporary benefits, they are left as stateless and illegal aliens upon expiration of the permits. Without a follow-on

¹²⁵ Wilson Center, "Understanding the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis."

¹²⁶ Winter, "The Backlash to Venezuelan Migration Is Here."

¹²⁷ Wilson Center, "Understanding the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis."

¹²⁸ Nicolas Parent, "Falling Short of Protection: Peru's New Migration Scheme for Venezuelans," *Forced Migration Review*, no. 56 (2017): 40–41.

recourse, the Peruvian government finds it suitable to deport those who have overextended their stay, while anti-refugee riots fuel a hostile sentiment toward Venezuelans.¹²⁹

These recent feelings of animosity have presented themselves through interviews. In a poll conducted in the capital of Lima in 2019, seventy-eight percent of Venezuelans reported feeling that they perceived Peruvians felt that their culture and lifestyle was highly threatened by Venezuelan immigration.¹³⁰ Additionally, eighty-percent of the migrants reported that they had received threats and insults by Peruvians just because of their country of origin.¹³¹ These statistics are alarming, and show a trend of gradually deteriorating attitudes. The situation may not be a matter of hate, but it shows signs that the bonhomie has indeed expired.

Ultimately, multiple factors made Peru shift from being a welcoming nation, to closing borders and deporting immigrants. For one, their temporary permits provided only a limited solution. Furthermore, some of the media and politicians seemed to work hand in hand in promulgating messages of fear and xenophobia. Moreover, the third wave of migrants has proven to be too much for Peru to handle at a social level. These factors are not helped by the fact that Peru and Venezuela have weak historical ties. It will likely take an extreme legislative and social overhaul for Peru to maintain open borders. Until then, Venezuelans are stuck in Colombia or must endure the journeys that lead them south of Peru.

¹²⁹ Annette Langer, “Are Venezuelan Refugees Still Welcome?,” *Der Spiegel—International*, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/are-venezuelan-refugees-still-welcome-a-28bc7099-009b-4724-a21e-e5e6f6891d18>.

¹³⁰ Melanie Rossana Arana Flores, *La relación entre aculturación, ciudadanía y bienestar percibido en inmigrantes venezolanos en Lima, Perú* [The relationship between acculturation, citizenship, and perceived well-being in Venezuelan immigrants in Lima, Peru] (Lima, Peru: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2019), 19, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12404/15376>.

¹³¹ Arana Flores, 19.

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IV. CONCLUSION

A. THE PUZZLE OF IMMIGRANT RECEPTION ATTITUDES

Throughout history, mass migrations have changed the landscape in the sending and receiving states. As migrants have relocated, reception attitudes in the receiving countries have greatly varied and even evolved over the course of the migration. Thus, the reception of migrants by receiving nations has ranged from welcoming to hostile. Due to the complexity of diasporas, identifying the cause of attitude variations has been an elusive task because various factors can influence native reception attitudes. This dilemma has presented a puzzle for all parties involved and has exacerbated the challenges inherent to mass migrations.

To research this puzzle, this thesis observed the ongoing case of the Venezuelan mass migration. As a result of severe economic mismanagement and corruption, the Venezuelan migration crisis started in 2015, and thus far, 5.1 million people have fled. The two most welcoming countries based on acceptance numbers, policies, and empathy, have been Colombia and Peru. However, in 2019—four years into the crisis—Peru completely turned from their initial stance, while Colombia maintained solidarity with the Venezuelan migrants. The stark difference in how the receiving nations' paths diverged four years into the crisis provided the perfect situation to research the variation in migrant reception attitudes.

B. HISTORICAL INTERACTIONS MATTER

Previously, scholars had viewed migrant reception attitudes in contexts that captured a limited snapshot of time. Although their research methods found certain variables that do affect attitudes, such as the fear of losing a job or the fear of increased violence, they lacked an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the sending and receiving nations and how that dynamic has influenced attitude variation. Consequently, the present study observed relevant historical interactions that Colombia and Peru had with Venezuela to understand if these connections—or lack thereof—affected how migrants were viewed in the receiving nation. Along with examining common migratory events

between the sending and receiving countries, this thesis analyzed the pertinent social, economic, and political factors.

One of the reasons historical ties have been ignored is because when looking for answers to attitude variation, current events have taken precedence in research, as they can appear more compelling. Consequently, historical facts can be deemed irrelevant, while salient topics drive the discussion. Moreover, since mass migrations are driven by specific catastrophic events, studies tend to focus around the situational context, which seems like a natural course of action. In other words, in searching for variation in reception attitudes, scholars have looked to answer puzzles happening in the present with evidence also found in the present, such as current labor conditions, polls indicating natives' sentiment, and media and political responses. However, this approach limits the scope of possible solutions because it leaves out a very important point and one that often is overlooked or underplayed when researching migrant reception attitudes: historical interactions matter. Just as relationships between people or between nations are affected by historical events, reception attitudes are also influenced by how—and *if*—two nations or their citizens have previously interacted with each other, and the legacies of those interactions.

With the understanding that historical relationships and milestones do play a role in how migratory receptions develop, the extent to which the historical variables impact attitudes largely depend on the strength of past social ties compared to the weight of the current social, economic, and political factors in the receiving country. Therefore, if historical ties are strong, it will be harder for the other three factors to influence the sentiment that has already been established. Conversely, if historical ties are weak or nonexistent, present factors will have a greater influence on the mood of the reception attitudes.

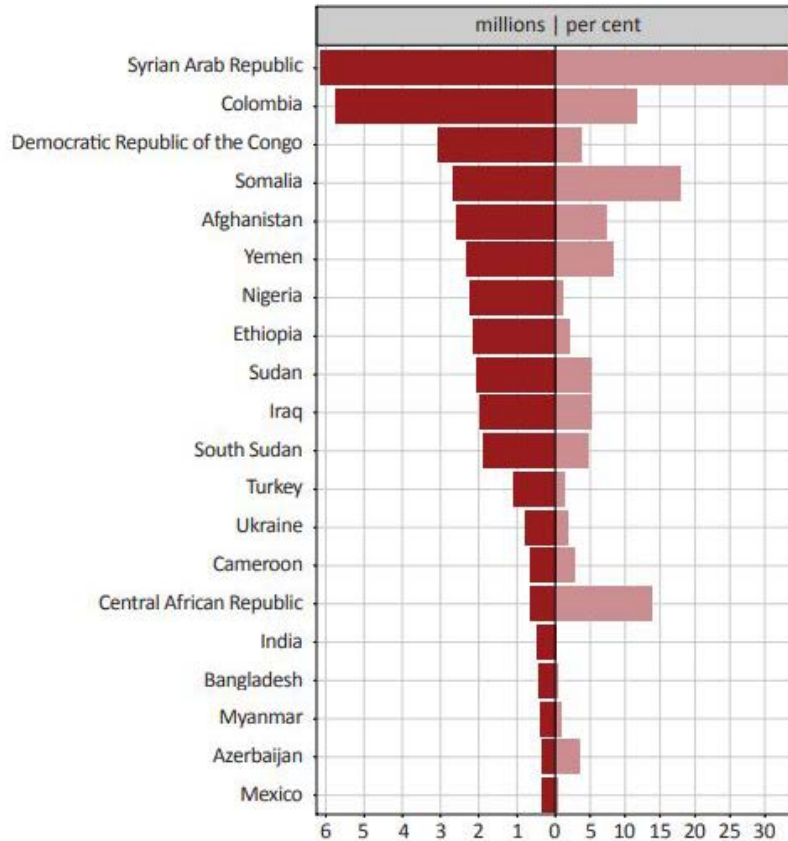
In Colombia's case, the evidence suggests that historical ties proved significant in establishing *bonhomie*, while other factors reinforced solidarity with Venezuelan migrants. In Peru, historical ties were weak, but present-day factors were sufficient to establish short-term solidarity. The divergence arrived four years into the crisis, and at that point, the present-day variables were insufficient for Peru to continue receiving migrants, while in Colombia, the reception's demeanor remains largely unchanged from initial hospitality.

C. COLOMBIA'S RESPONSE

From the beginning of Venezuela's migration crisis, Colombia actively supported the immigrants socially, politically, and to an extent, economically. Having taken in 1.5 million migrants to date, Colombia became the top destination for Venezuelan refugees. While geographic proximity certainly factors into where Venezuelans go, earlier migrants had more means, meaning more options to travel farther, but still chose Colombia. Moreover, the favorable perspective in which Venezuelans are viewed in Colombia ensures continued solidarity.

One of the most prominent voices for Colombia's welcoming reception has been the country's president, Ivan Duque, who referred to all incoming migrants as "brothers."¹³² His outspoken support of Venezuelans reflected the strength of social ties and reinforced the willingness of Colombian citizens to act with empathy. Despite the alleviating effect of positive rhetoric, it is not just kind words and social acts that fueled this warm reception; the historical migratory patterns between Venezuela and Colombia gave way to bilateral accords after both nations realized the importance of the interactions at their shared border. What followed was a recognition of each other's citizens and working opportunities for migrants, actions that have, in turn, generated a continued sense of solidarity regardless of the dilemmas occurring within either country. Not only that, but because of its troubled past, Colombia has extensive experience with internally displaced persons, which may have contributed to the experience of relocating the Venezuelan migrants (see Figure 16).

¹³² El Tiempo, "Migración venezolana es por dictadura."



Source: IDMC, 2019.

Notes: IDP stock refers to the accumulated number of people displaced over time.

The population size used to calculate the percentage of conflict stock displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2017 UN DESA population estimates.

Figure 16. Top twenty countries with the greatest number of internally displaced persons at the end of 2011.¹³³

Beginning in the 1970s, Venezuela was generally a wealthy oil nation while neighboring countries struggled. As a result, numerous Colombians migrated back and forth into Venezuela as periodic crises created significant displacements. Hence, the relationship between both nation's peoples has persevered through some of the greatest national challenges, such as drug wars, economic recessions and depressions, extreme violence, and political hostilities. Therefore, while in a mass-migration it could reasonably

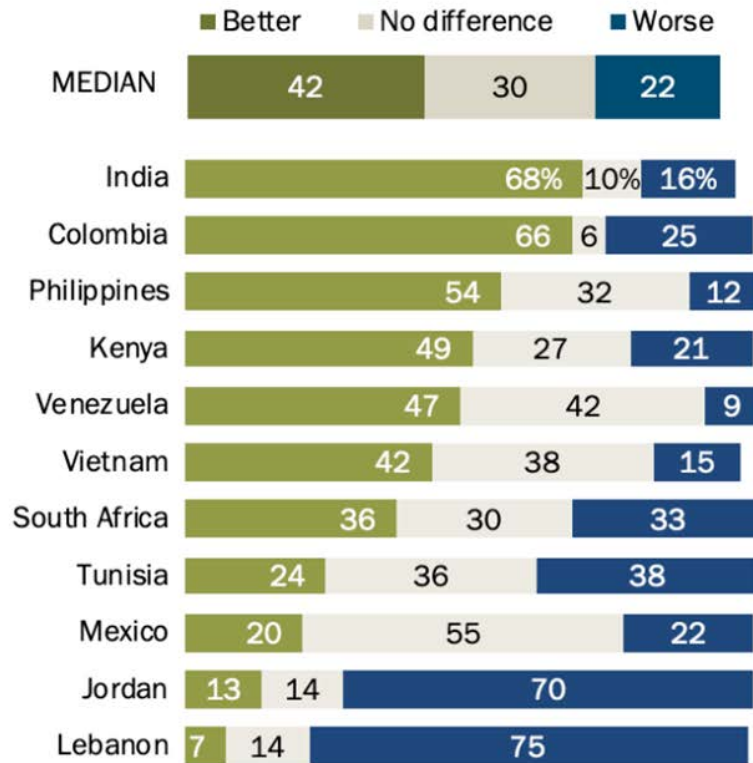
¹³³ Source: International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2019), 44, <https://www.iom.int/wmr>.

be expected that the immigrants would be seen as outsiders, that has not been the case in Colombia's reception. Ultimately, the social, political, and economic factors worked in tandem with the strong historical ties to form a migrant-friendly environment that has proven more durable than any individual factor.

Thus, in Colombia's acceptance of Venezuelan migrants, solidarity has withstood the test of contextual national challenges, such as the lack of infrastructure, low economic resources, and animosity between governments. These factors, although important, have not threatened to flip the initially welcoming response. A prominent poll showed that Colombians welcome increased diversity, which is good news for immigrants who choose it as a destination (see Figure 17). What is not clear is if Venezuelans are considered diverse from Colombians, as that would be more a question of identity.

In 11 emerging economies, divisions over whether people welcome increased diversity

% who say having an increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities in their country makes it a ___ place to live



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Mobile Technology & Its Social Impact Survey 2018. Q40. "Attitudes Toward Diversity in 11 Emerging Economies"

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Figure 17. Sixty-six percent of Colombians believe diversity would make the country better.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Source: "In 11 Emerging Economies, Divisions over Whether People Welcome Increased Diversity," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* (blog), accessed August 4, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/PG_2020.06.16_Diversity-Emerging-Economies_0-01.png.

Regardless, other factors seem to have less weight on changing migrant reception attitudes than historical ties. Despite being considered a developing country in many respects, Colombia has welcomed Venezuelans and reciprocity has enabled increased hospitality. Venezuela had received millions of Colombian migrants throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and although they were employed mostly in the lower tiers of the economy, it offered migratory workers a chance to succeed abroad. This previous dynamic has not been forgotten, and Colombian leaders have acknowledged their gratefulness to the Venezuelans for having received migrants for so many years.

For instance, if the crisis were observed strictly since it started in 2015 until 2019, determining factors for migratory reception attitudes would be difficult, if not impossible to solve. Hence, the evidence suggests that within the last fifty years, the amalgamation of cultures and societies at the Colombia-Venezuela border have softened the blow of the crisis and enabled prolonged solidarity. While favorable historical ties do have the capacity to alleviate the severity of a crisis between two nations, it does not mean that ties are the only variable in determining attitudes, or that harmonious effects will be permanent. Still, acknowledging the influential capacity of past linkages on present-day migrant-reception attitudes is the foundation of this study. It provided a clearer understanding of why migrants chose certain countries and how they were treated once they arrive.

D. PERU'S RESPONSE

Conversely, although Peru offered Venezuelans an even more welcoming reception at the start of the exodus than Colombia, its openness to receiving migrants expired first. From 2015–2017—the first two years of the migration crisis—Peru was quick to offer support, and provided some of the most generous benefits to Venezuelans, allowing them to work for at least a year. Consequently, Peru quickly became the country with the second largest number of Venezuelans migrants in the world. This cycle continued, and political, social, and economic factors appeared to provide favorable environment for the arriving refugees. However, as people continued to pour in, by 2019, Peru decided to close its borders.

Considering the lack of past interactions between Peru and Venezuela, there is not much evidence to attribute a welcoming response to the historical variable. Therefore, other factors enabled an initially welcoming response. A century since Asian migration began, Peru was faced with a new cultural integration problem. As a result of the tensions experienced in its previous immigration dilemma, the country was eager to follow regional and international accords. After all, the Venezuelan exodus was larger and quicker than any migration Peru had ever experienced, and its track record with the Asian integration had been a long and painful process. Still, having this experience, along with the fact that its economy was growing when the crisis started in 2015, meant that Peru could benefit from the first wave of arrivals. The first and second waves came to work, and although informal labor is a large part of the Peruvian economy, the country saw that it could benefit from young, motivated, and qualified workers. The mutual advantages between Peru and the Venezuelan migrants made the country the second most chosen destination in this migration crisis.

As the pool of working migrants dried up by 2018, the third wave did not come seeking work; they came seeking survival. Originating from very low-income areas, the last group was composed of persons who were more vulnerable in times of crises, such as women, teens, children, the ill, and the elderly. With its policies unchanged when this wave began, Peru received these poorer migrants beginning in 2018. Xenophobic events were on the rise and the national sentiment soured, followed by closing the border and legal restrictions for entry of Venezuelans in 2019. Without a clear explanation for the change of heart, the new variable that aligned with the timing of the response shift is the profile of the migrants who entered, the poor ones.

Acknowledging that Peru has had persistent political turmoil during the Venezuelan migration crisis, there was no indication, based on this research, that these internal struggles affected attitudes. On the other hand, the theory for why Peru departed from its initial response is reinforced by evidence from cases in the United States and Europe that show that immigrants with low education and low skill are more likely to receive backlash,

while highly educated ones diminish nationalism.¹³⁵ Thus, the lack of meaningful historical ties between Peru and Venezuela enabled a nationalistic response to manifest unchecked.

E. THEORETICAL TAKEAWAYS

In light of the evidence found to affect reception attitudes toward Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and Peru, theoretical lessons can be drawn. These cases have reinforced how complex and organic migratory movements are. As such, one must be weary of monocausal explanations or approaches that oversimplify the relationship between the relevant factors affecting attitudes toward migrants.

The first central finding is that historical interactions are important when studying current attitudes toward immigrants. Although the tendency in studying reception attitudes is to focus on present-day contextual factors, studying historical interactions can reveal ties that would otherwise go unnoticed and shed light on otherwise puzzling variation in these attitudes. At the individual level, citizens have memories of past events, which affect their present behavior in reception attitudes, yielding sentiments of reciprocity, as well as animosity. Therefore, by considering previous experiences, one lays the foundation for the research and a solid starting point for understanding the factors that currently have the greatest influence on reception attitudes.

Second, despite the importance that historical ties have on migrant-acceptance behavior, there is a balance between past interactions and other salient events affecting the migratory landscape. Determining which past events have significant influence in a present crisis requires a historical observation of events that are not only pertinent, but that are still recalled by the current national memory. This is to say that Colombia, as a whole, still remembers Venezuela's acceptance of migrants, leading to a sense of reciprocity. Conversely, even though Peru has fully integrated Asians into its society, too much time has passed between that period and the present for it to be a major factor in its current

¹³⁵ Peri, Turati, and Moriconi, "The Impact of Immigration on EU Countries' Nationalistic Sentiments."

reception attitudes. Consequently, with the lack of reinforcement of ties through periodic migrations, Peru has nothing to turn to in the past as a means to encourage steady solidarity in the Venezuelan crisis.

Third, historical ties provide crucial contextualization. With other salient elements that influence natives' behaviors in a current crisis, historical connections provide an anchor depending on the strength of the ties between the migrant sending and receiving nations. In other words, a friendship between two nations is more likely to endure catastrophic change for a longer period than two states that share few or no ties. In those countries that lack historical interactions, the social response will most likely be swayed by institutional, economic, and political factors. Yet, in countries where ties are strong, the effects of current-day factors may be significantly placated.

In Peru's case, it is clear that there is an absence of meaningful historical ties with Venezuela. As a result, other factors exert greater influence over migrant reception attitudes, such as legal frameworks, international accords, funding, and rhetoric by national leaders, to name a few. These factors are consequential; looking to comply with signed accords and international norms, Peru welcomed a large number of Venezuelan immigrants and adopted numerous social policies to enable their successful incorporation and adaptation to Peruvian society. For the first four years of the migration crisis, Peru received Venezuelan immigrants with open arms. Yet, the absence of historical ties seems to have made Peru less willing to sustain its compliance with the established norms once economic and political conditions started to shift. Ultimately, Peru opted to close its borders to further Venezuelan migration. This shift, moreover, seems to have been a response to changing trends in the influx of Venezuelans; as the crisis extended, the composition of those immigrant populations shifted from middle classes to the poor and vulnerable, and with this shift, Peru's backlash began. The reaction to the arrival of poor migrants highlighted the class dynamics in Peru and exacerbated the crisis. In Colombia, on the other hand, historical ties have, thus far, been able to fend off negativity toward poor migrants.

Lastly, it is important to note that the size of a migration and the time span in which it occurs are very influential in testing a nation's reception attitudes. The Venezuelan crisis occurred relatively quickly and with a mass outflow that initially overwhelmed regional

neighbors. Thus, relying on initial friendliness and empathy is only a temporary solution. After that, it is up to the state to be able to provide livable conditions for citizens and immigrants alike; otherwise, the population will turn on its government, since locals and foreigners in developing countries do not wield any power.

F. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Venezuelan migration crisis has devastated South America in a catastrophic manner because it is extremely underfunded and understudied, leaving countries to fend for themselves.¹³⁶ Although many nations have been creative about their solutions, others have not been so open, and the migration numbers tell part of that story. Hence, there is a disparity between the capacity for South American countries to host migrants and the actual contribution they have made toward alleviating the crisis. For instance, although it is the largest nation in South America, Brazil has taken in very few migrants while Colombia and Peru have borne the greatest burden of this crisis. As this research showed, one of the indicators for how a nation will react toward migrants is based on the historical linkages between the sending and receiving populations.

The findings in this thesis can aid policymakers in determining how the United States should allocate funding and resources by strongly considering historical ties. Using this research as a basis for qualification in allocation of funding, the United States can anticipate which nations will be the largest recipients of migrants and which ones are most likely to have a lasting, welcoming acceptance. Lastly, by focusing efforts and funding on the recipient nations that have the strongest historical linkages to the migrant-sending nation, the United States would not only reinforce those relations and encourage welcoming attitudes, it would also facilitate regional stability, thereby protecting its own interests.

Another way the United States can apply this approach is by raising awareness of the differences between receiving nations and their relationship to the immigrant

¹³⁶ Bahar and Dooley, “Venezuela Refugee Crisis to Become the Largest and Most Underfunded in Modern History.”

population. All other factors being equal, there is a difference in which regional nation is willing to help during a neighborly crisis. As this research suggests, economic affluence is not an indicator of which nation will provide the greatest assistance to desperate neighboring migrants. As such, the United States should focus on increasing aid where established friendly relations exist between the sending and receiving populations, as it can be expected that the bond would be longer lasting than in the case of two nations without strong historical ties. In light of these findings, this approach to policy would be more efficient by directing efforts where they are most likely to last.

Finally, expectations for migration crises should be to seek permanent relocation solutions to enable a welcoming and integrating mentality as opposed to temporary hospitality. This permanent solution better prepares the receiving nations, because the causes of forced migrations often create irreversible damages in the sending nation, such as wars, violence, and even climate catastrophes. Ensuring the receiving nation and its people are mentally and psychologically prepared for the arrival of a large number of newcomers would alleviate preconceived notions about immigrants, and might help spur early solutions within the economy, the government, and social institutions. One of the ways to ensure that citizens are ready for a sudden change is through education. With social programs and institutional backing, the reception of migrants can be normalized. However, because the consequences and timelines of national crises are very difficult to predict, the focus should be on permanent solutions rather than stopgap measures. Ultimately, by treating immigrants of national crises as permanent residents and providing basic resources, they can contribute to the local economy and social dynamic as a citizen would.

G. FUTURE RESEARCH

Forced mass migrations are complex organic movements and the Venezuelan case is no exception. As the exodus continues into its fifth year, different nations are beginning to gain more migrants, such as Chile and Argentina, while Peru has begun losing some. Although this study captured migration numbers, it did not capture the sentiment of the migrants themselves or their basis for selection of a country. Understanding Venezuelan

migrants and their desires may reveal if the different waves had their own preconceived notions about what each receiving nation would be like.

At the state level, it would be useful to know how the nations that have received the migrants have benefited or been hurt by the continued migration. Furthermore, knowing if receiving countries are internally or externally motivated to receive migrants would provide answers to how regional states could be incentivized to participate. Due to the severity of the Venezuelan migration crisis, it seemed like the receiving countries initially had no option but to take the migrants. However, when Peru and Ecuador closed their borders and reduced immigration to near zero, it became clear that they did have a choice. The problem is that all countries in the region should, by this point, be motivated to bring in migrants because with every Venezuelan they allow through their borders, they are saving at least one life.

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