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## How Great Power Politics Influences Refugee Policy: Assessing the U.S. Foreign Policy Implications of Differing Responses to the Venezuelan Migration Crisis in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil

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HOW GREAT POWER POLITICS INFLUENCES REFUGEE POLICY:  
ASSESSING THE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF DIFFERING  
RESPONSES TO THE VENEZUELAN MIGRATION CRISIS IN COLOMBIA,  
PERU, AND BRAZIL

by

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Spring Term, 2020

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Orlando, Florida

## **ABSTRACT**

Why are Venezuelan Migrants accepted in neighboring Colombia, but not in other countries in South America? It is true that Colombia and Venezuela are similar in terms of language, culture, and customs, but this is true across the continent. Here, I will assess why the Colombian government is more accepting of Venezuelan migrants, even when this is not popular in Colombia or any other country in South America.

My argument is that US foreign policy has caused Colombia to be more accepting of Venezuelans than neighboring countries. Great power politics play a role in this crisis. It is not in the United States' interests to take in Venezuelans, no matter how much they oppose the Maduro regime. This is because President Trump promised to take an "America First" stance and is not in favor of bringing in more migrants into the United States, which is popular among his party's base. Colombia has a very close relationship with the United States and has ties that go back decades. Other countries that are not taking in migrants, such as Peru and Brazil, do not have this precedent. Colombia also receives a much higher rate of aid from the United States than the other countries do, giving it an incentive to take in Venezuelans.

## **DEDICATIONS**

For the Venezuelan migrants seeking better lives for themselves around the world,  
wherever they may be.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Venezuelan Migration Conflict has been a great cause of distress not only for the migrants, but for neighboring countries. Countries in the region have scrambled to find ways to accommodate the influx of migrants while still providing what the native population needs. The amount of people leaving Venezuela due to the migration conflict has skyrocketed. It is now projected to become the largest migration crisis in the world. And yet, neighboring countries are expected to bear the brunt of this crisis. The United States is the regional and world hegemon, and it has been seemingly unresponsive to the crisis. This a front that has been overlooked: the US influence in South America's migration policies. If we look further into this issue, we can arrive to a conclusion that helps us further understand why a country like Colombia would take responsibility of the crisis almost entirely by itself.

## **BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Venezuelan Migration Crisis is the largest in the history of Latin America according to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC, 2019). At first, the regional response was in solidarity with the Venezuelan people. The idea was “hermandad” (brotherhood) between Latin American countries. By the end of 2018, the number of Venezuelans in Colombia reached 1 million (Bahar et al, 2018). Today, that number is 1.3 million according to the UNHRC. Colombia has taken in the most Venezuelan refugees to date (UNHRC, 2019). Since the crisis began, both the society and elites in Colombia have tried to tackle this issue. This unprecedented flow of migrants became a sensitive issue for all the countries in the region. Many countries did not have the resources to take in so many refugees, particularly in the health and education sectors (Bahar et al, 2018), In addition, typical misconceptions about the negative effects of immigrants on the labor market became more widespread at the beginning of the crisis, sparking xenophobic incidents (Bahar et al, 2018). In my thesis, I will be discussing the role that great power politics plays into this crisis. Colombia’s elites continue taking in migrants despite the fact that they do not have public approval, while other Latin American nations have closed their doors. I will argue that Colombia is more welcoming because of the country’s relationship with the United States.

I will begin with an overview of the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis. Venezuela is currently experiencing one of the worst economic crises in the history of Latin America. This economic crisis is said to be caused by failed socialism. Other explanations include a “long-standing historical dependency on oil, bad economic policies, increased corruption by the government,

and domestic/international opposition to the Venezuelan government's turn to the left in the early 2000s (Hanson, 2018). Between 2013 and 2017, "the GDP declined 35% and the per capita income shrank by 40%" (Hanson, 2018 pg. 1-2). The ongoing internal conflict has caused three to four million people to escape to neighboring regions (Doocey et al, 2019). Hyperinflation and financial collapse have led to widespread declines in food access, which is a primary reason refugees have been leaving Venezuela (Doocey et al, 2019). In 2017, "it was reported that 87% of households lived in poverty, up from 48% in 2014, and 80% were food insecure. Those receiving government food assistance reported only occasional receipt" (Doocey et al, 2019 pg. 2). In Venezuela, the minimum wage is just \$1.79 per month, and hyperinflation rates now exceed 45,000%, which negatively impacts the lives of millions of Venezuelans (Paniz el al, 2019).

Another significant cause of the mass migration is increased violence. According to the International Journal of Epidemiology Because of its high homicide rates, Venezuela is now considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world. The rate has increased 32.9 to 61.9 per 100,000 people between 2000 and 2014. This was at the same time that life expectancy improvements began to decline. (Garcia, Aburto 2019). Understandably, many Venezuelans have fled because they feared their life in their home country.

There are theories of great power politics that are in play when assessing the relationship between two countries. I will be assessing theories from David Lake's article "Great Power Hierarchies and Strategies in Twenty First Century World Politics." He mentions that the largest break between the twentieth and the twenty first century is that the structure is no longer dependent on material capabilities, but social capabilities as well. According to Lake, it took well

over a decade of non-balancing against the United States to accept that social capabilities are a part of the framework of great power politics (Lake, 2013).

One theory Lake highlights is unipolarity. Theorists accepted the basic tenants of neorealism while putting forward that unipolarity may temporarily suspend balancing as power becomes excessive deters and collective actions problems restrain challengers from rising against the hegemon (Lake, 2013). As anarchy creates an inevitable competition between states, great powers will continue to compete for positional advantage. This makes it almost indistinguishable to balancing (Lake, 2013). This theory is incomplete and indeterminant because it is almost impossible to deduce and see its effects. This is how states act and how the system evolves in unipolarity depends on factors outside of the scope of the theory (Lake, 2013).

Another theory that Lake highlights is the liberal self-restraint and soft-balancing theory. This assumes that liberal hegemons restrain their ambitions and as a result, do not threaten other states that do not provoke a balancing response (Lake, 2013). In this approach, not all hegemons are the same. Lake gives the example of the Soviet Union and Germany, stating that if they won the Cold War/WWII, their autocratic control would have required greater territorial/political control over their subordinates, and this need for control would have caused a greater resistance from other states. However, a democratically oriented hegemon such as the United States has limited restraints in its home region and is more likely to spread this model on a global scale. This approach explains the lack of balancing against the United States by emphasizing the internal characteristic of unipolarity (Lake, 2013). One criticism of this approach is that it does not make clear what is required by liberalism. In one variation of liberalism, the state should only show limited authority over citizens and firms. People who are optimistic about this theory

believe that the United States can extend its limited power on a global scale (Lake, 2013). The second variant of liberalism emphasizes the revolutionary stance of a state and its ability to “make the world safe for democracy,” even through by promoting violent regime change (Lake, 2013). There is a pluralist critique to this variant of liberalism. It suggests that actual self-restraint shown by a hegemon may be rare, and that by implication, other states should be balancing against the United States as implied by neorealism. This may be an advance of unipolarity, but it is still indeterminant (Lake, 2013).

In his article, Lake also highlights status hierarchies. Status and prestige have been considered a key focus of states internationally (Lake, 2013). Status is determined by material capabilities, which can be subjective. This relies on other states to recognize a state’s position internationally. This is desired internationally, but the states themselves must assert a claim to status. And states, as a whole or ones that already have power prestige, must accept this attribution. The relational intersubjective elements of this status are what makes this approach different than others in neorealism. Status shapes the state as a whole, and states with a high status are expected to be involved in more alliances, conflicts, and conflicts away from their home territories. The social identity theory suggests that states who want to be considered prestigious and have a high status emulate the actions of those who already do to gain acceptance, social competition in which a state seeks to defeat or humiliate a great power, and social creativity in which states redefine the meaning of status in order to enhance their standing. Their choice of status, in turn, helps them gain legitimacy among states who already have a high status (Lake, 2013).

According to David Lake, the authority hierarchy approach defines hierarchy as an authority, not just a status, through which one state exercises legitimate power over another's foreign, domestic, and economic policies. Lake contends that subordinate states accept these roles as rightful and even natural (Lake, 2013). Lake claims that authority hierarchies explain why no powers balance against the United States today, because of its legitimacy to rule over others' internal affairs (Lake, 2013). He states that it is not that the US is coercive. It is because other states benefit from the political order that the United States provides. This makes other states buy into American rule around the world (Lake, 2013). Although subordinate states may try to balance against the United States, their combined weight would not be diminished, and they would face enhanced collective action problems. This approach expects American authority to remain long after its material capabilities have decreased (Lake, 2013).

I would like to point out that in this instance, Lake may not be correct on other states benefiting from the political order the United States provides. The US has usually been unresponsive to conflicts happening in South America, and it almost only involves itself when its interests are at stake. For example, the drug war. The US is heavily involved in Latin American counter narcotics because it helps keep illegal drugs out of the country, not because this necessarily benefits Colombia. Similarly, the US is seemingly paying Colombia in order to take in migrants because it aligns with US domestic policies, not because it is at all beneficial to the Colombian government. In this particular instance, the US seems to be exercising its legitimate power over another state without the state benefiting from it.

In his article, Lake also highlights the identity theory in great power politics. This theory assumes that it is shared ideas, not material possessions, that shape behavior. Identity defines and

is defined by how states interact, their appropriate actions and roles (Lake, 2013). Normally, states do act within their own self-perceived role which in turn reaffirms the existing structure. However, sometimes states seek to overcome or challenge their identities, either challenging the structure or creating conflict against it. Identity theory reinforces the current American-led international order (Lake, 2013) The particular norms and practices that establish this order and are followed by it determine the actions of both large and small powers. In this theory, the level of liberalism of American order is not taken for granted and is itself constituted by that order. Under this order, the US ends up dealing with different regions in different ways. American power in different regions is characterized by differences in institutional forms, identities, and internal structures. This approach is better at illuminating questions than providing specific answers for questions on the topic. (Lake, 2013).

David Lake also makes mention of American hegemony in his book article “Hierarchy in International Relations” In the book, Lake defines power as A’s ability to get B to do something that he or she would not otherwise do. Coercion is defined as the linking of material threats or rewards to behavior. That’s just one form of power. But in international relations, it typically the only form studied. (Lake, 2009). Scholars usually take “hard power” indicators such as demography, GDP, and military spending to reflect a state’s ability to coerce others (Lake, 2009).

In his article “American Hegemony and the Future of East West Relations.” Lake points out that authority is a neglected form of power in international relations. In an authority relationship, A wills B to follow, and B voluntarily complies (Lake, 2006). As with all power, A gets B to adhere to its commands. What makes this different is that B sees A’s commands as

obligatory and legitimate. International relations assume that the world is anarchic, but this does not mean that there is no authority between states. Relationships between states can and often are authoritative. In an authority relationship between states, dominant states give goods, services, and social order to subordinate states, and in exchange, subordinate states do as they are told by dominant states because they see the commands as necessary for the order to be legitimate. The key to this relationship is that both states believe that the dominant state's status enables it to make demands rooted in its responsibility to maintain stability (Lake, 2006).

According to Lake, hierarchy exists when one state has authority over another. However, authority is never total. Hierarchy increases with the number of B's actions that follow A's commands. A partial hierarchy exists when B complies to A's demands in certain areas, such as security, but not in others. A can expand its hierarchy over B, but this depends on how compliant B is to A's commands. Hierarchy is a continuous variable that can change overtime to be expanded or diminished. Dominant states that wield partial authority over multiple subordinates are known as hegemons, and they create social orders known as hegemonies (Lake, 2006).

Lake is correct in many of his assumptions, but he does not link great power politics to migration. Relationships between states may very well lead some states to be more accepting than others. Lake highlighted Latin America in his article "American Hegemony and the Future of East-West Relations" but he based his assessment on post-cold war politics when the United States was emerging as a hegemon. Currently, the United States has come very far from that point. He does highlight US interventions in Latin America, however, taking a closer look at how US foreign policy shaped migration policies in Latin America would provide us with a more in-

depth look at the dominant-subordinate relationship between the United States and Latin American countries.

In addition to theories of great power politics, there are also theories of migration and refugee policy that are in play when discussing the Venezuelan migration crisis. In his book “The Age of Migration,” Castles highlights neoclassical migration theory. This theory is based on the idea that migrants make a cost/benefit analysis and move where there is a supply/demand of labor (Castles et al, p. 29). The theory is based on the assumption that social forces tend towards equilibrium. It sees migration as a function of geographical differences where the rural areas supply the urban areas with more workers. In this theory, Migrants make a cost-benefit analysis and move where they can be the most productive and earn the highest wages (Castles et al, p 30). One critique of this theory is that it makes unrealistic assumptions about migrants. It assumes that migrants are rational actors who maximize income or “utility” based on an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of their potential lifetime benefits. Potential migrants cannot be expected to have in-depth knowledge about wages in the countries they migrate to. Another incorrect assumption made by this theory is that markets are perfect and accessible to the poor (Castles et al, p 31). Because of these unrealistic assumptions, its hard to explain migration patterns through this theory.

In his book, Castles also highlights the new economics of labor migration theory. This theory arose as a critical response to the neoclassical migration theory. This theory argues that the decision to migrate is not made by an isolated individual, but usually by families and households. Groups may decide if one or more people in the household should migrate. Not always necessarily for the entire family to leave, but to diversify income (Castles, et al, pg. 38).

When assessing this crisis, it is necessary to highlight human rights. In Stephen Castle's article "Global Perspectives on Forced Migration," he defines the difference between a forced migrant and an economic migrant. Forced migration includes legal and political categories that involve individuals having to flee their homes (Castles 2005). The common term for them is "refugees," but Castles makes mention that this is actually a narrow category, as many migrants flee for reasons not mentioned in international refugee law. Castles makes clear that any definition given is not rigorous or scientific. Instead, it is the result of negotiations made by states in international conventions. Such statuses are necessary for administrative purposes but unfortunately, many people do not fit the standards (Castles 2005). Governments make distinctions between economic migrants and refugees, but many people who are forced to flee also want to make better lives for themselves. This is called having "mixed motivations." The "migration asylum nexus" is the term given to refer to the blurring of distinction between economic migrants and forced migrants. (Castles, 2005).

Asylum seekers are people who have crossed an international border searching for a place to live that is safe while their legal status has not been decided. Many countries offer different protections. This usually allows full refugee legal status for those who fulfill the 1951 Convention criteria, temporary protection for refugees of wars, and humanitarian protection for those who are not considered by international law to be refugees, but who are at risk if they return to their home countries (Castles, 2005).

In Stephen Castle's article "Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation," Castles observes forced migration and its ties to the relationship between the global north and south. Castles describes forced migration as both a result and a cause of social

transformation in the south. “Conflicts have been happening since the post-cold war era, when states were being formed and struggled through decolonization, state formation, and incorporation into the bi-polar world under cold-war order” (Castles, 2003). The trend of conflicts at this time came from the inability to build legitimate and stable states in areas of the global south. Castles mentions that usually wars happen internally due to identity struggles, ethnic division of state formation, and economic assets, the goal of these disputes is political control of the population (Castles, 2003). According to Castles, the protagonists are not usually long-standing armies, but irregular forces (Castles, 2003).

ˆ In his article, Castles also highlights the Northern economic interest in Southern wars. This could include oil trade, diamonds, coltan or small arms. These interests play an important role in prolonging conflicts in southern states. At a broader level, trade and development that favor the powerful industrialized countries maintain underdevelopment in the south. This makes conflict and forced migration an integral part of the northern-southern state relationships. According to Castles, this also reveals the ambiguity of efforts by the international community (being powerful northern states) in preventing forced migration from southern states. Northern states try to prevent forced migration through entry restrictions in the north and “containment” measures in the south. These containment measures include humanitarian aid, peace keeping missions, and military intervention (Castles, 2003). Although the north takes these measures, but in the long run they do more to cause forced migration than they do to prevent it. Castles also argues that underdevelopment in the south cause security problems for northern states. Although they do not present economic problems because they are largely disconnected from the global economy, the south does connect with the north in unexpected ways such as proliferation of

transnational informal networks. These networks include international crime, drug trade, people smuggling and trafficking, and irregular migrant networks that facilitate irregular mobility (Castles, 2003). These are caused in part by policies of deregulation and privatization in the north. Because of these effects of forced migration in the south, then, northern states need to use humanitarianism in order to prevent conflict and achieve social and economic change. This means that humanitarian actions attempt to be neutral and must impose certain systems in order to maintain global peace. The price of being connected to global economic and political networks is adopting northern political institutions, economic structures, and value systems (Castles, 2003).

### **ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS**

One alternative explanation is that the Colombia is more welcoming of Venezuelans in order to retaliate against the Maduro regime's oppressive policies. The right-wing Colombian government is essentially attempting to weaken the left-wing Venezuelan government by accepting migrants to Colombia. This is believed because many democratic countries tend to behave this way. For example: The US taking in Cuban migrants. However, this does not explain what is happening. Brazil is a country that borders Venezuela and is also a right-wing government whose policies stand against Maduro, and they have not been more welcoming of migrants. Peru is another country that is not leftist, and it still is not accepting of Venezuelan migrants. Its policies lean more to the center than Colombia and Brazil, but they are neither leftist nor supportive of the Maduro regime. In this case, the theory is not consistent with the evidence presented.

According to scholars Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox, when there is high-skilled immigration as opposed to low-skilled immigration, the levels of anti-immigrant sentiment are lower (Hainmueller, et al, 2010). This is because according to the labor competition model provided, natives of a country are less accepting of migrants who have skill levels similar to their own (Hainmueller, et al, 2010). However, this cannot be true in the case of Venezuelan migrants. This is because Venezuelan migrants are younger and more educated than average in these countries. According to the same labor competition model, natives of high and low skill levels approve of migrants who have a high skill level. And yet this cannot be true because there is a high anti-immigrant sentiment in the countries where they go to, including Colombia, Peru, and Brazil (Hainmueller, et al, 2010). Restricting them entering is the popular opinion in all three countries (Baddour, 2019). According to Brookings Institute, 75% of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia are working age, and 80% of them have completed at least a secondary education (Bahar, et al, 2018). According to the World Bank, “fifty-seven percent of female working- age Venezuelans in Peru have some kind of tertiary education” (World Bank, 2019 pg. 12). According to the IMF, GDP growth is expected overtime because many Venezuelan migrants bring relatively high levels of education and skills (Corugedo, Guajardo, 2019). Despite this, the people in receiving countries hold unfavorable views towards Venezuelan migrants. Thus, it can be concluded that skill level is not a factor in why Colombia accepts more migrants than Brazil and Peru.

*Table 1: Venezuelan Education Levels Compared to the Local Population in Colombia*

|                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Venezuelan Migrants<br>in Colombia | 80% have completed<br>secondary education | 21% have some<br>kind of tertiary<br>education |
| Colombian Natives                  | 42% have completed<br>secondary education | 20% have some<br>kind of tertiary<br>education |

SOURCE: Brookings Institute

*Table 2: Venezuelan Education Levels Compared to the Local Population in Peru*

|                                |   |                                      |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Venezuelan Migrants<br>in Peru | 62% have completed<br>secondary education | 19% Have a<br>university education   |
| Peruvian Nationals             | 38% have completed<br>secondary education | 16.2% Have a<br>university education |

SOURCE: IOM & INEI

*Table 3: Venezuelan Education Levels Compared to the Local Population in Brazil*

|                                  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Venezuelan Migrants<br>in Brazil | 62% have completed<br>secondary education | 19% have some kind<br>of tertiary education |
| Brazilian Nationals              | 43% Have completed<br>Secondary Education | 18% have some kind<br>of tertiary education |

SOURCE: IOM & OECD

*Table 4: Disapproval of Venezuelan Migrants in Peru*

Lima, Peru

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| September 12-14, 2018 | 55% disapproval rating<br>among residents of Lima,<br>Peru |
| April 10-12, 2019     | 67% disapproval rating<br>among residents of Lima,<br>Peru |

SOURCE: El Comercio Ipsos

*Table 5: Disapproval of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia*

Cucuta, Colombia

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| November-December, 2017 | 66% believed that<br>Venezuelan Migration is a<br>threat to the city. |
| November-December 2018  | 74% believed that<br>Venezuelan migration is a<br>threat to the city. |

SOURCE: Cucuta Como Vamos

*Table 6: Disapproval of Venezuelan Migrants in Brazil*

Sao Paulo, Brazil

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| December 18-19, 2018 | 64% of respondents were in favor of limiting migration from Venezuela |
|----------------------|---|

SOURCE: Datafolha

According to Hainmueller, ethnocentrism has a lot to do with prejudice when it comes to immigration. According to research, those who hold negative views of immigrants are more opposed to immigration because of negative implicit associations. This was especially true in Europe and North America. Racial and ethnic differences in addition to cultural and religious are also seen as a reason to oppose migrants for natives (Hainmueller et al, 2010). However, I would like to point out that this would not be a good theory for Colombians taking different measures than Brazil and Peru. In Europe and North America, many refugees have different ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. But in Latin America, this is not always the case. Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia share a language and have similar cultures. Even though Brazil is a Portuguese speaking country, they are neighbors and have cultural and religious similarities. The answer here cannot be ethnic differences because the ethnicities and cultures are similar.

Another alternative explanation is that Colombia is more accepting of Venezuelan migrants because it has a border with Venezuela. However, geography is not the sole reason that Colombia has more accepting policies. Brazil also borders Venezuela and they are not accepting migrants to the level that Colombia is. Colombia's border with Venezuela is 2,219 miles. At the same time, Brazil's border with Venezuela is 2,200 miles. I would like to point out that Colombia and Brazil have very different borders. Colombia's border is an area with a high concentration of trade, and Brazil's border is partially inhabitable, which may affect how many

people cross through each border. However, it is true that Colombia's policies are more accepting of Venezuela than Brazil's. It is possible, then, that another foreign policy element is at play.

Some say that the reason why Colombia has been able to accept migrants in comparison to neighboring countries is because it has a more stable economy. From 2000-2014, Colombia's economy has enjoyed an average growth rate of 4.3%, which is well above the region's average of 3.2% (Mejia, 2019). Shortages in the health/education sectors, competition in the informal labor market, and animosity due to the appearance of an increase in crime have been significant challenges in both countries. This argument, however, is not correct. Peru's economy is one of the fastest growing in Latin America, and yet, they are not accepting of Venezuelan migrants. Between 2002- 2013, Peru grew 6.1% annually, and growth is expected to grow above 3% annually (World Bank). This is not a viable argument because both economies are stable, and yet, Colombia has more open policies towards Venezuelan migrants than Peru.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For the methodology of this study, I have used the latest information of the Venezuelan migration crisis in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil. However, I would like to point out that this is an ever-developing crisis and by the time of publication there may be more recent developments. I also make assumptions about the United States and its motivations to send aid to Colombia in order to prevent an influx of Venezuelans going into the country. I base my theory on the work of theorists who have done theoretical and empirical studies on both great power politics and refugee policies. I rely on David Lake's theories of great power politics in order to come to conclusions about the US' motivations in using its power to have Colombia accept migrants. I also use Stephen Castle's theories in order to discuss the human rights regime and forced migration aspects of the crisis. These theories in conjunction can both explain the relationship between Colombia and the United States and explain the different policy positions taken by the different countries in South America. I also use process tracing in order to interpret what the relationship is between Colombia and the United States is. I do this by observing foreign policy actions and alignments in these countries to come to my conclusion. In the future, there should be more studies done on how great power politics influences refugee politics in different conflicts and regions of the world. For this particular conflict, more research should be done in the coming years as this migration crisis is projected to become the largest in the world, and there will be more policy developments in the US as well as Latin America.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The United States and Colombia have a long history of cooperation together. The United States is the regional hegemon, and Colombia has adopted policies that align with it. In addition, the cooperation between the countries to combat terrorism and drugs has furthered their relationship. I hypothesize that Colombia has taken an open-door policy of accepting migrants in order to please the United States. The US currently has policies put in place to deter migrants, and they are avoiding giving the migrants temporary protected status. So by Colombia and other South American nations taking in the migrants, they are helping the United States maintain this policy position.

One factor that Colombia has that the other two countries do not are strong ties to the United States. Although ties may be there, the US-Colombia relationship predates the relationship that Peru and Brazil have with the US. In addition, Colombian foreign policy is more closely aligned with the United States. Not only does it align itself with the US regionally, but internationally as well. Colombia is considered the US' strongest ally and given that domestic policy does not allow for an inflow of migrants, Colombia takes the burden. The United States also sends significant aid to Colombia, much more than the other two countries. This would suggest that it might be a reason for Colombia to be more accepting of Venezuelans than Peru or Brazil.

*Table 7: US Economic Aid*

|          | 2016          | 2017         | 2018         | 2019        |
|----------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Colombia | \$239,890,000 | 260,630,000  | 203,984,000  | 240,245,000 |
| Peru     | 240,245,000   | \$49,854,000 | \$35,480,000 | 38,970,000  |
| Brazil   | \$898,000     | \$890,000    | \$623,000    | \$0         |
|          |               |              |              |             |

USAID.gov

*Table 8: US Military Aid*

|          | 2016          | 2017          | 2018          | 2019          |
|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Colombia | \$326,087,567 | \$517,135,494 | \$528,108,464 | \$381,674,868 |
| Peru     | \$96,676,327  | \$123,115,686 | \$129,002,523 | \$97,556,490  |
| Brazil   | \$15,890,195  | \$29,821,087  | \$33,383,775  | \$41,743,209  |

Source: Security Assistance Monitor

The evidence shows that Colombia receives much more foreign and military aid than Peru and Brazil. I would like to point out that Colombia has always received a large amount of foreign aid from the United States, namely because of the war on drugs, which has been going on for decades. I'd also like to point out that Brazil is a wealthier country than Colombia, and the wealth per capita might impact the foreign aid it gets from the United States, as Brazil might need less money than Colombia in foreign aid. Despite these facts, I believe that there is still reason to believe that great power politics plays a role in Colombia's decision to accept migrants due to its historically close relationship to the United States compared to the other two countries and their current cooperation in combating the Maduro regime. The high amount of foreign aid could help influence Colombia to take in migrants in order to appease the United States.

Additionally, this would not be the first time that a country is being paid to host migrants. The Syrian refugee crisis has been difficult to manage for the European Union, Turkey, and the United Nations. In order to mitigate the crisis, here has been a “deal” put in place as an international measure that between the EU and Turkey that requires Syrian refugees who reach Greece to return to Turkey and resettle there. In exchange, the EU would resettle one Syrian within its borders. As a part of the deal, the EU would pay Turkey €3 billion for resettling and facilitating the refugees in Turkey. As an additional incentive, the EU would also liberalize visa restrictions for Turkish citizens (Aras, Duman 2018). This is one example of how an organization of states paid another state to host refugees. Although the United States and Colombia have not said anything publicly, the massive aid received could prove to motivate Colombia to accept migrants on behalf of the United States.

## EMPIRIC SECTION

### Colombia

While fleeing their home country, Venezuelans have chosen to go to countries such as Colombia, Peru, and Brazil among others regionally. While most of these countries were mainly welcoming at the beginning, they all eventually put in limitations so that Venezuelan migrants would not enter their countries. Colombia is the only country that maintains an open arms policy. In 2017, President Juan Manuel Santos started granting Venezuelan migrants “Tarjetas de Movilidad Fronteriza” (border mobility cards) for Venezuelans who needed to frequently enter Colombia through the border to access food, medicine, and other goods. President Santos also urged the Colombian people to be accepting of Venezuelans, because they are “hermanos” (brothers) and should show solidarity in these difficult times (Cancilleria de Colombia, 2017). In 2018, President Santos signed a decree that regularized 442,462 Venezuelans in the country irregularly as documented in the Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos (Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants). This decree granted them Permisos Especial de Permanencia, or PEP (Special Permanence Permits). It granted them permanence in Colombia for two years, access to basic health benefits, education, and jobs. It also partly payed off the hospital debts of Venezuelans using hospitals in the country to receive medical care (Presidencia de la Republica, 2018). The majority of the Colombia’s population agreed with this generous response initially. In 2017, a poll showed that In Bogota, 78% of respondents think that the administration should give some kind of assistance to Venezuelan migrants. In Bucaramanga and Medellin, 88% of respondents believed that local administrations should give some kind of food and housing assistance to the Venezuelan migrants. In the border town of Cucuta, 69% agreed (World Bank, 2018).

Public opinion has shifted. In 2019, one poll from a Colombian market-research firm showed that Colombians' disapproval of the government's handling of the Venezuelan crisis grew from 34% to 54% from February to July. At the same time, support for Colombia's accommodative policies fell from 56% to 46% (Baddour, 2019). While the approval ratings have been going down, the government has actually given Venezuelans more rights than before. Up until August 2019, babies born to Venezuelan mothers were stateless. Because Venezuela no longer has consular operations in Colombia, Venezuelan parents were not able to register their children as Venezuelans. And up until that point, they could not register their children as Colombian because undocumented migrants as well as those with temporary visas were not Colombian citizens. Duque said that babies born to Venezuelan migrants since 2015 would be granted Colombian citizenship. He also said that in difficult times, Colombia would put fraternity above all else (Forero, 2019).

In July 2019, Colombia also planned to grant temporary work permits to Venezuelan migrants. This was part of an effort to reduce under the table jobs that often pay minimum wage and deprive the state programs of revenues (Acosta, 2019). Colombia's Deputy Labor Minister Andres Felipe Uribe told journalists that "We cannot permit that the migrants' main asset is that they are cheaper to hire informally. That's why we're going to start to put in place rules for a special work permit so that the moment a Venezuelan is hired illegally they can receive a formal work proposal" (Acosta, 2019). President Uribe said that Venezuelans must receive the same labor rights as Colombian workers. This includes wages of 925,148 pesos (\$288) (Acosta, 2019).

The Colombian public does not completely agree with these measures. This is because similar to Peru, Colombia has a large informal labor market. Hence, some Colombians have felt

that they are competing for jobs with the Venezuelans. (Bahar et al, 2018). In addition, Colombia already has the highest rate of internally displaced people in the world due to the ongoing conflict involving the armed group FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). The total number of internally displaced people of Colombia is 5,761,000 as of December 31st, 2018 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). In receiving areas, some are fearful for their security. However, according to a World Bank study, crime rates have not increased. In fact, in some cases, they have decreased (World Bank, 2018).

I hypothesize that the Colombian government responds differently than its counterparts in Latin America and goes against public opinion within the country because of its relationship with the United States. Colombia is seen as the strongest ally the US has in Latin America. This has taken years to build, Colombia and the United States have a history together across administrations that predate the Duque-Trump era. Colombia has always been aligned with US on its security policies. During the cold war, Colombia accepted Washington's strong stances against communism. Later it became a close ally on the war on drugs and was recognized by President Bush as "one of the United States' strongest regional allies combating terrorism" (Nieto, 2007 pg. 7). According to Nieto, "Colombia was the only Latin American country to send troops to Korea during the 1950s and in 1961 during the Punta Este Conference it proposed Cuba's expulsion from the OAS, proving consistent with the views of the United States." (Nieto, 2007 pg 5). In the 1960s Colombia signed an agreement their intelligence with the United States. Washington also signed different agreements for each of its armed military services to its embassy in Bogota. Colombian military leaders "assimilated national security doctrine developed by Washington and by the militaries in the southern cone" (Nieto, 2007 pg 7).

Nieto also contends that “Colombia’s institutional stability and economic growth even when faced with increased violence made it a regional model in Latin America for almost three decades” Nieto, 2007 pg7). At the same time, the presence of guerrilla movements since the 1960s made it “something of a testing ground for United States’ counterinsurgency strategies” (Nieto, 2007 pg. 8). In the 1960s, Ronald Reagan’s “War on Drugs” policies joined with counterinsurgency efforts as defining policies of US intervention in Colombia Up until 1991, these policies helped preserve Colombia’s democratic practices (Nieto, 2007). In the late 1990s, Colombia’s internal war got worse and cocaine production was on the rise. This led Washington to determine that the increase of conflict and drug production made it a threat to regional stability (Nieto, 2007). This assessment made Colombia “the third-highest recipient of US military aid in the world, the lead recipient of US military training, and a key part of Washington’s counternarcotic policies” (Nieto, 2007 pg. 8). The September 11th attacks and the breakdown of Colombia’s negotiations with the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) guerrillas in 2002 favored a redefinition of the “global war on terror.” The election of Alvaro Uribe favored redefining the “global war on terror” because it helped widen democratic stability in the region (Nieto, 2007).

Colombia was important to the United States in its “global war on terror” because the US State Department identified three active groups in the country. Among them there are two leftist guerilla groups, the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). There is also one right-wing paramilitary alliance that the state department has indicated is an active terrorist group, the United Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) (Nieto, 2007). Colombia and the United States under President Alvaro Uribe and

President George W. Bush achieved the greatest counterdrug cooperation achieved between the two countries (Frechette, 2007). This impacted Colombia's foreign policy decisions. The same way US military aid increased, so did its presence in Colombia. At the time, including all US contractors, Bogota had the largest US embassy in the Western Hemisphere (Frechette, 2007). The candidacy of then defense minister Juan Manuel Santos proved to be the best viable option to secure the consolation of "democratic security" policy. President Santos maintained this relationship with the United States, and the drug agenda remained an integral part of the US-Colombia relationship (Granada, 2014).

It is not hard to see how the US' great power influence impacts Colombian foreign policy. For example, Colombia was the only country in South America that supported the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, so because of this, President Bush considered President Uribe an ally (Frechette, 2007). At this time, efforts toward free trade, another American priority, were made and a Free Trade Agreement was reached in 2006 (Granada, 2014). Another example is how in 2010, Kosovo was recognized by Colombia due to Colombia's close relationship with the United States (Mirilovic, Siroky, 2017)

Colombia accepting Venezuelan migrants aligns with the US' interests in Latin America. During the Obama and Trump administrations, there has been a consistent effort to weaken Maduro's regime through sanctions, multilateral diplomacy, support for negotiation between the Venezuelan government and opposition, and securing support from other countries for a tougher line in Venezuela (Camilleri, 2018). Donald Trump proposed a military intervention in Venezuela, but this was proven to be a very unpopular option in both the United States and Latin America. There is also no pressing concern in the country that would prompt such a response

coming from the US government (Camilleri, 2018). Because Maduro's regime remains in power, Venezuelans are leaving the country in large numbers. The Trump administration is not willing to accommodate this need, even though in 2018, Venezuela came on top of China to become the number one country of origin for those claiming asylum in the US upon arrival or shortly after. 30,000 Venezuelans applied for asylum with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that year. Venezuelans filed the most out of any country, accounting for one-third of the total applications (O'Toole, 2019). This has created problem, for the Trump administration, which considers Maduro's government an oppressive dictatorship, conflicting with its current immigration policy which intends reducing the amount of asylum seekers and migrants (O'Toole, 2019). As a result, the Trump administration has halted bipartisan efforts to grant Venezuelans the right to stay in the US under temporary protected status (TPS). TPS is a program that offers the right to work and protection from deportation. Administration officials have tried to stop this program completely. This is part of a greater effort to reduce immigration (O'Toole, 2019). In dealing with the issue, the United States announced in September 2019 that it would give an additional 120 million to deal with the migration crisis (Symmes, 2019). The United States government sends aid to deal with the problem so that they do not have to deal with it themselves. The United States already has policies in place to reduce immigration, so having Colombia take in migrants proves advantageous to maintaining these policies.

Colombia's policies of accepting Venezuelan migrants are generally more welcoming than Peru's and Brazil's. First, by regularizing hundreds of thousands of migrants through its Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP) which has been discontinued in Peru and although Brazil has offered work permits, they are more limited than they are in Colombia. Additionally,

Colombia has offered more rounds of PEP in order to regularize a large amount of migrants (Frier, Parent 2018). In addition to PEP, Colombia regularizes Venezuelan migrants who have a job offer in the formal sector. Peru has protectionist policies and prioritizes native-born workers while Brazil also has policies in place to limit migrants taking jobs in specific sectors, such as engineering. Colombia also has a permit that allows migrants to cross the border, take what they need, and go back (Frier, Parent 2018). Brazil has a border with Colombia and does not offer this, although I will point out that the two borders do have very different terrain. In Colombian schools, Venezuelan children are given identification numbers in order to allow them to enter schools. This has been the boldest move taken by any country so far, as other countries have opened up their education systems, but Colombia is ensuring that undocumented kids are registered in schools (Frier, Parent 2018).

### Brazil

In 2017, Brazil followed the trend of giving Venezuelans temporary work permits in their country. However, after the election of Jair Bolsonaro, the new president said that he would either like to revoke the 2017 Migration Act that gives refugees rights or build refugee tents at the border (Frier, Parent 2019). President Bolsonaro ordered soldiers to guard the border so that Venezuelans would not enter (Muggah, Abenur 2019). Colombia not only accepts more migrants, but they are also afforded more rights through the permit system.

The Brazilian states of Roraima and Amazonas have received many migrants fleeing crime and poverty. Despite Venezuelan migrants being entitled to temporary residency in Brazil for two years, (under a resolution made for associate MERCOSUR members) most Venezuelan migrants do not know this or cannot partake in it because of the economic costs (Mahlke,

Yamamoto, 2017). Instead, many Venezuelans opt to apply for asylum whether they are eligible for it or not. The crisis has only deepened; border states have found themselves affected by the inflow of migrants. Brazil's Law No 13445 passed in 2017 takes a rights-based approach to migration law, and there was hope that it would improve migration channels for those who cannot seek asylum in the country (Mahlke, Yamamoto, 2017). However, the country lacks migration laws for those already in the country. As a state party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, Brazil is required to provide the structure necessary to receive and reintegrate refugees. However, it is lacking, which is a political choice the country has made to address the issues on a case-by-case basis (Mahlke, Yamamoto, 2017).

The relationship between Brazil and the United States has not been close over the years. Brazil and the US and Brazilian interests have prioritized regional stability, but both powers interpret this differently and favor different approaches. Both the US and Brazil have historically supported peaceful resolutions of interstate disputes (Long, 2017). The US has taken an activist role of promoting liberal democracy and showing skepticism towards left-wing governments, while Brazil has a policy of non-interference. When the US denounced rights violations in 2015 and sanctioned Venezuelan officials, Brazil denounced this action. This served two purposes: standing for sovereignty and rallying South America around the position that the region can solve its problems without the US (or OAS) interference (Long, 2017).

The US and Brazil have both emphasized their roles as regional leaders, but this has rarely caused conflict. In the Monroe Doctrine, Theodore Roosevelt's reinterpretation recognized that US "police powers" did not apply to "certain republics of the south of us which have already reached such a point of stability, order, and prosperity that they themselves, though as yet hardly

consciously, are among the guarantors of this doctrine.” (Long, 2017). This essentially enlisted Brazil to ensure stability in the region. The US has often encouraged regional powers to share burdens in regional stability (Long, 2017). Colombia is a much closer ally to the United States, both economically and diplomatically.

Although this may all be true, neither power has provided regional public goods in South America consistently and effectively. The US has often conditioned access to the markets on special cooperation (such as drug trafficking.) (Long, 2017). Brazil has not been consistently open. Both have played helpful roles in reducing the likelihood of interstate conflicts, but their approaches have been vastly different, so they have not been doing so together (Long 2017). Brazil and the US have very different strategies for reaching the same goals. After Bolsonaro won the election in Brazil, many expect to see more cooperation from these similar leaders, but that is still to be seen (Long, 2017).

#### Peru

Another country that has opposed Maduro in the region but refuses to take in more migrants is Peru. At the very beginning in 2017, Peru’s center right president Pedro Kuczynski who is himself a descendant of immigrants, opened his arms to the Venezuelan migrants. Through his policies, Venezuelan migrants would be given Permiso Temporal de Permanencia (PTP), a temporary residency permit that would allow Venezuelans and others to look for jobs, apply for a tax number and receive health and education services (Cantu, 2018). June 2019, President Martin Vizcarra announced that Venezuelans would have to enter Peru on a “humanitarian visa” or otherwise could not enter the country. Until then, migrants could just apply for a temporary work permit (PTP). Getting a humanitarian visa is very difficult, so this

measure was meant to deter migrants from entering the country (Dupraz, 2019). This visa rule came after the Internal Minister Carlos Moran linked the heightened crime to Venezuelan migrants. In addition, the public opinion was also against the migrants. This is a country whose leaders are also against Maduro but have not decided to accept migrants to the same scale that Colombia has.

Peru's relationship with the United States was characterized by misunderstandings and tensions between Lima and Washington. This was until President Alberto Fujimori came into power and announced full cooperation with the US. Bilateral relations have improved since then. They have mainly been concerned with fighting narcoterrorism, addressing security issues, the democratizing political life, and respect for human rights (Beas, 2003). In April of 1992, President Fujimori dissolved congress, and action that the Bush administration strongly condemned. They also demanded democracy be restored in Peru, and this was a condition for the country receiving US aid.

It is no secret that the US-Peru relationship has been based on cooperation against drug traffickers and producers for the past two decades. Peru was the most important country in the early 1970s until the 1995 when Colombia began leading the role. Both President Bush Sr. and President Reagan were strong supporters of a strong solution against drug traffickers and producers in Latin America (Wordliczek, 2015). However, the Peruvian government was afraid of the social and economic impact of destroying plantations, and instead proposed solutions such as economic support for farmers to plant alternative crops and promoting other ways for Peruvian farmers to make a living. According to the Peruvian government, the solutions proposed by the US would only make farmers work with narcotraffickers and worsen the issue

(Wordliczek, 2015). Although their views of ultimately solving the issue were different, in 1995, President Clinton and President Fujimori signed an agreement on the prevention of drug transport from Peru to Colombia. After September 11th, 2001 the US-Peru relationship has been shaped by both the fight against drug trafficking and the fight against international terrorism (Wordliczek, 2015). This effort continues.

Peru has also signed a trade agreement with the United States, bringing the country together. The Peru Promotion Trade Agreement was signed in the early 21st century (Wordliczek, 2015). Trade between the United States and Peru only accounts for a fraction of US international trade. At the same time, the United States is Peru's largest trade partner, followed by China and Switzerland (Wordliczek, 2015). In terms of US economic policy, Peru is in second place because Latin America has larger markets such as Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico (Wordliczek, 2015).

#### United States

The United States' contributions to the crisis have been mostly monetary and foreign policy related. In contrast with the other countries, the US has not taken in large amounts of migrants and refugees. Instead, they have provided increased aid to South American countries while denouncing the actions of Nicolas Maduro. The United States has been imposing sanctions on Venezuela for more than a decade. The Trump administration has significantly expanded those sanctions have increased economic pressures on the Maduro regime, accelerating the decline of oil production in Venezuela. Since 2006, the US has imposed sanctions on Venezuela for terrorism-related activities because Venezuela has declined to cooperate in antiterrorism efforts. Drug trafficking sanctions have been in effect since 2005, when the president made the

determination that Venezuela was not adhering to obligations under the international narcotics agreements. The Trump administration made this determination most recently in 2019 (Congressional Research Service, 2020). The United States has also backed Juan Guaido, the declared interim President in Venezuela. In response to Venezuela's anti-democratic actions and human rights violations, congress enacted the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014. Among its provisions, the president is required to impose sanctions for whom he believes is responsible for significant acts of violence or human rights violations (Congressional Research Service, 2020). Since then, both President Obama and President Trump have issued executive orders sanctioning those responsible for human rights violations in Venezuela, putting pressure on the Venezuelan economy (Congressional Research Service, 2020).

The United States, unlike other countries, has not been taking in significant amounts of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. It has instead sent aid to countries who are receiving Venezuelan migrants. Since the beginning of the crisis, the US has been incrementally sending money to South America in order to deal with the crisis. In 2019, the US announced it was going to send 120 million dollars in aid to Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and other countries in South America, bringing the total US contribution to more than 376 million dollars (Symmes, 2019). This came after the Colombian authority lamented the lack of aid, pointing out that other crises coming out of countries gesuch as Syria, South Sudan, and Myanmar receive much more funding than the crises coming out of Venezuela (Symmes, 2019). The point is that many in Europe see the Venezuelan conflict as largely a US issue, as the international community is not prepared to deal with a crisis coming out of Latin America. Donor nations from Europe and elsewhere would

look to the United States to come to the relief of Latin America, and the US authorities have shown that they are unwilling to do more than send aid (Gedan, 2017). The US Agency for International Development has maintained emergency supplies at Florida warehouses, and its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance is getting ready to send supplies refugee camps in Colombia if needed (Gedan, 2017). But domestically, the US has shown that it is unwilling to accept refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

When asked if the US had any plans of resettling Venezuelan refugees, a spokesperson for the US State Department said, “At this time, the United States is not in discussions about resettling large numbers of Venezuelan refugees” (Madrid, 2019). Despite the crises happening in Venezuela, immigration judges have denied around 50% of all asylum applications filed in the past five years (Madrid, 2019). In 2019, Venezuelans were the largest group by nationality of asylum applicants in the United States for the third year in a row. “U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have received more than 20,100 petitions for asylum from Venezuelans from January through September of 2018. In 2017 there were 27,629 applications filed and that is already almost four times greater than the 5,603 petitions made in 2015” (Madrid, 2019). Aside from asylum applications, the number of visa applications accepted have also plummeted. “The number of non-immigrant visas issued to Venezuelans has plummeted, from 237,926 in fiscal year 2015 to 28,540 in fiscal year 2018” (Madrid, 2019).

Decreasing the number of migrants and refugees has been a trend in the presidency of Donald Trump. Since his 2016 campaign, President Trump has made immigration policy one of the central aspects of his administration’s domestic policies. He made promises to cut legal immigration and “put America first.” He also promised to build a wall that stretches across the

US-Mexico border and extensively vet immigrants (Pierce, Selee 2017). What has changed under President Trump is that the United States has been less accepting of refugees and asylum seekers. This administration made historic reductions to the number of refugees the United States is willing to let into the country. President Obama raised the refugee admission ceiling from 70,000 in fiscal year 2013-15 up to 85,000 in fiscal year 2016 and then up to 110,00 in fiscal year 2017. Upon taking office, President Trump dramatically decreased the number of refugee spaces to 45,000 in fiscal year 2018, the lowest it has been since 1980 (Pierce, Selee 2017). The Trump administration also removed the Temporary Protected Status program for migrants from certain countries. TPS is a humanitarian program meant to help youth from certain countries suffering from violent conflicts or natural disasters. TPS beneficiaries receive provisional protection against deportation and permission to work in the US, with the renewals depending on whether the US continues to consider designating their home countries TPS eligible. President Trump expelled people from Nicaragua, Suriname, and Haiti, saying that the conditions in those countries had improved so there was no need for TPS (Pierce, Selee 2017).

Activists and leaders in the United States were hoping to get TPS passed for Venezuelans in the US. A bill advancing this policy passed the House of Representatives. However, it failed in the Senate, so the proposal failed. It is not hard to see that the current administration does not want an open entry for refugees and migrants. They would prefer to keep them far away in order to fulfill their “America First” policy. Accepting migrants might be popular in areas such as South Florida, with a high concentration of Venezuelans. However, if they were accepting of migrants, it would be hypocritical after years of limiting migration and asylum from Latin America. Instead, they would prefer to pay Colombia in aid and protection in order to limit

migration to the United States. It is not hard to see the historical and political ties the US and Colombia have, and the US is currently using its power as a hegemon in order to persuade the Colombia government to do what is best for US domestic policy

Table 4: Benefits for Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia, Brazil, and Peru

|          | Entrance Requirements  | Providing Legal Status   | Granting Asylum   | Education   | Labor Market Access   | Healthcare  |
|----------|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Colombia | Passports that expired up to two years prior or border mobility card required to enter country | Colombia has offered Permiso Especial de Permanencia several rounds in order to regularize migrants. Children born in Colombia granted citizenship.                              | Smaller number of asylum applicants because there are other visa options available, and it is not clear if asylum seekers can work.   | Students without documents can enroll in schools. Authorities created identification numbers for undocumented children.                             | Combats Venezuelans ending up in informal sector by legalizing those who have formal job offers | Government encourages recent arrivals to sign up for government healthcare. Public system available to all who need care.                         |
| Peru     | Visa required to enter country   | Permiso Temporal de Permanencia permit offered and gave a path to regularization for immigrants who arrived before December 2018. There is not path for those who arrived after. | Requires an interview for asylum seekers at the border. If the individual does not meet one of the five grounds in the 1951 Refugee Convention, they are returned to Ecuador. | Overcrowding has been a significant problem in this country. Peru has expanded the school day to two sections to accommodate the needs of students. | Restrictive policies towards immigrants and protectionist over native-born workers.             | Only those with identity documents issued by Peruvian government or those who migrated legally have access to healthcare with certain exceptions. |

|        |   |  |   |  |  |   |
|--------|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| Brazil | Passports that expired up to five years prior required to enter country | Authorities allow those with a certain temporary residence to apply for permanent residence three months before their permit is set to expire. This is specifically for Venezuelans who have found a job in the formal market. | Migrants who cross by land apply for either a temporary residence permit or asylum at a post. | Overcrowding and language barriers are issues. Measures are taken to tackle to language barrier such as Spanish language education classes for teachers. | Has laws that limits hiring foreign workers in key fields (such as engineering.) | Healthcare is available for all residents of Brazil, including ones who are foreign-born. However, the system is severely strained due to the influx of Venezuelans needing care. |
|--------|---|--|---|--|--|---|

SOURCE: MPI & JMHM

## CONCLUSION

The Venezuelan migration conflict has deeply affected not only the migrants themselves, but neighboring countries. The influx of migrants has caused there to be security problems in Colombia, Brazil, and Peru. In addition, public opinion in these countries strongly opposes taking in migrants. Despite this, Colombia has continued to accommodate them; it is the only country on the continent that is still receiving migrants, and the question becomes why? In this work, I suggested that there may be a foreign policy element to this crisis. The theory of great power politics led me to come to my conclusion. The United States could be paying Colombia to take in migrants so it does not have to, as its domestic policies do not align with taking in more migrants. I also use Castles' theories of migration in order to understand the flow of migrants from one country to another. With both of these frameworks, I am able to come to a conclusion about the US' motivations.

What is obvious is that it has the longest and strongest relationship with the US out of the three countries. Colombia also by far receives the most aid from the United States. In addition, the US cannot currently take in migrants due to its unpopularity with the American public and the Trump administration's America First policies. The Trump administration takes in a historically low number of asylum seekers, and it has made it more difficult for migrants to come into the country. Instead, Colombia has been receiving migrants. Due to this influence, the United States is proving itself to be the regional hegemon. The role of great power politics in migration crises should be further studied and evaluated in migration conflicts across the world. Finding this link would help us understand why some countries welcome migrants and refugees while others do not.

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