What are the Effects of the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis on Colombia and Peru?

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Abstract
Venezuela has undergone a political and economic crisis that has drastically changed the way of life of millions. As a result, Venezuelans are “fleeing a profound economic and political crisis, characterized by the systematic violation of human rights and a deepening humanitarian emergency.” (Wilson Center, 2019, p. 1). As a result, over 4 million Venezuelans have fled since 2015 (International Rescue Committee, 2020). While many South American countries have welcomed Venezuelan migrants, most take refuge in neighboring countries Colombia and Peru. (Labrador, 2019). However, Colombia and Peru have greatly suffered as a result of the influx of Venezuelans because “the uncertainty of the crisis in Venezuela, and the lack of an immediate solution increases the need for local governments to provide long-term economic opportunities for migrants in their countries.” (Carpio, 2019, p. 1). The purpose of this research project is to determine the positive and negative effects, both economically and socially, of the Venezuelan refugee crisis on Colombia and Peru.

Methodology
Using academic journals, data, news articles, and looking through interviews of refugees and political figures, I was able to research the effects of the Venezuelans refugee crisis on neighboring countries Colombia and Peru.

Research Findings
According to some estimates, 4 million Venezuelans could seek refuge in Colombia by 2021, which would bring the number of Venezuelans in the country to a total of 6 million, equivalent to about 10 percent of Colombia’s total population (Nasr, 2019). As a result, the Colombian government, short on resources to begin with, “has nevertheless endeavored to provide Venezuelan refugees with economic support, access to education, and emergency healthcare” (Shen & Yang, 2020, p. 1). Additionally, Colombia may face short-term and long-term unemployment problems, as many of the Venezuelan migrants have yet to find employment within the economy (Shen & Yang, 2020). Socially, many Colombians worry that these “vulnerable refugees—including children—are being recruited or trafficked by gangs into sex work or indentured labor, some in coca fields” (Nasr, 2019. p. 1).

However, the effects of the Venezuelan refugee crisis on Peru are much different. According to the UNHCR (2019), the total number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Peru now stands at about 800,000. This number of Venezuelan migrants is helping Peru’s economy. Venezuelan migrants and refugees could contribute more than 2.2 billion Peruvian soles in tax revenue over the next five years (World Bank, 2019). Also, labor productivity could increase by 3.2 percent due to the large number of migrants in the country in 2018. Socially, the Venezuelans in Peru are educated and prepared. The Venezuelan population arriving in Peru are young and skilled (World Bank, 2019). For example, “fifty-seven percent of female working-age Venezuelans in Peru have some tertiary education” (World Bank, 2019, p.1).

Conclusion
While both Colombia and Peru have received large amounts of Venezuelan refugees in the past few years, the effects they have had on those countries are different. While Colombia is suffering economically and socially the increase of Venezuelans, Peru is seeing its economy thrive as well as a positive social impact as a result of the Venezuelan refugees. More research should be done in order to determine if long term those effects would still be the same.

Abridged Bibliography
UNHCR. (2020). What is a Refugee?