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Perú and Migration from Venezuela: From Early Adjustment to Policy Misalignment

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Introduction

Beginning in 2015, the world began witnessing the surreal unravelling of one of South America's strongest economies. The outflow of Venezuelans seeking refuge from both political repression and economic collapse grew exponentially. Within seven years Venezuelans fleeing their country would top 7.18 million (RV4, January 2023), putting Venezuela in league with the world's two other modern mass migration crises, Syria and Ukraine. The Venezuelan economy shrunk to one-quarter of its former size and over 75% of the remaining population is now living in extreme poverty (ENCOVI, 2021). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Organisation of American States (OAS) designated Venezuela as a country of "forced displacement" (2018). The economic-political-social "implosion" of Venezuela has created the largest mass migration crisis in Latin American and Caribbean history (Alvarez et al., 2022; Mauricia, 2019). Venezuelans have moved overwhelmingly to South American countries, which received more than 80% of all Venezuelan refugees and migrants (RV4, January 2023, Selee et al.,

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2019). Colombia, which shares multiple borders with Venezuela, has received the largest number of migrants—2.5 million by January 2023 (RV4, January 2023). But Perú is the number two destination country, even though it has no direct borders with Venezuela. Perú has received the second largest number of Venezuelans every year since April 2018, many walking 4,500 kilometres through neighbouring Colombia (Rossiasco, 2019). By the end of 2022, more than 1.5 million Venezuelans were resident in Perú, comprising 4% of Perú's national population and highly concentrated in the capital city of Lima and local port of Callao (RV4, January 2023).

This chapter addresses the principal question *how* and then *how well* did Perú adapt to the mass migration of Venezuelan migrants? To answer *how*, the chapter constructs a historical chronology of three phases: (I) 2015–2018; (II) 2018–early 2020; and, (III) 2020 to present (2023) and details the principal national migration policy steps taken together with the changing size and nature of the inflows of Venezuelan migrations. The three phases correspond to different Peruvian presidencies, and as the chapter will detail, each phase varied dramatically on a spectrum of receptivity and restrictiveness to Venezuelan migrants.

To answer both *how* and *how well*, the chapter draws on the principal regional literature, including economic studies and surveys, and utilises migration data of the United Nations to track the flows of migrants in and out of Perú both before and during the Venezuelan migration crisis. To specifically analyse *how well*, the chapter cites and analyses evidence on a range of impacts: bureaucratic and administrative, impacts on the Peruvian economy, labour market, and social conditions as well as impacts on the Venezuelan migrants themselves. In 2018, a unique multilateral level of aid coordination and management was created by the United Nations in response to the Venezuelan crisis, known as the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform (R4V). To further answer *how well*, the chapter explores Perú's national policies in the context of R4V's multilateral migration coordination and support that was only drawn on to a limited extent.

The first section introduces Perú's long, multi-cultural history with migration and places Venezuela's current crisis within the literature of forced displacement. The second section lays out in three phases how Perú national migration management moved from early accommodation in Phase I under Umberto Humala and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski to restrictive migration policies in Phase 2 under Martin Vizcarra to a COVID-19-dominated Phase 3 of even further restrictions that began under Martin Vizcarra and continued with the Presidencies of Pedro Castillo and Dina Botuarte. This section also describes the formation of RV4 and what became Perú's limited reliance on

this resource. The chapter concludes by evaluating Perú's migration management as maladapted to the dimensions and nature of the Venezuelan forced migration crisis, creating clear contrasts with approaches undertaken by its South American neighbours, in particular, Colombia and Argentina.

Overall, the Venezuelan migration crisis has given rise to a substantial body of regional (Latin American and Caribbean) literature drawn on in this chapter. There is, however, comparatively less academic literature analysing Perú in a South-South context with regions outside of Latin America (Levaggi & Freier, 2022); this chapter thus contributes by placing Perú's challenges as part of the Global South. Even further, academic literature is only beginning to look at Venezuela as part of a more modern phenomenon of "mass" migration crises that link Syria, Ukraine, and Venezuela (Mazza & Caballero, 2022). As this chapter will argue, "mass" migration crises have a greater set of demands on countries of the Global South for which traditional national case-by-case migration management policies such as those pursued by Perú are particularly poorly suited.

Perú's Migration History

Perú's origins as the seat of the Inca Empire and indigenous culture in the Americas were fundamentally reshaped in the early colonial period by the influx of Europeans, African slaves, and Asian immigrants. From independence in 1824 to the abolition of slavery in 1854, Perú's early history was redrawn by more than a century of immigrants coming from the East and West. The draw of Perú's vast natural resources as well as commodity booms in guano and rubber attracted labourers and merchants from Spain, China, Italy, Japan as well as other countries shaping an early history of multi-ethnic migration. Today the impact of this early immigration made Perú into one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse nations in South America (Takenaka et al., 2010).

But beginning in the 1960s, Perú's economic and political troubles reversed the migration trend to outmigration. By the 1990s, Peruvians were fleeing hyperinflation, the terrorism toll of Sendero Luminoso, and frequent political crises. Peruvians migrated particularly to the United States, Spain, Japan, and Italy, and to the stronger regional economies of Chile and Argentina. As shown in Fig. 30.1, for more than 50 years from 1960 through 2014, Perú had become a country of net outmigration. As Fig. 30.1 demonstrates this large volume of emigration drove net emigration rates to nearly—8% of the population by 2008. The global financial crisis of 2008–9

and the return of (principally) commodity-based growth in Perú was able to slow substantially the net outflows of Peruvians after this low point. Spain, in particular, provided incentives for South Americans to return home given economic troubles in Spain.

Just prior to the Venezuelan crisis, Perú had reached a net migration rate of 0 (Fig. 30.1), but 2014 would be the last year that emigrants and immigrants netted to zero.

From the arrival of the first significant numbers of Venezuelans in 2015, Venezuelans fleeing political and economic chaos under Maduro became the principal factor transforming Perú into a net receiving nation in the modern era, with a high 3% net migration rate in 2018 when Venezuelan migrants had topped 700,000.

As shown in Fig. 30.2, Venezuelan migration to Perú escalated sharply beginning in 2017, displaying a spurt characteristic of “forced” rather than voluntary migration. The crisis unfolded in a surreal fashion: mismanagement of the oil industry and the economy, brutal repression of the opposition, then massive economic contraction, inflation spiralling to one million per cent, food shortages, widespread hunger and malnutrition, violence, criminal gangs, with the government and military the seat of drug running, and other crimes.

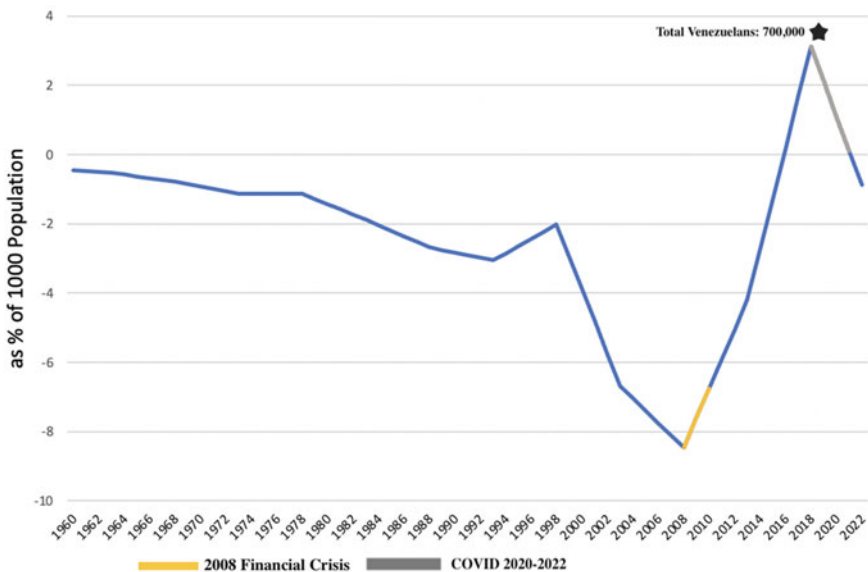


Fig. 30.1 Perú: Net migration rates, 1960–2022

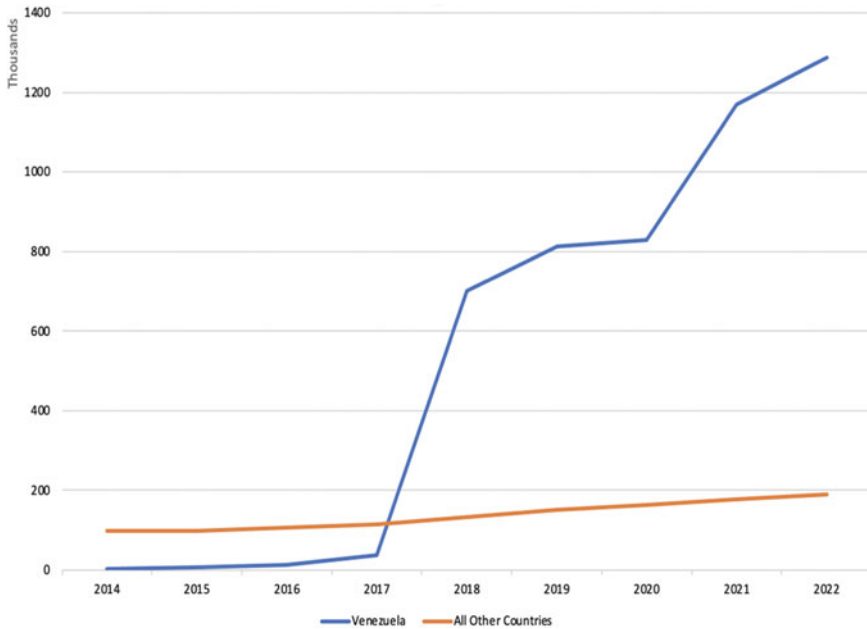


Fig. 30.2 Venezuelan migrants to Perú vs. all other migrants, 2014–2022

Most internal and international migration is broadly considered to fall into the category of voluntary migrants, typically moving in search of economic opportunities, for family reunification, and/or for education (Castles et al., 2005). In contrast, involuntary or forced migration is more applicable to the current Venezuelan crisis. Reed, Ludwig, and Braslow (Reed et al., 2016) define forced migration “as coerced or involuntary movement from one’s home”. Involuntary migration is understood within the United Nations system as coming from four broad types of which Venezuela constitutes the first type:

- Conflict-induced displaced migrants;
- Environmental- or disaster-induced displacement;
- Human trafficking;
- Development-induced displacement such as the construction of dams (Reed et al., 2016).

According to Stankovic, Ecke, and Wirtz, forced migration refers to the “forcibly induced migration of people, for example, when migrants are forced to flee to escape conflict or persecution or become trafficked” (Stankovic et al., 2021). By 2018, the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights

(IACHR) and the Organisation of American States had issued Resolution 2/18 clearly placing Venezuela in the category of forced migration, due to the “massive” violations of human rights, violence, and insecurity (IACHR and OAS, February 2018). The IACHR stated that not only the massive violations of human rights but also the internal economic and health crisis that Venezuela has been facing as a result of the shortage of food and medicines were factors for which, hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans were *forced to migrate* to other countries in the region as a survival strategy (IACHR and OAS, February 2018).

Three Phases of Venezuelan Migration

The first “wave” of Venezuelan migrants was visible in the capital city of Lima in large numbers by 2015. These waves multiplied yearly with the exception of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic led to border closures for nearly a year. By 2022, the number of Venezuelan migrants in Perú reached nearly 1.3 million (87% of all immigrants) dwarfing all other migrants who numbered only 200,000 (Fig. 30.2).

The scale and the profile of these migrants—their age, gender, education, and whether they migrated with family members or alone—would change markedly in just seven years. Forced migration from Venezuela coincided and was shaped by the country’s political turmoil and ongoing administrative instability (Paredes & Encinas, 2020). Since 2015, Perú’s executive branch of government has been ruled by six different presidents. In 2020 alone, Perú had three different heads of State. The last six presidents of Perú have been either investigated or convicted for corruption-related charges.

The objective and content of Perú’s migration policy can be most accurately described in three historical phases that followed the ups and downs of Peruvian politics: Phase 1 (2015–late 2018), Phase 2 (late 2018–March 2020), and Phase 3—COVID-19 (March 2020–2023+).

Phase I: 2015–18: Relative Openness to Relatively Fewer Numbers

Perú had substantially modernised its legal framework for migrants and refugees well before the start of the Venezuelan crisis. In 2002, Perú renewed its law regarding refugees, endorsing the Cartagena Declaration’s definition of refugee status, which defines refugees as persons who have fled their countries

or origin if their lives, safety, or freedom has been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order (Law n.º 27.891, 2002, art. 3). The definition of refugee under the Cartagena Declaration expands on the 1951 Refugee Convention, which had predominantly relied on persecution as the key element to determine refugee status (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). By 2015, Perú had already signed and ratified major international conventions related to the protection of migrants. Many experts believed the country remained faithful to Latin America's exceptionalism regarding political asylum (Blouin, 2021).

In 2015, under the government of Ollanta Humala, Perú adopted a National Migration Policy which guaranteed a relative openness to immigrants, reforming the State's migration infrastructure, and increasing frontier controls among its measures (Decree n.º 1236, 2015). This landmark decree coincided with the first wave of highly skilled and educated Venezuelan migrants arriving in Perú. Perú's 2015 National Migration Policy, however, was never truly implemented confronting both legislative and administrative obstacles. During the last year of the Humala presidency corruption-related scandals overwhelmed the capacity of the government to promote implementation of many policies, including the National Migration Policy (Quiñón et al., 2016).

The election of Pedro Pablo Kuczynski to the presidency in 2016 marked the start of Perú's more open-door policy to Venezuelan migrants, in line with a dramatic change in the country's foreign policy in opposition to the Maduro regime in Venezuela (Vidarte, 2018). In contrast to the Humala administration's ambiguity and neutrality towards the Venezuelan government, Kuczynski was adamant in denouncing human rights conditions in Venezuela and he started a regional movement to oppose the Maduro regime (Freier & Parent, 2018). The Kuczynski government created the Lima Group in 2017 to bring together regional pressure on the Maduro government. He also expelled the Venezuelan ambassador from Perú (Arcarazo Acosta et al., 2019).

Most importantly, six months after arriving to the presidency Kuczynski enacted the decree providing the Temporary Permanence Permit (hereinafter "PTP"). The PTP granted Venezuelans two years of stay and could serve as a pathway to achieve legal residence. The measure provided for the permanence of Venezuelan migrants, allowing them access to health, education most importantly employment (Supreme Decree N. 002, 2017). This first version had very flexible requirements covering Venezuelans whether they

entered regularly or irregularly. The PTP was widely regarded as an accommodating move in support of migrant inclusion in Perú (Blouin & Freier, 2019, Wolfe, 2021). The PTP granted Venezuelans two years of stay and was to serve as a pathway to achieve legal residence. The PTP was renewed four times during Kuczynski's presidency. During this period, the Kuczynski administration, in particular, framed Perú's policy as one honouring how Venezuelans welcomed Peruvians during Perú's political crises of the 70 s and 80 s (Gestión, 2018).¹

Even though Perú had its own economic troubles post-2015, economic studies indicate that immigrant labour has been well accommodated in the economy largely given the underlying positive economic conditions in Perú in the first years of the Venezuelan migrant crisis. Vera and Jimenez find in the specific case of Venezuelans in Perú that there was no negative impact on wages for native Peruvians. They find that the pre-2019 labour market absorbed migrant labour quite well but that was done principally by expanding jobs in the informal sector. So, although the net employment effect in Perú was positive, the growth was nearly all in informal employment (Boruchowicz et al., 2021). Perú's early national policy approach of creating a new migration instrument, the PTP, was not granted under the framework of international protection based on refugee status or asylum. Instead, it was a broader instrument intended to favour social integration and economic development of Venezuelans in Perú. In this early stage (2015–18), Perú's early openness to Venezuelan migrants was considered the "most accommodating" of all the South American receiving nations (Blouin, 2021; Selee et al., 2019; Wolfe, 2021). Perú's regional leadership towards Venezuela ended abruptly with the tumultuous fall and resignation of President Kuczynski amid a corruption-related scandal. The subsequent two phases of Peruvian migration policy would lead to substantial backtracking from its lauded initial policy.

Phase II: Late 2018–March 2020: Greater Legal Restrictions, Numbers, and Exclusion

Martin Vizcarra replaced Kuczynski as president of Perú in March 2018. From the beginning of his presidency Vizcarra signalled he would be undoing Perú's accommodating policy towards Venezuelan migrants, in particular making work authorisation more difficult to qualify for through a series of changes to the PTP. Gone from public discourse was the idea that better economic and social integration of Venezuelans would be good for Perú. In August 2018, the government introduced Decree 007 which moved up the deadline to request the PTP from 30 June 2019 to 31 December 2018

(Republic of Perú, 2018). That decree also provided that the PTP could only be requested if the entry to Peruvian territory was made before 31 October 2018. Later in October 2018, the government enacted a resolution requiring the submission of a valid passport as a requirement to access the PTP (Resolution N. 00000270), knowing full well that the Maduro government was collapsing bureaucratically and no longer issuing passport renewals.²

The increasing restrictions did not have the impact on reducing migratory flows that the Vizcarra government intended. Venezuelan migration to Perú surged past the half million mark to 700,000 by the end of 2018 (Fig. 30.2) driven by the external factors of forced migration. The Vizcarra government added to the bureaucratic burdens on the Peruvian government by failing to provide additional resources or infrastructure to process migrants under its more complicated requirements. President Vizcarra stated publicly in an interview with CNN in 2018 that Perú had reached its limits and capacity to host Venezuelan migrants, ignoring its own role in enacting requirements without resources to carry them out (CNN, 2018).

In 2019, the Vizcarra administration launched the ironically-named “Operation Safe Migration”, going even further in restricting legal immigration and setting difficult-to-meet requirements to enter Peru legally. This policy had two principal measures. First, it created a specialised police force in charge of deporting all Venezuelan migrants that committed crimes. It also required all Venezuelan migrants wishing to enter Perú to apply for a Humanitarian Visa (Republic of Perú, 2019). The humanitarian visa required Venezuelans to present a valid passport and a certificate of criminal records that had to be duly notarised and apostilled before leaving Venezuela. There were only two Peruvian consulates in Venezuela that could process humanitarian visas, alongside three more in Colombia (Bogotá, Leticia, and Medellín) and five consulates in Ecuador (Guayaquil, Quito, Cuenca, Machala, and Loja).

The onerous requirement to possess a valid passport and go through additional procedures and qualifications for a humanitarian visa led to a surge in Venezuelan migrants asking for refugee status and asylum as the only alternatives to legally enter Perú (Camino & López Montreuil, 2020). Overnight, asylum and refugee claims skyrocketed and again the Vizcarra government was both unprepared, making no provision to handle increased claims. Venezuelans who went through the lengthy process in Perú found that the vast majority of claims were denied, even though Venezuelans fit refugee and asylum requirements under international norms. A report of the Peruvian

Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed Perú received 158,311 refugee applications from Venezuelans in 2019, 548 were denied and 497 were approved, which represents just 0.3% in acceptance rate (Morales Tovar, 2019).

The enormous increase in refugee/asylum requests put a spotlight on how fragile and unprepared Perú's refugee/asylum infrastructure was. Weak implementation infrastructure is a noted common feature in Latin America despite the existence of robust legal mechanisms (Gandini et al., 2020). In the case of Perú, the asylum process was set up to take just 60 days (Camino & Montreuil, 2020).

Seeing that Ecuador had become the largest point of entry to Perú, the Vizcarra government tried to patch that hole by adding a new pre-screening application at the border through Ecuador (Camino & López Montreuil, 2020). Peruvian border authorities could now refuse entry to asylum seekers while their central office staff reviewed the request for asylum/refugee status. Perú's actions were viewed by many international NGOs and human rights advocates as being contrary to not only the Refugee Convention of 1951 (which prohibits the return or rejection at the border of asylum seekers), but also the Cartagena Declaration whose spirit had been at least embraced by Peruvian law (Amnesty International, 2020).

By early 2020, even before the COVID-19 health crisis hit, the Vizcarra government increased public attacks on Venezuelan migrants, claiming the need for greater security and border control. He promoted a hardline policy to deport Venezuelan migrants that had committed crimes, even the most minor ones. Venezuelan migrants were easy targets of the now poorly performing economy, and the negative stereotyping of Venezuelan migrants would be further accelerated once the COVID-19 crisis hit.

Phase III: March 2020–2023: Dual Health and Migration Crises with Deteriorating Conditions for Migrants

On the 15th of March 2020, the Peruvian government declared a strict State of Emergency lockdown with rising cases of COVID-19 (Republic of Perú, 2020b). Under the State of Emergency, a mandatory quarantine was enacted, and all travel was suspended by the closure of land, air, and water borders to both foreigners and Peruvian nationals. Venezuelan migration flows did dramatically decrease. What is not known is how many migrants came across porous land borders evading border control during the early COVID period. Vizcarra steered an early strict lockdown of COVID-19, but it was not able to prevent the later soaring deaths on an overwhelmed, fragile hospital system, and now collapsing economy.

Under lockdown, Venezuelan migrants who had lost the legal right to work under Phase II were now principally working in the informal sector, suddenly cut off from any way to earn a daily living as open markets were not operating. While international organisations tried to step in and help, migrants were not eligible to receive nationwide emergency cash transfers enacted by the government (Republic of Perú., 2020a) as they were in most countries of South America except for greater limitations in Chile. The national identity document (DNI) was used to qualify as a beneficiary of the cash assistance programme. Individuals with a DNI number could receive the allotted 320 soles (about \$115) a month but few qualified (Mazza & Forero Villareal, 2020).

To access the national health system, the SIS (*Seguro de Salud Integral*), migrants were required to have legal status (at least temporary residence) or a Foreign Identification Card (*Carta de Extranjera*), except for those under five. Migrants could buy into the SIS system, but few of them could afford this. In theory, access to emergency medical assistance for those with COVID-19 was provided under an extraordinary national government measure. Nevertheless, many health providers continued to request the national identity document (DNI) or simply refused services to Venezuelans (Levaggi & Freier, 2022; Mazza & Forero Villareal, 2020).

Housing conditions for Venezuelan migrants also deteriorated greatly during the pandemic, as many were in precarious housing, without a rental contract and were thus not often protected from eviction (Mazza & Forero Villareal, 2020). Statistics indicate that in both 2018 and 2019 at least 94% of Venezuelan migrants in Perú were living in rented, many daily-rate housing (INEI, 2018). The Peruvian Ombudsperson reported in 2020 that due to the pandemic at least 39% of Venezuelans in Perú were at risk of losing their housing (República del Perú, Defensoría del Pueblo, 2020). The Peruvian government remained silent and inactive regarding evictions of Venezuelans which placed more Venezuelans on the streets during lockdowns.

In October of 2020, the government introduced the Temporary Permit Carnet (CPT) which allowed Venezuelan migrants to remain legally in Peruvian territory for one year during the health crisis. According to the Decree of 2020, the CTP must be renewed annually, and it allows Venezuelans access to health, education, and labour services. The CTP, however, had provisions discouraging its use. Venezuelans had to register and pay a fee, including an additional penalty fee for those that have overstayed their visas in Perú before the pandemic period. Despite appearing to be a similar measure to the PTP of the Kuczynski administration, the additional penalty fee was regarded by many as a particular burden to an already vulnerable population

and penalised migrants who were not able to qualify for legal residence under Perú's difficult to comply with requirements (e.g. valid Venezuelan passport).

President Vizcarra played into the growing xenophobia against Venezuelans portraying migrants as criminals and carriers of COVID-19 (Aron & Castillo, 2020; Freier & Perez, 2021). Echoing the voices of Perú's leadership, the pandemic led to an increase in xenophobia against Venezuelan migrants (Freier et al., 2021; Winter, 2020). Several congressmen introduced limits on the rights of Venezuelan migrants. In 2020, a draft law was presented in the Peruvian Congress for Perú to reject and withdraw its support from the UN Migration Compact of 2018 (de la Vega et al., 2021). The increased xenophobia had little to do with evidence, a 2021 survey, for example, found that the largest immigrant areas of Lima and Callao had lower levels of non-violent crime than non-immigrant dominated areas (Boruchowicz et al., 2021).

In November of 2020, the dramatic death toll from the pandemic and continued internal political turmoil led to President Vizcarra's ousting by vote of Congress. Rather than abate, political turmoil now focused on how a succession would proceed. The incumbent president of Congress remained the interim president until elections were held in 2021. During this time, the Peruvian government did begin vaccinations, including of some Venezuelan migrants and the more systematic application of the CTP.

The 2021 elections pitted an extreme left and an extreme right candidate both of whom espoused xenophobic views of Venezuelan migrants. The winning candidate of the left, Pedro Castillo, publicly tied Venezuelan migrants to COVID-19, insecurity, and crime. When Castillo took office in July 2021, he made the situation of Venezuelan migrants even more precarious by restoring diplomatic relations with Venezuela and signalling a friendlier, less critical policy towards Maduro. The Castillo government did extend the CTP in 2022 to last two years, but this was more a bureaucratic measure rather than an attempt to improve conditions for Venezuelan migrants.

Economic and health recovery was undermined amidst growing political paralysis, and Venezuelan migrants were portrayed as part of the problem. After months of continuous changes in his cabinet and several failed impeachment votes, Castillo announced the closure of Congress in December 2021. Castillo's announcement, however, rallied most members of Congress to finally vote in favour of his impeachment accompanied by his dramatic removal from power and imprisonment on charges of conspiracy and rebellion.

The Congress named the former Vice-President, Dina Boluarte to replace Castillo. Boluarte's interim government has not been recognised by several

key actors in the region, including Colombia and Mexico. Domestic turmoil in Perú only worsened with tens of thousands of Peruvians protesting against the new government and its legitimacy. Boluarte's tough response to protests has been widely condemned by international organisations, national and international human rights NGOs (UN News, 2023). Domestic turmoil has overwhelmed national policy and economic recovery, migration policy being but a subset of these.

The Boluarte government introduced a National Development and Social Inclusion Policy (PNDIS) 2030 with the goal of reducing poverty to 15% in seven years. This Plan, although it recognises migration as a key issue, did not introduce any specific measure to support the inclusion of migrants (La Republica, 2023). Perú's restrictive migration policies (with some adjustments made to the COVID-19 crisis with the CTP) even if faithfully carried out would have required resources, attention to good management, and the ability to seek help from international authorities or its own small NGO community; none of these steps were undertaken.

Migration Management: How Well Did It Work?

The mass migration of millions of Venezuelans to South America represents a historic challenge for all South American receiving nations. In recognition of the extraordinary crisis presented by forced migration from Venezuela, the United Nations created a unique platform in 2018, the Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform (R4V). R4V became the principal source of both regional data and information on the crisis unfolding in the region and helped guide, coordinate aid, and identify needs for international assistance in the key receiving nations (see below). Migratory management after 2018 thus became a combination of national government policies and programmes and a combination of international, national, and coordinated assistance to support Venezuelan migrants in destination countries.

Perú's national migration policies, as documented above, changed dramatically from an accommodating migration policy in Phase I to restrictive and often counterproductive policies in Phases II and III, intended to discourage inflows by enacting difficult-to-meet legal entry criteria and bureaucratic delays. In Phase III, the restrictive policies interacted with the onset of COVID-19 policies and deepening national political crises, the combination of which led to deteriorating living conditions for barely-surviving Venezuelan migrants and a near breakdown of migration management by bureaucratic inaction.

This section explores in more detail the component parts of “how well” Perú’s migration management went in Phases II and III as more and poorer Venezuelans were forced out of their country. It reviews key studies, surveys, and analyses regarding Perú’s bureaucratic and administrative management approach, particularly in terms of discouragement of migrant flows, bureaucratic demands on its public sector, migration policy outcomes, and impacts on Venezuelan migrants themselves. It also reviews Perú’s limited use of both international assistance and international coordination under RV4 which further undermined Perú’s ability to cope with mass migration.

Administrative Burdens and Policy Dysfunction

As the size of the Venezuelan migrant population exceeded all expectations by 2017–18, new bureaucratic and hard-to-meet eligibility requirements were put in place by President Vizcarra as described under Phase II. These heavy requirements were put in place with neither additional resources nor staff nor streamlined procedures. Many analysts argue this may have been intentional, a policy designed not to work as a way to discourage Venezuelans from entering the country in the first place.

There is no evidence that the increased “bureaucratic burdens approach” discouraged Venezuelans from entering Perú. Ecuador and Chile also enacted migration restrictions at the same time, so Venezuelans could not be expected to be easily diverted to a neighbouring country based on news of particular country’s legal work requirements. The factors of forced migration, compelling Venezuelans to leave—political repression, hunger, collapse of health, and other basic institutions—were not responsive to a set of restrictive policies that would more appropriate for voluntary migration.

The principal impacts of Peru’s difficult to comply with administrative policy were instead on i) a massive increase in the number (and percentage) of Venezuelans crossing over non-official land borders and ii) increases in those “illegally” working and residing in Perú. Irregularity increased from just 10% of all Venezuelans before late 2018 to over 50% afterwards (Chaves-González et al., 2021).

Despite increased restrictions on legal migration, Perú quickly became the number two destination country for Venezuelan migrants after Colombia. Venezuelans were particularly drawn into informal work in the cities of Lima and Callao as part of a growing diaspora of Venezuelans around Lima. Perú advanced ahead of Chile as number two beginning in April 2018 and every year thereafter, even though the biggest restrictions on migration began in December 2018 (RV4, 2022).

By enacting bureaucratic burdens to legal residence and cancelling the PTP work permit of President Kuzinski, Perú created another bureaucratic burden for itself—a “flood” of new political asylum claims they were unprepared to process. Asylum claims (for which Venezuelans qualified under international definitions) became the only viable option to those without valid passports. As with its other migration policy changes, the Vizcarra administration did not provide additional resources or capacity to handle the increased political asylum claims.

Despite Perú’s refugee law which states a decision on political asylum should be granted within 60 days of presentation of the request (Republic of Perú, 2002), by 2019, less than 1% of asylum claims were processed and Venezuelans were waiting up to two years for their claims to be considered (Guerrero et al., 2020). On humanitarian visas, Venezuelan applicants have waited up to 4 years to get a response to their humanitarian visa application, a response that was typically negative (Morales, 2019). As of January 2022, Perú’s Special Commission for Refugees reported that of the 615,771 applicants for refugee status; of which the vast majority were Venezuelans, only 4125 Venezuelan citizens have been recognised with refugee status (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2022). Perú’s Ombudpersons’s Office found that immigration and police authorities were simply not advancing the processing of refugee applications, despite the national legislative requirements (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2022).

Limited Reliance on International Coordination (RV4)

With the rapid expansion of Venezuelan migration into a regional crisis, the United Nations Secretary-General called for the IOM and UNHCR to co-lead and coordinate multilateral assistance to the key receiving nations.³ In April 2018, the R4V regional response platform was created and headquartered in Colombia. The RV4 regional coordination mechanism links the key relevant United Nations agencies and international donors, and provides up-to-date assessments of migrant needs, numbers, and profiles of migrants. In addition, R4V became a multilevel management platform that also incorporated domestic and local organisations involved in the protection of migrants creating a novel hybrid system between international, national, and non-governmental organisations.

Each receiving nation in the Latin American and Caribbean region creates a “chapter” affiliated with RV4, and that national RV4 chapter can have very different relations and reliance on the help of RV4. The chapters are

made up of distinct organisations of the UN, non-governmental organisations working throughout Latin America to support Venezuelan migrants, the Catholic Church, and other organisations. State entities from the local, regional, and national level are often invited to assist at the meetings of the RV4.

The organisations that are members of the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Perú are active in poverty alleviation in Perú (CARE, Save the Children, *Ayuda en Acción*, World Vision). Levaggi and Freier noted that Perú had a smaller, less active NGO community pushing for greater inclusion of Venezuelan migrants which undermined both advocacy for national policy and for greater use of international resources (Levaggi & Freier, 2022).

Perú has not actively sought high levels of financing nor has finance tracked well the dramatic increase of needs as Venezuelan migrants topped over 1 million from 2019 onwards. While all countries face levels of underfunding relative to RV4’s estimated needs, Perú’s financing deficits are considered particularly severe. In 2022, only 17% (\$52.7 million) of the estimated \$304 million needed has been granted via the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform. (RV4, November 2022; Fig. 30.3).

Perú’s lower levels of financing have been attributed in large part to its own foreign policy positions. Levaggi and Freier argue that Perú has shunned the level of international support that Colombia embraced in the Venezuelan crisis (Levaggi & Freier, 2022). They point out this trend can be traced back to the presidency of Alan Garcia who rejected large-scale international aid as a symbol that Perú had advanced beyond its third world country status.

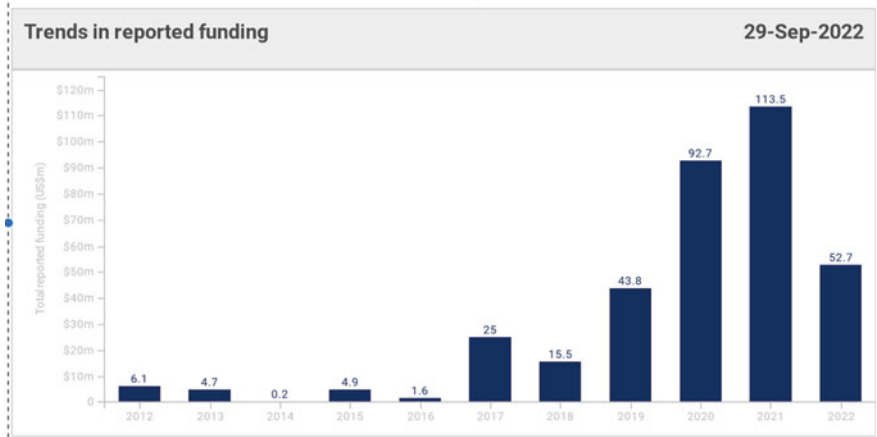


Fig. 30.3 International funding received by Perú for the Venezuelan migrant crisis

Additionally, RV4's platform was introduced by the time Kuczynski's government had already ended. At this point for Perú, the Vizcarra government's less open approach to migration reflected a low priority to seek funding provided through RV4. With limited national state capacity itself, Perú further constrained the effectiveness of even its more restrictive policies by not drawing sufficiently on international resources and its own non-governmental community. Local governments such as the city of Lima, already strapped by the COVID-19 crisis, were left to sort out responsibilities more rationally allocated to national governments.

Deteriorating Economic and Social Impacts on Migrants Despite Labour Market Effects

In contrast to the negative rhetoric of Phases II and III, a range of scholarly works and economic analysis found that Perú largely accommodated migrant labour and that it contributed to the countries' growth, particularly best during Phase I. The Peruvian Central Bank assessed in 2019 that migrants had contributed. 3% to GDP growth and had a net positive impact on the country's fiscal balance. The study determined these impacts were positive despite the country's 2015 slowdown (IMF, 2020). The World Bank calculated a net positive economic contribution both to the economy and the Treasury of \$365 million by 2019 (Rossiasco Uscategui, 2019). The study posited three pathways through which these results might have come: (i) from the increase in local demand for services (e.g. food, clothing, restaurants to serve migrants); (ii) from the "freeing" up Peruvian women to seek higher wage work as Venezuelans occupied a greater percentage of the lower wage informal work; and, (iii) from potentially higher productivity in the informal sector as higher skilled Venezuelans were likely more productive in these informal jobs (Boruchowicz et al., 2021). Morales and Pierola of the Interamerican Development Bank found that the economic effects on Perú were positive but generally low, except for significant effects on low-income Peruvian women, perhaps again from greater sales and being able to move up in earnings (Morales & Pierola, 2020).

The combination of the particular deleterious effects of COVID-19 on migrants and less widely available services for migrants as discussed in Phase III led to a dramatic increase in precarious daily life for migrants. Of the 1.3 million Venezuelans in Perú in January 2022, UNHCR (United Nations Commission on Refugees) estimated that 810,000 of them (over 60%) were in conditions of extreme vulnerability and require greater support in food, health, shelter, and daily living (UNHCR, January 2022). The existing

high informality—over 70%—combined with low legalisation rates of migrants resulting from Phase II and III policies—led to an extraordinary rate of over 90% of Venezuelan migrants ending up working in the informal sector or self-employed before COVID-19 hit; informality that only increased as a result of the pandemic (Mazza & Forero Villareal, 2020). Multiple studies have linked the lack of legal status for migrants in Perú to their high presence in low-skilled informal work and limited benefits, leading to poorer socio-economic conditions overall (CIUP, 2020; Koechlin et al., 2019).

The high vulnerability and informality of Venezuelans led to significant labour exploitation according to Blouin and Freier (Blouin & Freier, 2019). Migrants faced different types of discrimination with different impacts by gender (Boruchowicz et al., 2021). For example, a World Bank study found particularly discrimination in public transit against female migrants and in public places against all migrants, with males having a higher rate of discrimination than females (Boruchowicz et al., 2021).

The children of Venezuelan migrants faced increasing problems to access education even though it was in theory guaranteed to them under Peruvian law. Key problems cited identified were the lack of space in schools to include migrant children, delays in getting certification of their grades from Venezuela or taking a placement exam, and poor information given to migrant parents regarding the eligibility of their children (Blouin, 2019). A Save the Children survey in late 2021 found nearly one-quarter of Venezuelan migrant children in Lima and la Libertad do not go to school (OCHA, 2021).

Misaligned Migration Policy and Its Alternatives

To conclude, it is important to remember that Perú was dealt an extremely difficult, and unpredictable hand with the mass influx of forced migrants from Venezuela. There simply is no precedent in South America for the size of such flows and then a health crisis the scale of the COVID pandemic.

After successfully accommodating the first, and comparatively smaller wave of migrants under Phase 1, Perú switched to restrictive strategies, promoted by its political leadership yet without the national capacity nor resources to carry out even what it said were its policies. Perú's more restrictive approach was "poorly adaptive" (Aron & Castillo, 2020) both to forced migration flows as well as to creating more workable social services delivery particularly in the time of a health crisis. The road not taken would have fostered better economic integration of migrant talents, expand and strengthen its institutions, relying more heavily on an expanded non-governmental sector

and international community and taking more care not to create highly discriminatory treatment of such a large group of migrants. Levaggi and Freier explain how Perú's policy choices turned counterproductive: "The country's new immigration law [late 2018] lacks institutional consolidation and there is no strong civil society to act as a counterweight to restrictive policy developments" (Levaggi & Freier, 2022, 311).

Accommodating migrants on a mass scale was not in Perú's modern historical experience as it had been for neighbouring Argentina, although Perú did have a post-colonial experience to draw on. Argentina was able to do a better job at integrating Venezuelans, albeit at smaller numbers (Levaggi and Freier, 2022). Argentina had learned the lessons of how legal status, institutional capacity, and labour market and social integration of migrants can contribute to national well-being. Perú's approach was the opposite. It restricted legal status with virtually no impact on diminishing flows, merely increasing the precariousness of Venezuelans living in Perú and reducing more positive impacts on the economy. Levaggi and Freier note that Argentina was better able to integrate Venezuelan refugees for three reasons: smaller numbers and higher socio-economic characteristics of Venezuelans, a progressive legislative framework, and the prominent role of civil society actors in pushing for more inclusive public policies (Levaggi & Freier, 2022).

Perú's policy became more misaligned to better socio-economic performance as migration levels rose. A more productive use of resources would be to invest in more universal migration management and better integration of migrants in the local economy. A less burdensome administrative alternative would have been to grant migration status based on group or country-based criteria rather than individual, case-by-case proceedings. Other South American countries used more group-based criteria with greater administrative ease; Brazil determined a priori that all Venezuelans were designated refugees. Colombia, the country with the greatest number of Venezuelans by far, took the bold step of granting all Colombian Temporary Protective Status (TPS) (Freier et al., 2021). The group-based designation enabled Colombia to register over 900,000 Venezuelans for 10-year TPS work and residency status just by mid-2022 (*Migración Colombia*, 2022).

De Haas has written about the importance of states in shaping favourable conditions for a positive developmental role for migration (De Haas, 2010). While the education levels of Venezuelan migrants decreased overtime in Perú, the overall high level of education represented a "brain bonus" to Perú that was not taken advantage of. Adequate state capacity to advance development via migration includes fiscal resources, administrative capacity, technical knowledge, legal and political capacity, and territorial control (Cingolani,

2013). The World Bank and others argue that what most helps determine positive economic impact are the conditions in destination countries and Perú was in a favourable moment in the early phase of Venezuelan migration with a complementary migration policy (Boruchowicz et al., 2021). This World Bank study argued that Perú's high informality rate, typically considered a liability, gave the country greater flexibility to deal with the shock of migrant influxes.

Perú remains something of an outlier in South America, undertaking a comparatively limited range of state actions to integrate or accommodate the escalating migrant population. Cynthia Aronson of the Wilson Center noted that Colombia and Ecuador are proceeding with integration policies at a much faster pace than Perú (Arnson, 2019). Perú does provide international experience in the contrasting lessons between its Phase I and its Phases II–III policies, two periods that contrasted both in “how” and “how well” it responded to forced migration from Venezuela. Today, Peru remains a contrast between what could have been a greater contributory role to economic growth and humanitarian outreach rather than a policy approach more associated with a mass of marginalised informal workers, maligned by Perú's political leadership. Learning how to advance national development while adapting to large migration flows is becoming ever relevant to the Global South as they face the out-of-size role human migration now plays in the twenty-first century.

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Notes

1. See also “Entrevista al presidente de la República Pedro Pablo Kuczynski,” 2018, *TV Perú*, 5 de marzo.
2. This last restriction was challenged in court as discriminatory and violating the rights of Venezuelan migrants to access international protection. The Peruvian courts ultimately upheld the legality of the resolution (Costa Checa, 2021).
3. R4V stands for the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela <https://rv4.info>.

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