

Receiving our “Venezuelan brothers”:
*Understanding Responses to Displaced Venezuelans
in Colombia and Brazil*

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Introduction

Receiving our “Venezuelan Brothers”: *Understanding Responses to Displaced Venezuelans in Colombia and Brazil*

- More than **5 million** displaced Venezuelans abroad. Most of them are displaced due to ‘**massive violations of human rights.**’
- 15 countries in the region have incorporated the **1984 Cartagena Declaration** into their laws, but employ its ‘expanded’ refugee definition very selectively (Reed-Hurtado, 2013).
- A **plethora of factors influence countries’ responses** to mass refugee influxes (domestic politics, international assistance, foreign policy, etc.) (Jacobsen, 1996).
- **UNHCR official guidance** (2018 and 2019).

Introduction

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- **The ‘Venezuelan brothers’ discourse:** Both presidents Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil, 2019-) and Iván Duque (Colombia, 2018-) have referred to displaced Venezuelans as their ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ several times.



Jair M. Bolsonaro ✓
@jairbolsonaro

¡Fuerza a nuestros hermanos venezolanos! ¡Dios al mando! 🇧🇷 🇻🇪

[Translate Tweet](#)

12:59 PM · Feb 23, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

24.4K Retweets **1,047** Quote Tweets **98.3K** Likes

The study

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Impetus for research comes from Freier et al. (2020, p.9):

‘Future research should seek to explain this implementation gap and the variance in the policy responses between countries in the region, taking into consideration the critical literature on the limitations and contradictions of Latin America’s “progressive” approach to immigration and refugee matters.’

Case selection

- **Colombia** (hosts 1.8 m. Venezuelans)
- **Brazil** (hosts 300,000 Venezuelans)

Questions

- How have these countries responded to the arrival of displaced Venezuelans?
- **Which factors influenced their responses?**



Methodology

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Process tracing

1

Analysis of the intermediate steps in policymaking



2

Comprehension of the sequence and values of the analyzed variables

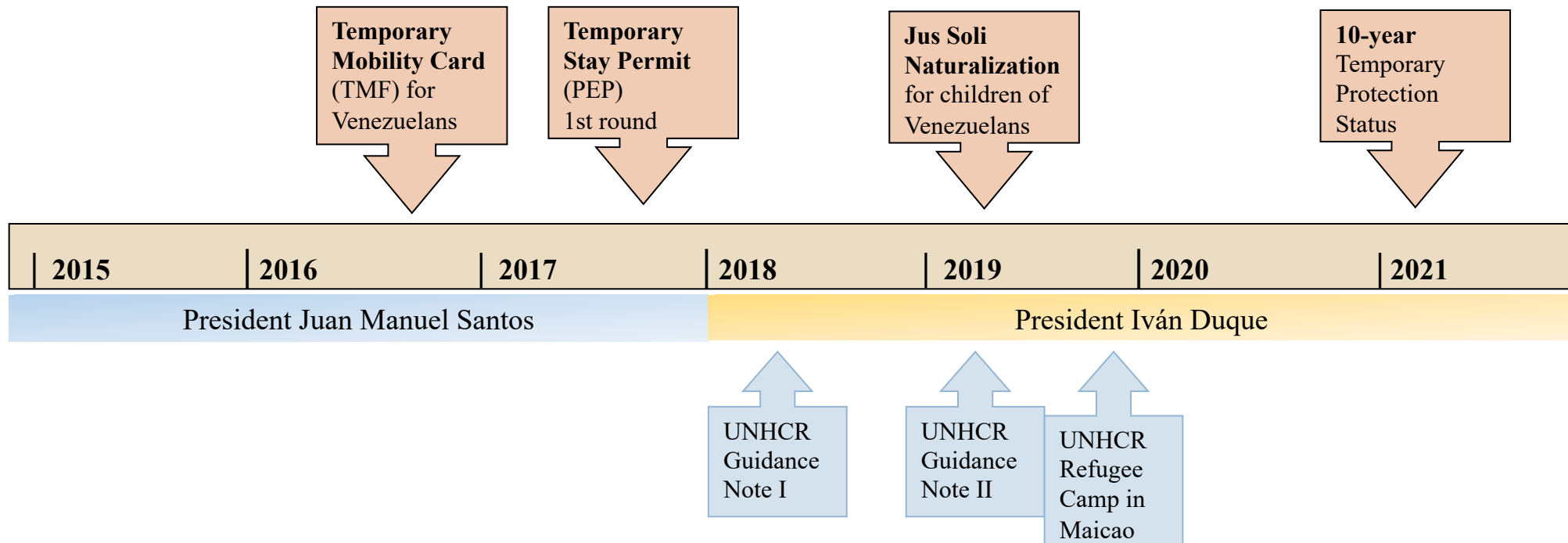
(Amalgamation of primary sources, such as official reports, interview transcripts, and meeting minutes)

Results

- Brazil: OK
- **Colombia: (still ongoing)**
 - ❑ Less available sources (e.g. reports from the refugee bureaucracy)

Responses in Colombia

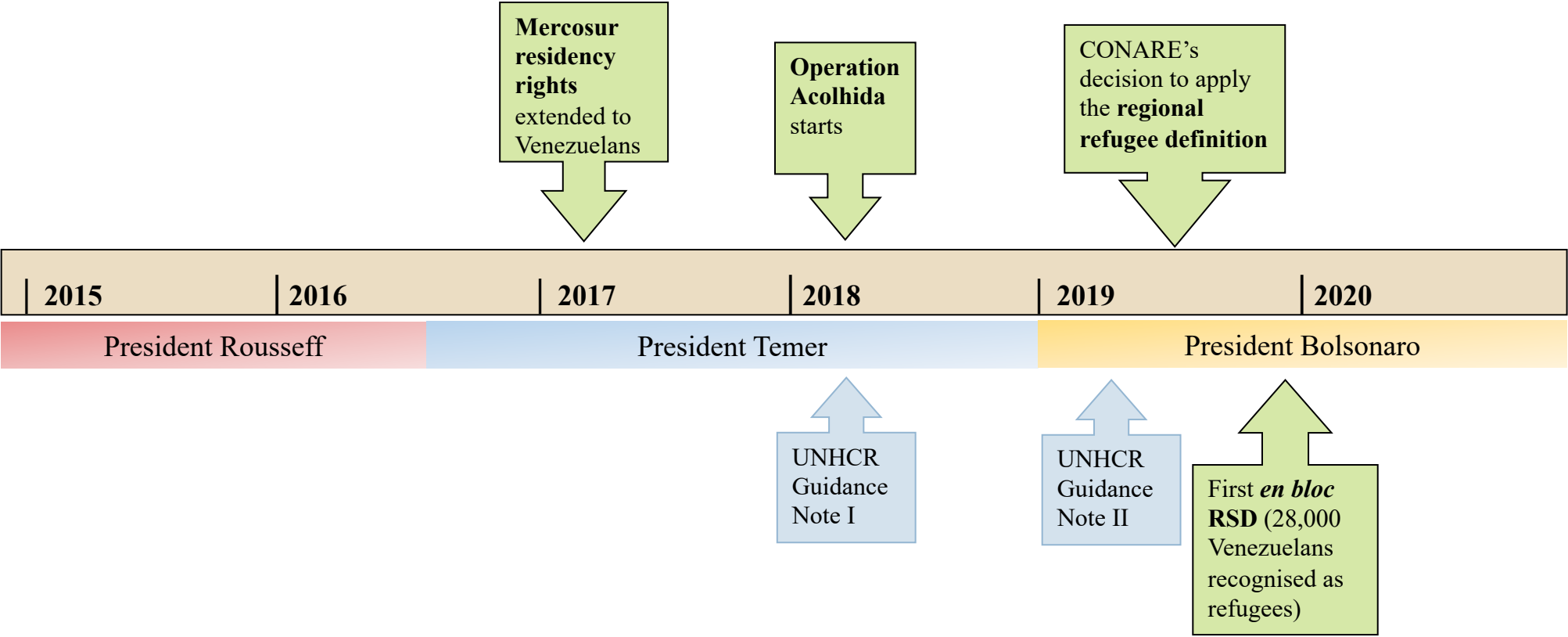
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- **Is access to asylum being restricted?** (approx. 11,000 applications)

Responses in Brazil

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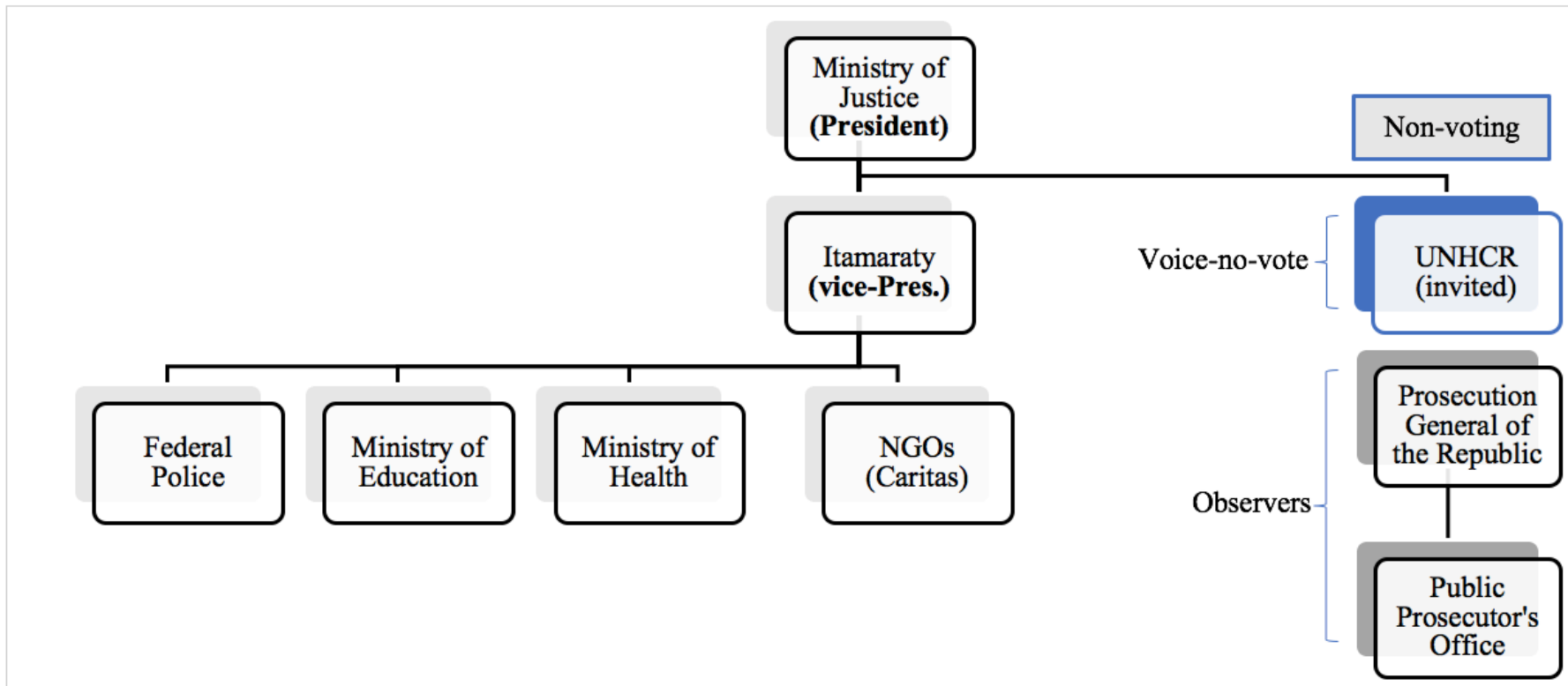


- Currently **presides UNHCR's ExCom**

Responses in Brazil

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Figure 2: Structure of CONARE



Source: Adapted from MoJ (2021)

Interpreting Responses and Discrepancies

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Similarities

Both countries...

- (i) Have **porous borders** with Venezuela
- (ii) Receive sizable **international assistance**, particularly from UNHCR
- (iii) Have **deteriorated relations** with the Maduro-led government

Differences

Colombia...

- (i) **Is transitioning from a country of displacement to a major country of asylum**
- (ii) **Host almost 10x the number of Venezuelans** Brazil does
- (iii) **Is also dealing with return migration** from Venezuela

Brazil...

- (i) **Is less affected by this mass displacement**
- (ii) **Is pursuing leadership in the international refugee regime** and a rotating seat at UNSC (2022-2023)

Cited works

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Thank you

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