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Abstract

This paper examines the process of feminization of South American intra-regional migration, with emphasis in the Southern Cone. It describes recent changes and trends, and addresses some of the most salient issues on the participation and experiences of female migrants. It deals with the social and economic reasons underlying the increasing autonomous migration of women, particularly on the interconnections between the South-American economic restructuring and the increasing demand of female migrants by the service and care sectors. Further issues are examined, such as the potential effects of the migration process on women's empowerment; the emergence of global chains of care and its relation with long-distance motherhood; and the labor market experiences of female migrant. Finally, the report also deals with the dark side of the women's migration: female trafficking.

Keywords: gender, female migration, South American intra-regional migration.

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Introduction

Emigration from Latin American countries has significantly increased during the last two decades. A conservative estimate indicates that in the year 2000 about 4.1 percent of Latin American and Caribbean population live in a different country than their country of birth (ECLAC, 2006). The region, particularly South America, has turned from being an immigration region to one of emigration (Castles and Miller, 2003).

At the turned of the XIX century, South America attracted a massive European immigration¹ as well as inflows from other regions of the world.² After this period, immigration decreased substantially and the largest share of international population movements occurred within the South American region.

Regarding intra-regional migration, two main systems developed with centers in Argentina and Venezuela. The first one, which steeped from 1950's onwards, attracted migrants from neighboring countries (Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and Uruguay). The second one, with its peak in the first half of the 1970's, pulled migrants predominantly from Colombia, and minor flows from other countries in the region.

However since the 1980's a new phase of migration started taking place in the region and emigrants began choosing developed countries as preferred destinations³. This reorientation of migration streams was partly the result of socioeconomic and political processes taking place in many countries of the region (Massey et al. 2005). First the so-called debt crisis and soon after structural adjustment programs and free market reforms altered the structure

¹ According to Lattes (1985) Latin America received about 13.8 million immigrants from 1800 to 1970. The majority of these migrants went to the Southern Cone, particularly to Argentina.

² Brazil received African slaves up to the nineteenth century and Japanese workers until the 1950's

³ It is important to emphasize that since the 1960's highly qualified South Americans have migrated to developed countries in search of better professional opportunities. This phenomenon was conceptualized in the 1960s and the 1970s as "brain drain". Although this type of migration continues, there is a significant debate on its consequences. Today, the discussion on "brain drain" has progressively substituted by proposals to stimulate circulation and interchange ("brain circulation", "brain exchange. See Pellegrino, 2001 and 2002; and Pellegrino and Martinez, 2001.

of opportunities for vast portions of South Americans, stimulating their emigration to more developed countries⁴.

As Castles and Miller (2003) point out, up to the 1990's, the most important factor behind the rise of emigration from the region to developed countries was the declining level of economic performance during the 1980's.⁵ During the nineties the acceleration in emigration in most South American countries –mostly to the developed world, but to a lesser extent to other countries of the region- relates to the effects of the several strong political and economic crisis experienced by them.⁶

Still it is important to point out that increasing international migration has been accompanied by rising flows of capital and goods and facilitated by technological advances in communications, transportation and the growing of large-scale transnational institutions. The emigration of thousands of South Americans with no doubts was eased by lower costs of migration and the increasing presence and complexity of their growing social networks.

The aspiration of a getting a better income is not the only force driving migration as posit by standard frameworks. These perspectives overlook the needs of migrants to seek for a better life. In this sense, and following Amartya Sen's (1999) perspective on development, migration can be recognize as one mean to satisfy freedoms of human development needs (such as nutrition, education, health, etc). For most migrants, therefore, moving to a different country than their own is driven by a search of personal and family development, through a real access to education, vocational training, social protection and effective possibilities of social upward mobility (Castillo, 2003).

From 1980 to 2000, the number of South Americans residing in the United States more than tripled from half million to 1.7 million (Table 1). Yet, as the United States imposed

⁴ See Massey and Capoferro (2006) for the Peruvian case and Magliano (2007) for the Bolivian case.

⁵ The so-called "lost decade" implied for Latin America as a whole a decrease in its GDP of 9.8% between 1981 and 1989. (ECLAC, 1990).

⁶ For Castles and Miller the democratic renewal in the region and a trend toward liberalization of Latin American economies in the early and mid-1990s "briefly buoyed Latin American economies before a succession of economic crises ravaged the area. By 2000, an estimated 78 million out a total of 480 million lived below poverty line" (op.cit., p. 149).

greater restrictions to immigration, Europe particularly Spain emerged as a more viable destination (Martínez Buján and Golías Perez, 2005; Martínez Buján, 2003; Pellegrino, 2004, 2005, 2008). Again, South America migration to Spain and to a lesser extent to Italy is not new⁷ and derives from a series of linkages between these countries.⁸ However the greater permissiveness of Spain towards South American immigration has been recently coming to an end.⁹

Regarding regional migration, even though in relative terms declined, it continues to be significant: in the year 2000, about 2.5 million South American emigrants live in another country within the region. However, it is important to note that data on regional migrant stocks conceals more dynamic changes both in terms of the direction of recent flows and the characteristics of migrants. During the last decade some flows have virtually stopped, others continued but at a slower pace, and a few intensified. New phenomena are emerging as well, such as interlinks between regional migration and emigration to the developed world. A recent study has shown, for example, that migration to Argentina has facilitated migratory movements of Bolivians first to the United States and nowadays to Spain (Hinojosa Gordobava, 2008).

One of the most salient changes in migration from the region is the increasing presence of women among migrants. As in other areas of the world, intra-regional migration is also feminizing. Women migrate to improve their standards of living and to provide for the needs of those left behind. As UNFPA 2006 State of the World Population has put it: “For many women, migration opens doors to a new world of greater equality, relief from oppression and the discrimination that limits freedom and stunts potential. For origin and receiving countries, the contribution of women migrants can quite literally transform

⁷ In the 1970’s many political refugees from Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay went to Europe, particularly to Spain.

⁸ As Massey et al.(2005) state, “the descendants of former Italian and Spanish emigrants to the Americas have taken advantage of liberal entry provisions to gain until 1985, Latin Americans of Spanish ancestry did not need permits to enter Spain and immigrants from its former colonies still receive preferential treatment in gaining visas (Stalker, 1994). Likewise, the children and grandchildren of Italian emigrants to the Americas are still able to exercise historical claims on citizenship to gain entry to Italy.” (p..117).

⁹ Due to the significant increase in unauthorized migration from the region Spain began requiring visas for Ecuadorians in 2003 and for Bolivians in 2007.

quality of life”. Yet, migrant women are more likely to be subject of discrimination and abuses, and frequently due to the nature of their work, their labor goes virtually unnoticed.

Numerous scholars have studied gendered patterns of migration to understand and explain how gender differences and inequalities both in sending and receiving countries shape the experiences and behaviors of men and women. While substantial research has been devoted to examine women’s experiences and gender differences in Latin America migration to developed countries -in particular to the United States and Spain-¹⁰ far less is known for intra-regional migration in the South.

In order to start filling this gap, this paper examines the process of feminization of South American intra-regional migration, with emphasis in the Southern Cone. The general purpose is, first, to depict recent changes and trends, and the role increasing presence of women. Sex-discriminated migration matrixes with South American countries, allows determining major and more dynamic migratory streams and the relative presence of women. Having shown these changes, the paper centers on some of the most significant and dynamic migration streams and examines key aspects of the participation and experiences of female migrants.

A key aspect that is examined deals with the role of women in the migration process and the effects of migration on women’s empowerment. For a long time, they were depicted as passive followers of male migrants and the autonomous migration of women was overlooked. With evidences from previous studies and existing data the paper discusses the heterogeneity of female experiences in migration from Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru to Argentina, three of the currently most significant streams in the region.

¹⁰ During the last twenty years, the growing interest on the issue of female migration, have moved from the initial stage of turning women visible in the migratory process to the venture of understanding how migration and gender systems influence each other. For pioneer works on gender and Latin American migration to the US see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 1984, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992, 1994; Donato, 1993; Goldring, 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Greenwell, Valdez, and DaVanzo,1997; Hagan 1998.

Another and related trait of the context in which female migration relates women's family situation, particularly families' separation and the care of children left behind. The emergence of global chains of care and its relation with long-distance motherhood appears to be one of the most salient issues in the area of female migration. Using comparable quantitative data the paper presents some estimates and discusses this phenomenon for two large and contrasting migratory groups: Paraguayan and Bolivian migrants in Argentina.

Literature on the labor market experiences of female Latin American migrants in the developed world generally point to their double burden, they suffered discrimination for being both women and immigrants. There are highly concentrated in personal service and caring occupation with lower wages and meager opportunities for advancement. In relation to this topic, the paper examines types of immigrant labor demanded by structurally more flexible and informal labor markets. Once more, it focuses on the experiences of female workers from Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru in Argentina's labor market.

Regarding the connection that women migrant keep with their families, this report also includes a section on remittances. During the last years, migrants' remittances have caught the attention of researcher and policy makers interested in the potential linkages between international migration and development. More recently and in parallel with the increasing interest in gender and migration, a series of studies have explored the intersection between gender and remittances¹¹ (INSTRAW, 2007). Using evidences from the Inter-American Development Bank and previous studies, this last part of the paper examines the magnitude of regional remittances and discusses differences in remittance behaviors of female and male migrants.

Finally, the report also deals with the dark side of the women's migration: the illegal commercial activities that exploit vulnerable women, particularly trafficking that target migrant women for sexual exploitation.

¹¹ See Ramirez, Dominguez and Morais, (2005), INSTRAW (2007).

A note on data

Migration is probably the most elusive demographic behavior to study due to its multifaceted aspects and levels of analysis involved. A proper assessment on gender differences on determinants and impacts of migration would require the use of data collected with specific purposes. As a consequence, despite its recognized limitations¹², most comparative studies on feminization of international migration had to rely mostly on census data¹³. This paper is not an exception and makes use of census data to depict main migratory trends and the relative role of women within intra-regional migration. More concretely it employs data from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ECLAC, Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Observatory (2006) and the IMILA project. The IMILA Project (Investigación de la Migración Internacional en Latinoamérica)¹⁴ IMILA Project, launched in 1970's by the Latin American Demographic Center of ECLAC, provides basic comparable socio-demographic information on international regional migrants in each in each country for different census rounds, distinguished by sex. IMILA has been instrumental in facilitating research and exchange of information on international migration in the region. These data allows the construction sex-discriminated migration matrixes and a characterization of immigrant stocks in each receiving country in the region.

However, using data referred to immigrant stocks presents several restrictions being one of the most salient the difficulties for a dynamic approach of migration trends. Censuses are traditionally carried about every ten years, include limited information on migration, present problems of coverage or misreporting of international migrants, use heterogeneous approaches to define the population enumerate (*de facto* vs. *de jure* population); and in other regions of the world present variations in how they define an international migrant (place of birth vs. citizenship).

¹² See Bilsborrow and et al (1997).

¹³ An empirical analysis of gender differences in the migratory process using census data usually faces a number of limitations, since frequently is not sex-disaggregated. Furthermore, usually it refers only to individuals preventing the analysis at a household level. Most of them lack of information to reconstruct the timings of the event, crucial for the study of migration trends.

¹⁴ <http://www.eclac.cl/migracion/imila/>

Information on migrant stocks employed in this report constitutes only an indication of the actual number of immigrants who have gone to a particular country. In fact they provide a static picture of the number of foreign born people who reside in a particular country and have arrived at an unspecified time -that is for more dynamic streams, more recently, and for those stagnant and old streams, long time ago¹⁵-. It is important to caution that these stocks do not account for former migrants who returned to their country of birth (or migrated to other countries), and for those immigrants who died. In other words, data on migrant stocks expresses only a restricted image of the migration process and does not allow studying trends, temporary, circular or return migration.

Besides these sources of information¹⁶, and for more specific analysis on the largest and most dynamic current migratory streams, the paper uses an international migration survey collected in Argentina, the Complementary Survey on International Migration 2002-2003, gathered by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC). This survey (that was part of the 2001 Population Census) contains information on numerous aspects of migration for the main regional immigrant groups¹⁷

Finally, regarding the issue of remittances, results are based on data from the Inter-American Development Bank, surveys on reception of remittances in several Latin American by Bendixen & Associates, and results from a Paraguayan and Peruvian immigrant survey collected by the Center for Population Studies (CENEP) in Buenos Aires, Argentina.¹⁸ This survey was collected between 2003 and 2004 among 511 Paraguayan and Peruvian immigrants residing in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. It contains

¹⁵ As it will be shown later with more detailed, there are large immigrant groups in the region that have shown little dynamism over the last two decades as Chileans and Uruguayans in Argentina and to a lesser extent Colombians in Venezuela.

¹⁶ In addition to census data the report also uses more updated information from the United States 2005 American Community Survey, and the municipal records in Spain.

¹⁷ 2001 Census data served as the base to collect eighteen independent sample of households (total of 20.131) in which at least one of their members was foreign born from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

¹⁸ The survey was collected in the context of a broader research project on Paraguayan and Peruvian Migration to Argentina. This research was coordinated by Marcela Cerrutti and Emilio Parrado at the Centro de Estudios de Población, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and had support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

information on a broad range of migration topics, including remittance behaviors (transfer methods, sending frequency, recipients and intended use of remittances).

Patterns and trends of intra-regional migration

A long standing tradition of intra-regional migratory movements characterizes South America. Frontiers that were imposed by decolonization and nation-states formation separated people who previously share territories, cultures and ethnicities (Massey et al., 2005). Throughout time, cross-border movements were common and the seasonal migration of agricultural workers characterized the first half of the XX Century. Since 1950's divergent processes of economic development in the region and specific linkages between countries determined the upsurge of two main migratory systems¹⁹, one with the center in Argentina and the other with the center in Venezuela.

In Argentina, the adoption of an inward looking industrialization model of growth, particularly from the 1950s, generated until mid 1970s, an expansion and diversification of the economy. Tariff protection, public subsidies to industrial activities, and a widespread state intervention in many sectors of the economy stimulated a rise a substantial labor demand in a country with low domestic population growth. Consequently, in the 1960's and 1970's migration from neighboring countries grew significantly (Marshall and Orlansky, 1981, 1983). In this period, internal rural-urban migration also grew at its peak, fueled by similar factor. International migrants, originally from rural areas, who worked as agricultural seasonal workers, started heading towards Buenos Aires metropolitan area²⁰.

¹⁹ A migration system includes a core receiving region (one or more countries) and a set of specific sending countries linked to them by large flows of immigrants. It is a dynamic system that emerged and evolved from linkages between sending and receiving countries (intense exchanges of goods, capital and people between certain countries) (Kritz, 1992; Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992). Fawcett (1989) points out that within migration systems there are four categories of linkages: State-to-State relations, mass culture connections, family and personal networks, migrant agency activities. These linkages can be regulatory (as it is in the case of migration regulations, migrant recruitment policies, etc.), tangible (in the various economic and political connections, and in the sending of remittances.) and relational (like for example, cultural similarity, economic dependency, etc.).

²⁰ Immigration from neighboring countries to Argentina was predominately undocumented and, as it will be further show, many became legalized after amnesties offered by the Argentine Government.

Emigration from neighboring countries to Argentina was the result of social and economic constraints and lack of opportunities. On the one hand, uneven land distribution, fragmentation of parcels, soil exhaustion of parcels, and a modernization of agriculture promoted the migration of rural workers. In many instances, these structural situations were also accompanied by political turnovers and military coups. On the other hand the apparent differences between the standard of living in these countries and Argentina also fuelled emigration.²¹

The relevance of “push factors” as well as the reinforcement of migration by social networks is evidenced in the continuation of a milder immigration from neighboring countries to Argentina despite the crisis of the inward looking model of economic growth in the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s (Marshall, 1984).

Later, throughout the 1990s a considerable overvaluation of the Argentina’s peso²² acted as a powerful attraction for many migrants, particularly from countries that due to internal factors generated a higher propensity for emigration. The significant increase in the purchasing power of remittances and savings largely explains why migration continued growing despite increasing unemployment rates in Argentina.

Immigration to Argentina slowed down (and a returned migration flow probably occurred) by the year 2000, when Argentina experienced one of its worst economic crisis ever. However, a couple of years later, with the devaluation of its currency, a more favourable external situation and changes in macroeconomic policies, the economy began growing at high rates and consequently labor demand for immigrants (in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, commerce and personal services) significantly expanded. Unfortunately

²¹ For a more comprehensive view on historical determinants of regional migration in Latin America see Diaz Brisquets, 1980; Balán, 1985; Lattes A. and Recchini de Lattes Z., 1994; Galeano, 1979.

²² In 1991 a rigid scheme based on a “currency board” system was adopted in order with the purpose to control inflation. Government was compelled by law to keep a fixed exchange rate level (one Argentinean peso against one US dollar) and to exchange dollars by pesos (and vice-versa) at any moment and at that rate of exchange. This exchange rate combined with a low -but still positive inflation rate- lead to a significant overvaluation of Argentina’s Peso.

there is no updated data on migrant stocks that will provide a more solid evidence of this recent immigration trend²³.

The second most important country attracting regional immigrants was Venezuela. Even though this country still concentrates a large portion of all regional migrants (particularly from Colombia), immigration has decreased.²⁴ The peak of regional immigration to Venezuela took place in the late 1960s and the 1970s, particularly with the economic boom in Venezuela²⁵. The substantial increase in oil revenues financed the expansion of well paid professional occupations attracting migrants not only from Colombia but also from other countries in the region. Venezuela applied a series of policies in order to attract skilled and professional workers (Pellegrino, 1989). Immigration of unskilled workers also increased significantly due to the strength of Venezuelan currency.

However by the end of the 1970's the economy entered a dramatic reversal and experienced a significant decrease in the annual rate of per capita GDP. According to Hausmann and Rodriguez (forthcoming) Venezuela's economic "collapse" was generated basically by three forces; declining oil production, declining non-oil productivity and the country incapacity to move resources into alternative industries as a response to the decline in oil rents. With decreasing opportunities and a weaker currency, the end of the oil boom promoted returned migration and emigration. Pellegrino (1984) estimated that whereas between 1971 and 1979 net immigration to Venezuela reached 316,000 foreigners, between 1980 and 1984, net out-migration reached 107,000 foreigners.²⁶

²³ One indirect piece constitutes the large numbers of immigrants who recently were regularized.

²⁴ Massey et al. (2005) point out that studies of immigration to Venezuela are less well defined theoretically than those carried out in Argentina, probably because they have to describe "an *atypical* situation where immigration and economic growth stem from an external source (oil boom) that resists prediction. Another feature of the Venezuelan case is that immigration occurred simultaneously with a high rate of natural increase among native (unlike in Western Europe, North America, or the Asian NICs), which provided employers with a viable alternative source of labor" (p.211).

²⁵ According to Hausmann and Rodriguez (forthcoming) by 1970, Venezuela constituted one of the richest countries in Latin America and one of the twenty richest in the world, with a per capita GDP higher than Spain, Greece, and Israel and only 13% lower than that of the United Kingdom

²⁶ Cited by Massey et al. (2005)

Emigration from Colombia to Venezuela was stimulated by external factors. However, by mid 1980's a second phase of emigration started engendered by internal factors, mainly the economic crisis and the escalation of the armed conflict (Cárdenas and Mejías, 2006). Colombians who headed mainly to Venezuela started massively emigrating first to United States and more recently to Spain.

According to Guarnizo (2006) internal and international factors explain massive emigration from Colombia since the late eighties, such as the adoption of structural adjustment policies, a significant drop in the international coffee prices, and a deterioration of the political, military and social situation due to drug trafficking. For Mejía Ochoa (2006) the extension and consolidation of the drug business not only promoted but also facilitated emigration.

Overtime, nationals from South American countries have shown different propensities to emigrate. In all of them the number of emigrants increased, though the incidence of emigration (in relation to countries populations) varies considerably. According to ECLAC (2006), around the year 2000 South American countries with the largest proportion of emigrants are: Uruguay (8.3%), Paraguay (6.7%), Ecuador (4.8%), Bolivia (4.1%), and Colombia (3.4%). In contrast, those with the lowest proportion of population living abroad are: Brazil (0.4%), Venezuela (0.9%), and Argentina (1.4%).

The first panel in Table 1 shows stocks of South Americans intra-regional emigrants. In 1980, Colombia, Paraguay and Chile were the countries with the largest absolute numbers, followed by Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia. Clearly, until the 1980's intra-regional migration was a more viable option than migrating to developed countries (with the exception of the highly skilled). The ratio between emigrants within the region and emigrants to the United States was in 1980 3.6 (see Table 1). Overall, half of these regional migrants (50.8%) were women.

From 1980 onwards significant changes have taken place in both the origin of emigrants as well as in their preferred destinations (Martinez Pizarro and Villa, 2005; Pizarro, 2003), being the most significant trends the following:

- South American emigrants increasingly headed to the developed countries. Just as an example, in the year 2000 the ratio between emigrants to other countries of the region and emigrants to the United States significantly decreased to 1.4.²⁷ Since then, the ratio has become even lower.²⁸ While between 1980 and 2000 the stock of South Americans immigrants in the region grew 31.7% (from 1.779.899 immigrants in 1980 to 2.344.587 in 2000) in United States grew 244.7% (from 493.950 to 1.702.465). South American immigration in Spain was even more spectacular.²⁹
- In the last twenty years, and depending largely on the economic and social performance of origin countries, while some traditional streams almost disappeared (for example from Chile and Uruguay to Argentina) other have consistently increased (Bolivia and Paraguay to Argentina).³⁰
- Despite Argentina's economic downturns, the country continued attracting immigrants, at the beginning of this century Argentina concentrates about one million regional migrants, who represent 43.2% of the regional immigrant stock in South America.

²⁷ Estimation based on data from ECLAC, 2006.

²⁸ If the ratio is estimated with data from the 2005 US Community Survey instead of the 2000 US population census, the ratio turns to 1.1 (assuming no change in the size of regional migration).

²⁹ (Maguid and Arrunaga, 2008; Martínez Buján and Golías Perez, 2005; Martínez Buján, 2003; Pellegrino, 2004, 2005, 2008).

³⁰ Whereas only 8.1% of Chilean immigrants have arrived to Argentina since 1990, among Bolivians the proportion is 44% (data from Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones, ECMI 2002-2003).

Table 1. Emigrants stocks living in other South American country or in the United States by origin country. 1980-2000.

	South American emigrants in the region					South American emigrants in United States				
	1980		2000		% of growth	1980		2000		% of growth
	Emigrants	% of female	Emigrants	% of female	1980 - 2000	Emigrants	% of female	Emigrants	% of female	1980 - 2000
Argentina	144.080	51,3	198.661	49,7	37,9	68.887	49,4	125.220	50,5	81,8
Bolivia	125.124	45,5	281.535	50,1	125,0	14.468	51,5	53.280	51,3	268,3
Brazil	167.860	49,7	153.759	51,8	-8,4	40.919	55,6	212.430	53,8	419,1
Chile	273.590	47,8	262.743	51,1	-4,0	35.127	50,7	80.805	51,4	130,0
Colombia	535.922	52,8	675.834	52,3	26,1	143.508	53,7	509.870	54,9	255,3
Ecuador	33.085	50,0	52.734	51,9	59,4	86.128	53,0	298.625	48,0	246,7
Paraguay	279.402	53,7	357.719	57,2	28,0	2.858	55,5	11.980	53,0	319,2
Peru	42.624	42,6	156.028	56,1	266,1	55.496	50,9	278.185	51,9	401,3
Uruguay	133.273	51,1	147.207	50,9	10,5	13.278	50,0	25.040	49,5	88,6
Venezuela	44.939	51,7	58.367	51,8	29,9	33.281	48,5	107.030	52,0	221,6
TOTAL	1779899	50,8	2344587	52,5	31,7	493950	48,5	1702465	52,0	244,7

Source: ECLAC 2006 and IMILA.

- Immigrant inflows to Venezuela have decreased significantly. While in the last twenty years relative growth of regional immigrant stock in Argentina was 36.4% in Venezuela was only 14.2%. Still the proportion of regional immigrants as a percentage of total population in both countries remains low (about 3% in both countries).
- In 2000, Colombians in Venezuela constitute the largest immigrant stock in South America. However these are not recent migrants, since they arrived long time ago: half of Colombians in Venezuela arrived before 1980.
- Chile, historically a country of “emigration” (particularly to Argentina) became during the 1990’s a country of “immigration”. Even though the stock of regional immigrants is still relatively small, it grew significantly from 1990 to 2000 (from 33.630 regional immigrants to 125.148). Consequently, as in the case of Colombians in Venezuela, immigrants from Chile in Argentina arrived several decades ago and their number have decreased.
- Emigration for Uruguay continues to be high. It is the South American country with the largest proportion of emigrants compared to its population. They head mainly to developed countries; consequently the number of Uruguayans in Argentina (that was a significant migration group in the region) stagnated.
- Stocks of regional emigrants that grew the most during between 1980 and 2000 originated in Peru (266%), Bolivia (125%), and Ecuador (59.4%) (Table 1). There are new and quantitatively important intra-region migratory streams, particularly as a result of the political and economic deterioration in Peru and Ecuador during the 1990s. Nationals from Peru emigrated to Argentina, Chile and Venezuela; while Ecuadorians to Venezuela (and to a lesser extent to Chile and Colombia).
- The majority of emigrants from Bolivia (82.3%) and Peru (56.1%) who remained in the region headed to Argentina. Argentina also continues attracting immigrants

from Paraguay, who currently constitutes the largest immigrant group (322.962) and the second largest in the region. Figure 1 shows the evolution of immigrants of different origins. Three groups have grown considerably during the last decade and will be the focus of the study in the remaining sections of this paper: Peruvians (448.0%), Bolivians (61.3%) and Paraguayans (28.6%).

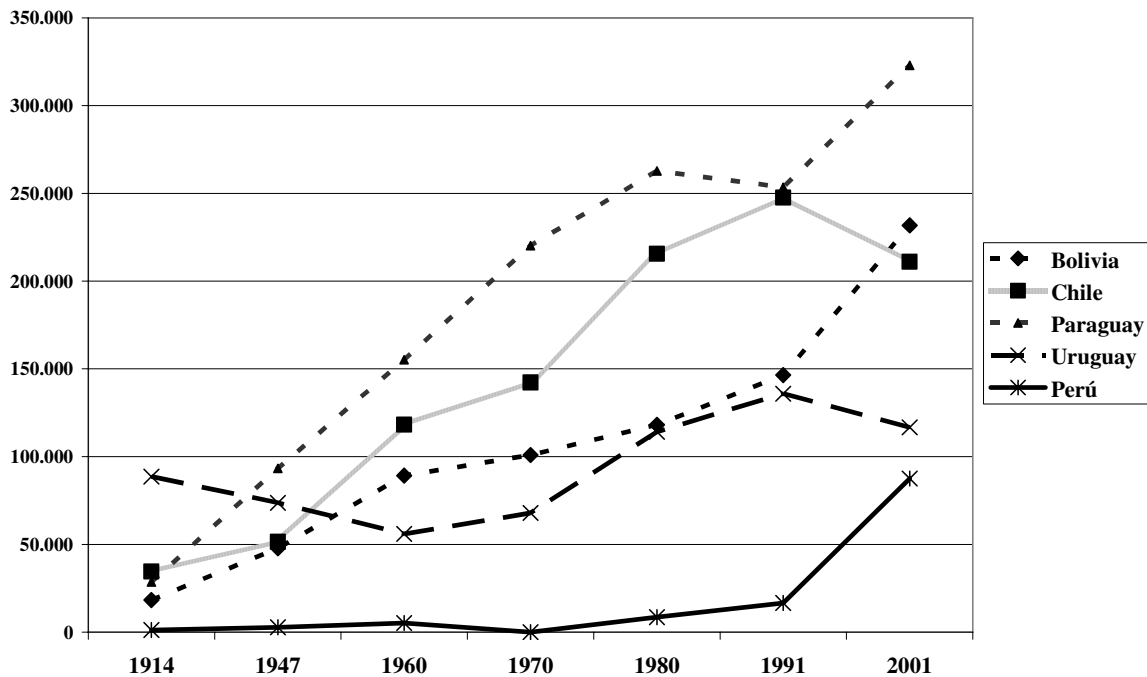
Table 2. Intra-regional migration. Immigrant stocks by country of origin and residence. 2000 Census round.

COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE										TOTAL
	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Ecuador	Paraguay	Peru	Uruguay	Venezuela	
Argentina		27094	27531	48176	1953	2239	61247	4165	26256		198661
% of female		50,4	43,5	50,0	45,9	41,2	49,8	57,1	54,5		49,7
Bolivia	231789		20388	10919		634	1068	3216	13521		281535
% of female	49,7		44,9	54,4		46,7	48,8	60,6	58,7		50,1
Brazil	33748	14428		6899	1383	1101	80156	2523	13521		153759
% of female	58,6	48,6		53,9	61,0	53,8	47,7	58,5	58,7		51,8
Chile	211093	4163	17131		1496	4702	2260	4652	1726	15520	262743
% of female	52,2	48,7	40,2		48,5	45,3	41,1	62,5	51,3	47,9	51,1
Colombia	3713	1244	4159	4097		51556		2374		608691	675834
% of female	53,4	51,8	45,0	55,0		52,9		58,7		52,2	52,3
Ecuador	2054	652	1188	9393	9040			1801		28606	52734
% of female	53,4	52,6	42,3	54,8	48,0			62,2		51,7	51,9
Paraguay	322962	3201	28822	1222					1512		357719
% of female	57,6	48,7	53,1	53,0					65,8		57,2
Peru	87546	8824	10814	37863	3182	5682	1589		528		156028
% of female	59,3	44,7	38,3	60,2	43,7	40,9	43,3		53,4		56,1
Uruguay	116672		24740	2241			3155	399			147207
% of female	51,9		47,7	47,7			42,9	46,6			50,9
Venezuela	2665		2162	4338	43285	3691		1489	737		58367
% of female	54,7		49,4	51,6	51,8	53,3		49,4	50,5		51,8
TOTAL	1012242	59606	136935	125148	60339	69605	149475	20619	57801	652817	2344587,3
% of female	54,2	49,0	45,8	54,3	50,7	51,0	48,3	58,9	56,6	52,1	52,5

Source: ECLAC, 2006 and IMILA.

- As it is usually the case with major migration flows, a number of noteworthy second generation “rebound” migrations have also taken place³¹. Classic examples of these types are: Argentines in Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia; Venezuelans in Colombia; and Paraguayans in Brazil (see Table 2).
- Regarding the role of women in regional migration, in the last twenty years women have increased their participation. By the year 2000 there is no a single migration group in which males outnumber females in a significant way. The process of feminization of migratory flows has been more intense among most dynamic groups, as it will be further show in the next sections.

Figure 1
Regional immigrant stocks in Argentina by country of origin,
1914-2000.



Source: INDEC, Argentina Population Censuses.

³¹ These flows are mainly composed by children of returned emigrants born in a foreign country.

Summarizing, during several decades intra-regional migration was the predominant form of international mobility in South America, historically an immigration region. Although South American emigration to the developed world was not uncommon, it was mostly driven by a search for improved professional opportunities of highly skilled individuals or by political refugees. However, since the 1980's a significant change in migration patterns took place, a diversity of foreign destinations increased, and migration to developed countries became less selective with respect to human capital. The evidence point to the fact that emigration has been larger in those South American countries with the lowest GDP per-capita (Bolivia and Paraguay), and in those that have experienced severe governance and economic crisis (such as Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and to a lesser extent Argentina). On the contrary, in countries with more stable economic and political trajectories, such as Chile and Brazil, emigration propensity did not change significantly.

Currently, two of the most dynamic groups in regional migration –Bolivians and Paraguayans- continue heading to Argentina, and the third group, Peruvians, have diversified their destinations in the region. Although there are not systematic studies on migrants selectivity in these groups, there is some indication of positive selection in comparison to their counterparts in their origin countries³², but negative selection compared to those who head to the developed world and count with larger human, social and financial capital.

Migration management in South America: The MERCOSUR residency agreement

In 2002 an Agreement on Residency for Nationals of the MERCOSUR³³ member countries was signed. According to this agreement immigrants from a country of the

³² In the case of Paraguayan migrants to Argentina, result from an event history analysis based on data collected in Paraguay and in Argentina indicate that net of macroeconomic effects, males probability of a first migration to Argentina is positively associated with years of education (Parrado and Cerrutti, 2003). Among women, the effect of education on first migration was not lineal. Both, those with high levels of education as well as those with low levels of education were less likely to migrate (Cerrutti and Gaudio, 2008).

³³ MERCOSUR means Common Market of the South, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

region who acquire a temporary or a permanent residence visa in another MERCOSUR country will receive the same treatment as the country nationals, including in the labor field. At the same time, the Agreement on Regulating the Migration of MERCOSUR Citizens was concluded making possible to regularize immigrants without their having to return to their countries of origin. Immigrants with a resident visa and their families will have the same civil, social, cultural and economic rights and freedoms as the nationals of the receiving country. They will receive the same treatment as the nationals in all matters related to the application of labor legislation, wages, working conditions and social security.

Argentina was the first country putting in practice the agreement. One year after it was signed, Argentina changed its National Migratory Law (Num. 25875) establishing that any citizen of a MERCOSUR country or associate country (Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador) with no criminal background can obtain a legal residence in Argentina. This law defines an immigrant as a foreign born person who wishes to enter, transit, reside –either on temporary or permanent bases- in Argentina according to current law.

With the purpose of improving the human right situation of migrants who have been living as undocumented in Argentina, a regularization program was put in place in April of 2006. (Patria Grande Program) since December of 2007, 565.831 individuals were regularized.³⁴ Acquiring residency –either temporary or permanent- under this program is relatively easy and does not take a long time. Migrant have to present an update personal ID, a certification of entry to Argentina, and proves of no criminal records in both their countries of origin and in Argentina. They have to pay a fee of about 67

³⁴ Argentina's migratory new open policy, not only is the first initiative in the region but also constitute a significant change compared to Argentina's regulations in the past. Historically this country applied a selective and restrictive migratory policy toward nationals from neighbor countries. As a consequence of these policies and relative permeable border, the size of undocumented migration was high and pervasive. The regulation of migration was highly connected to the political situation: more restricted under military governments and more open under democratic ones. Several amnesties (1958, 1965, 1974, 1984 y 1992) to undocumented migrants were granted, all with the purpose of reducing illegality and improve migrant integration.

dollars in order to obtain the residency. No intermediaries are needed to process the paper work.

It is too early to establish the consequences of this massive regularization program for the lives of regional immigrants residing in Argentina. However, some improvements are expected particularly regarding the labor conditions of immigrants. Becoming either temporary or permanent residents will allow them to be protected by labor regulation. If hired by formal employers they will obtain fringe benefits at work (including social security). In addition, migrants' regularization will help to reduce negative orientations of the general public toward immigrants. These new orientations and policies towards international migrants have been also accompanied by public campaigns to increase tolerance and to ban discrimination.

The increasing presence of women in intra-regional migration

Women have increased their participation in international migration worldwide from 46.6% in 1960 to 48.8% in 2000. However, there is large regional heterogeneity in terms of both their share in different migratory streams and its evolution overtime (Zlotnik, 2003). In Latin America the percentage of women among international migrants grew from 44.7% in 1960 to 50.5% in 2000. Intra-regional migration in South America also experienced a process of feminization and today women's representation among immigrants in the region is one of the highest in the world: 52.5% in 2000.

Within intra-regional migration there is a substantial heterogeneity in the presence of women in each migratory streams, although there is a regular element: feminization takes place among most recent and dynamic migratory groups (Table 3). For example, the percentage of women has increased significantly in the cases of Peruvian

immigration both in Chile and Argentina.³⁵ Something similar happened with immigrants from Bolivia and from Paraguay to Argentina³⁶.

However feminization does not occur in old migration groups, that is among practically stagnant migration streams. In these cases, migrants' stocks are composed by people who arrived long time ago. This is the case of Chileans and Uruguayans in Argentina and to a lesser extent Colombians in Venezuela. In these cases, their sex compositions are far from being indicative of the role of women when these migrations occurred. Since most of these immigrants arrived several decades ago, the current proportion of women may be affected by sex differences in both mortality and return migration.³⁷

Finally, there is another situation, comprised by migrant groups that can be characterized as "rebound" migrants. Argentines in Paraguay and to a lesser extent Argentines in Chile can be included in this group. There are no specific studies conducted on this type of migration, particularly on sex imbalances.

³⁵ The case of Peruvian immigration to Argentina is particularly interesting since when immigration was low and composed by middle class and privileged students, Peruvians in Argentina were predominately male.

³⁶ Since a larger portion of these three migration stocks are constituted by recent migrants, their sex composition provide a better evidence of the actual representation of women in recent flows.

³⁷ Several studies have shown throughout the world that women are more prone than men to remain and became permanent migrant in countries of destinations.

Table 3. Evolution of main intra-regional migratory groups: relative growth and women's share, 1980-2000.

Most significant regional migration groups	Immigrant Stocks		Relative percentual growth	Percent female	
	1980	2000		1980	2000
Immigrants residing in Argentina:					
From Bolivia	115.616	231.789	100,5	44,8	49,7
From Chile	207.176	211.093	1,9	47,7	52,2
From Paraguay	259.449	322.962	24,5	53,9	57,6
From Peru	8.561	87.546	922,6	33,6	59,3
From Uruguay	109.724	116.672	6,3	51,7	51,9
Immigrants residing in Venezuela:					
From Colombia	494.494	608.691	23,1	52,9	52,2
Immigrants residing in Paraguay:					
From Argentina	43.336	61.247	41,3	50,6	49,8
From Brazil	97.791	80.156	-18,0	46,5	47,7
Immigrants residing in Chile:					
From Argentina	19.733	48.176	144,1	52,3	50,0
From Peru	4.308	37.863	778,9	48,3	60,2

Source: ECLAC 2006 and IMILA.

What are the forces behind the increasing presence of women in regional migration? Providing a definite answer to this question is problematical, not only due to the complexity of the process but also due to the lack of adequate and comparable data. There are few regional research initiatives that have collected data both in sending and receiving countries that will allow testing for the effects of various determinants on sex differences in peoples' propensity to migrate³⁸. However data of this sort is restrictive to particular communities and is not representative nationally.

³⁸ For example the Latin America Research Project (LAMP) conducted by Douglas Massey and Jorge Durant include data bases for two South American countries, Colombia and Peru. For more information see: <http://lamp.opr.princeton.edu/>. Another initiative conducted with a similar methodology is Marcela Cerrutti and Emilio Parrado project on Paraguayan migration to Argentina, developed at the Centro de Estudios de Poblacion, Argentina.

Despite these limitations, scholarly work on this issue agrees in linking regional female increasing participation in international migration to two main processes: changes in sex roles, particularly a greater participation of women in public sphere including providing economically for their families; and a growing demand of immigrant labor in the service sector (particularly domestic services and caring occupations).

In most Latin American countries, women's growing participation in the public sphere was not only the result of secular societal changes that altered cultural norms regarding sex roles, but also a product of increasing household economic needs. The model of male sole breadwinner -that constituted a central aspect of patriarchal families in Latin America- could not be sustained after years of structural adjustment programs and liberal reforms. In most countries, these policies negatively altered occupational opportunities, income levels, income distribution and labor protection (Portes, Roberts and Grimson, 2005) and drove women into labor market activities³⁹.

In the 1990's labor force participation rates of women aged 15 to 65 increased with no exceptions in all Latin American countries. For the region it grew in 7.1 percent points and reached about 49% before the turn of the century. This overall rate is very similar to that of South European countries, such as Spain, Italy and Greece (Duryea, Jaramillo and Pages, 2002). For example, in the cases of emigration countries the rise in female labor force participation has increased significantly. Between 1990 and 2007, these rates grew from 46.6% to 54.7% in Bolivia; from 50.6% to 56.1% in Paraguay, 45.7% to 54.0% in Colombia and 43.2 to 53.7% in Ecuador⁴⁰.

Consequently women gained both newer and more demanding responsibilities to provide for their families but also more autonomy in their decisions. In this context,

³⁹ In addition, in some countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, emigration propensity steeped due political instability and violence: in these context women were more likely to emigrate (INSTRAW, 2007).

⁴⁰ Information extracted from ECLAC data bases.

gender norms governing sex division of labor have changed, what in turned may have generated a greater social acceptance for women's independent migration.⁴¹

In receiving countries the demand for cheap immigrant labor in the service sector increased, favoring the migration of women⁴². This demand is not a new phenomenon in South America, since traditionally wealthy middle class and privileged social sectors have hired internal and increasingly international migrants for domestic work and child care. Yet, with the substantial increase of middle class and professional South American women participating in the labor market, the demand of domestic services also grew, similarly to what has been noticed in the case of the developed world⁴³.

Studies on the rise of dual earner couples in the Argentina show that the increasing presence of women in the labor market has not been accompanied for a significant change in males' participation in household chores (Wainerman, 2005). Consequently working women are hiring other women in order to be able to work outside their homes.

Migratory decisions, particularly regarding who migrates first, greatly depends on ideas on how easily women or men could first find a job in the receiving country. Increasingly, auspices of migration have been related to the availability of jobs in the domestic services sector, as qualitative studies show. In her study of how migratory decisions are taken by Peruvian couples, Rosas (2007) found that many of the women interviewed were the ones moving first and by themselves to Argentina because they will supposedly secure jobs more rapidly than their partners.

⁴¹ The proportion of women headed households also increased in many South American countries during the nineties.

⁴² In the developed world, particularly in Spain, South American immigrant flows that are predominately female share one common trait: women are primarily employed in the personal service sector, which includes not only domestic work, but also caring occupations. As Herrera (2005) has pointed out feminist analysis has started to document the use of migrant female labor in domestic service and caring occupation as a component of the globalization and privatization of social reproduction. Thus the demand for female migrant labor in the service sector would respond to more structural forces linked to the market, the state and social reproduction (Sassen, 2004).

⁴³ Several studies on the rise of female migration from Latin American countries to Europe have linked the commercialization of reproductive work (domestic services and caring occupations) with the rise in female wage-earning in wealthier nations.

Finally it is important to note that the relative presence of women in regional migration has historically been high⁴⁴. One of the factors that may help explain this trait is not only the existence of an abundant demand for their labor, but also the relative easiness – compared to developed countries, particularly the United States- to enter and remain in receiving countries as irregular migrants. If risks involved in undocumented crossing are low, women will constitute a larger share of migrants⁴⁵. On the contrary, if risks of being caught and being subject of abuses are high, women will be less start out the crossing, as it is in the case of Mexican migration to the United States (Cerrutti and Massey, 2004). Migration policies, border controls and the costs of being undocumented are elements that also have to be taken into account in order to explain the differential presence of women in migratory flows.

The migration of women: ¿ Autonomous or Associational?

For a long time, neither neoclassical economic theories of migration nor the new economics of labor migration assigned women much agency in the migratory process either as autonomous decision makers or as independent participants in household bargaining (Cerrutti and Massey, 2001). Recently studies have challenged these ideas showing that members of the household do not necessarily cooperate rationally in designing economic strategies, and in many instances conflicts of interest and power relations within the household prevail (Tilly and Scott 1978; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994)⁴⁶. Increasingly migration is conceived as a process, embedded in larger social structures such as gender systems, households, kinship groups, friendship networks and communities.

⁴⁴ In 1980 the proportion of women among worldwide international migrants was 47.4% whereas among South American migrants was 50.8%.

⁴⁵ Qualitative studies conducted in the cases of Paraguayan and Peruvian female migration to Argentina (Cerrutti and Gaudio, 2008; Rosas, 2007) show barriers to irregular migration were not a concern in the migratory decision making process.

⁴⁶ In many migration streams, husbands precede wives in migration not because it is a family strategy consensually defined but because women have been excluded from decision-making (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992).

Processes governing the decision to move as well as cultural norms presiding female and male migration differ. Women's bargaining power in relation to their own or other household member decision to migrate varies significantly by age, household position, and parity (Riley and Gardner 1993; Ortiz 1996). It also depends upon their level of autonomy in the sending community, which in terms relate to the sexual division of labor in their families and their economic roles.

The growing presence of women in international migration is undermining the historical view of migrant women as followers or associational migrants –of husbands or parents. Both the process of feminization of migration as well as qualitative evidence of women who increasingly are the ones migrating first are indicative of their greater autonomy and independence in the migration decision process.

Besides women's role in the family, their stage in family course, and their relative power, the decision to migrate relates as well to the structure of opportunities (in particular labor opportunities) available to men and women in both sending and receiving societies. As it will be further show with the case of female Peruvian migration.

Peruvian immigration to Argentina, the most dynamic recent inflow, is the one with the highest proportion of women, indicative of its autonomous character. As it is also the case of Peruvian migration to Chile and Spain, it is a migration group in which young women with relatively high levels of education are over-represented (Nuñez and Stefoni, 2004; Cerrutti, 2005). Still, the independent migration of women with family responsibilities is not uncommon. In her analysis on how migratory decisions were made among several Peruvian couples, Rosas (2007) found that the main determinant of migration was either that one or the two members of the couple lost their jobs or a decreased in household incomes. She also found that migration was not only triggered by economic reasons but also because they felt emotionally dissatisfied or because they were victims of different kind of domestic violence. Cerrutti (2005) also found that female Peruvian decisions were not only to increase their standard of living, but also

driven by sentimental or emotional motives. For many women economic needs was the motive that made the decision to migrate more sociably acceptable (particularly for husbands and sometimes parents).

In the vast majority of her interviews Rosas (2007) found that women were the ones migrating first, and many were the ones coming first with the idea of emigrating. Interestingly, she shows how male partners left behind kept their jobs in Peru in order to support their families and to facilitate their wives migration. These men sooner or later ended up migrating themselves in order to “reunify their families.”

Peruvian migrants had previous labor experience, and counting on their networks, they were aware of prospective jobs in Argentina –generally as domestic servants. Similarly to what has been found in other contexts, the resources that Peruvian migrants mobilize in order to migrate are gendered (Hagan, 1998; Curran and Rivero-Fuentes, 2003). They employ networks mainly composed by female relatives. Her study suggests that in many instances female networks serve not only to limit but also to discourage male migration

Cerrutti and Gaudio (2008) also observed the same pattern in the case of the migration of Paraguayan women to Argentina. Based on in-depth interviews with immigrants residing in Buenos Aires, they found that their migration generally was either supported or promoted by female chains of assistance. The most significant people in both insisting and promoting women’s migration were female relatives, followed by friends and neighbors. These women also provided support at the initial stages of migration helping to get acquainted with the new environment and to get jobs. In contrast, men’s migration was assisted mainly by other men, who were the ones motivating the aspiration to move and helping them to find jobs. However, men also obtain help from female relatives (particularly sisters) who provide assistance to find shelter and companionship when they first arrived to Argentina.

As in the case of Peruvian migration, women are also a central actor in Paraguayan migration to Argentina. They are significantly more likely to migrate independently at

younger ages and unmarried, indicative of the autonomous character of their migration. Almost seven out of ten Paraguayan women who have migratory experience and were married at the time of the survey migrated for the first time when they were unmarried (either as single or divorced), and therefore did not migrate following their husbands (Cerrutti and Gaudio, 2008). Furthermore, the same study shows that more than half of all married women and female headed households (54.5 per cent) migrated before having their first child⁴⁷.

The independent character of female migration relates to the role play by women in the family and in household agricultural production.⁴⁸ Historically women's economic contribution to family survival was essential⁴⁹, they were central in smallholding agriculture, handcraft production and later as domestic servants in the cities. Their economic autonomy made women more prone to initiate an international independent migration. In addition, due to the fact that entering Argentina as an undocumented migrant has not been difficult or risky it favored female migration.

The proportion of women among immigrants from Bolivia to Argentina is significantly smaller, although it has considerably grown in the last decade. Against Paraguayan and Peruvian migrations, migration from Bolivia seems to be governed by different social and cultural norms. A significant portion of female Bolivian immigrants (52 per cent) who arrived to Argentina at the ages of 15 and older lived with their husbands when they first migrated.⁵⁰ In addition, a significant portion of Bolivian immigrants migrated as minors following a relative. These data corroborate the centrality of the family in the decision to move, as showed by several qualitative studies.

⁴⁷ Differences between these percentages suggest that women's independent migration after having a child is not uncommon in Paraguay.

⁴⁸ In the past, when migrants were heading to the Northeast provinces to participate in seasonal agricultural production, streams were not significantly biased toward men. Data from the 1947 census indicates that 47.6 per cent of Paraguayan migrants in Argentina were women. When Buenos Aires began attracting a growing number of migrants in the personal service sector, the participation of women increased significantly (Rivarola, Galeano and Fogel, 1979).

⁴⁹ For an historical review of the role of women in Paraguay see Pottahst (1998).

⁵⁰ Data from ECMI 2002-2003.

The particularities of household agricultural production greatly shape the migratory process (Balán, 1990). Women's decision to move has traditionally been part of a family strategy, and even though in the last years the independent migration of women have increased, family migration still dominate (Magliano, 2007). In this context women do not necessarily are passive actors since many of them actively participate in labor market activities, frequently centered in the family (as it is the case of horticultural production).

Despite the increase in the proportion of women among Bolivian immigrants in Argentina, the percentage remains smaller than the one observed for these immigrants in Spain.⁵¹ This difference highlights the relevance of the context of reception as well as the origin of migrants (in socioeconomic and regional terms) in shaping gender patterns of migration. Hinojosa Gordonava (2008) indicates that autonomous migration of Bolivian women to Spain is growing, with significant consequences for the families left behind. He shows that 67% of Bolivian emigrants from Cochabamba heading to Spain are women.

How men and women decide to move and their sex composition of migrant groups relates also the costs of migration and integration. Three are the factors that may have facilitated the migration of complete Bolivian families to Argentina. One is the proximity and the relative permeability of borders, what makes traveling comparatively inexpensive. The second one refers to several bilateral migratory agreements between Bolivia and Argentina that promoted regularization among undocumented migrants, and consequently family reunification. A third factor relates, as mentioned before, to the nature and characteristics of social networks, and strongly interrelated, with the types of jobs and occupation for Bolivian workers in Argentina. As it will be shown factor relate to the niches of economic activities in which Bolivian immigrants tend to concentrate, as it will further show.

⁵¹ Among immigrants arriving to Argentina in the last decade, 53.3% are women, while according with data from the Padrón Municipal in Spain, in 2007, 56.5% of Bolivian immigrants were women.

Data from the ECMI 2002-2003 collected in Argentina, provide some quantitative grounds of sex differences in the motives driving migration from Bolivia and from Paraguay.⁵² According to the results, the principal motive declared for both men and women from the two countries to migrate is either “to find a job” or “to improve income”. As expected, this motive has been more important for men, but gained relevance among women who arrived to Argentina more recently. Not surprisingly, taking into account differences in migration patterns of Paraguayan and Bolivian women, the first ones were significantly more likely to indicate that their migration was driven by labor motives.

⁵² The Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales, ECMI 2002-2003, included the question *What was the main reason to leave your country?* That was asked to foreign born people from Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, aged 18 and older.

Table 4. Argentina, 2002-2003. Immigrants from Bolivia and Paraguay classified by principal motive of migration and date of arrival.

Principal motive for migration	Bolivia		Paraguay	
	Arrived before 1990	Arrived from 1990 to 2003	Arrived before 1990	Arrived from 1990 to 2003
Women				
Minor following relatives	26,9	10,5	28,9	4,5
Employment/income	33,1	49,5	40,6	63,8
Family reunification	14,8	21,4	8,4	10,1
Political reasons	0,3	0,0	1,0	0,0
Other	24,8	18,6	21,1	21,6
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Males				
Minor following relatives	28,9	9,9	31,3	3,2
Employment/income	45,1	59,2	50,3	79,1
Family reunification	6,9	12,1	3,5	10,9
Political reasons	0,5	0,5	2,2	0,1
Other	18,6	18,4	12,7	6,7
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: INDEC, Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales, 2002-2003.

Concomitantly to the greater relevance given to economic reasons, the proportion of migrants who came to Argentina as minors accompanying a relative (usually their parents) decreased. This result could be interpreted either as a change in the migratory dynamic or in family migratory patterns, with consequences for children in origin communities. In the first case, would be the product of enlarged recent immigration cohorts that did not have enough time to reunify their families. In the second case, could be indicative of increasing presence of young single migrants, as well as migrants with own families, but leaving children in origin communities⁵³. Another possibility to take into account, and very likely, is that fertility of immigrant groups have declined considerably.

⁵³ Data from a survey conducted to 511 Paraguayan and Peruvian immigrants residing in Buenos Aires show that 89.1% and 79.3% women from Paraguay and Peru, respectively, indicate that when arrived neither one of their parents nor a husband were already living in Argentina.

Consequences of migration: female empowerment

Migratory family strategies centered on women could be indicative of increased autonomy and free will. Yet, contexts driving women decision to leave their own countries as well as the ways in which they are incorporated and received in destination societies are shaped by structural factors in which gender inequalities play a significant role. Therefore, having control on the migratory decision-making process, women's autonomous migration, and women's empowerment do not necessarily relate.

Consequences of female migration on gender power are contested. It has been assumed that improvements in economic opportunities and the exposure to other cultural contexts in which gender norms are more equalitarian, will provide to female migrants more autonomy and independence. The emancipating aspect of migration would derive from gaining access and control of resources that would improve women's power. However, there is also a body of literature that calls the attention of a significant variation in patterns of migrant adaptation that challenges this view. As Parrado and Flippen (2005) pointed out "The scholars behind this literature point out that lives of migrants are structure by class, race, ethnicity, and foreign status, which may supersede gender in determining their wellbeing. Depending on the larger context of reception, including labor market opportunities, the degree to which migrants are isolated in the receiving society, and the available social networks, migration may mitigate *or* reinforce gender inequality"(p.608).

The dispute over the emancipating effect of the migratory experience for women is partly due to the complexity of gender domains that could be affected by migration. Clarifying those domains, on the one hand and taking also into account the experiences of non-migrant women as counterparts (or control group) seem to be the appropriate way for approaching this issue as Parrado and Flippen (2005) have proposed and carried out. In their study on Mexican migration to the United States they found that the effect of migration on gender is highly variable: Mexican migrants selectively incorporate some aspects of the receiving society while simultaneously reinforce cultural patterns

and behaviors brought with them from their communities of origin. The interaction between migrant's characteristics and the social environment in which they operate are crucial.

Even though there are a growing number of studies on the experiences of female South American migrants in the developed world, particularly in Spain, it is not the case for intra-regional migration. Studies are scarce, generally based on a limited number of in-depth interviews, and usually with female migrants in countries of destination. However, the existing evidence provides mix-results. For example, in the case of Bolivian immigration to Argentina Magliano (2007) argues that Bolivian women in Argentina are victims of discrimination and exclusion. Their migratory experience has changed certain general cultural norms and expectations, but gender roles and gender relations have remained almost unaltered. Despite the significant role Bolivian women play in several aspects of family life (generating income, taking care of the family, keeping alive their culture and ethnic identities) they continue occupying a subordinate social position. The study suggests that the reception context (that offer few opportunities for Bolivian women and tend to discriminated against them) did not significantly altered gender inequality.

Regarding Peruvian migration to Argentina, in her analysis of gender and the migratory decision making process, Rosas (2007) calls the attention on one factor that has been usually overlooked: the effect of female migration on males. Since very often women are the ones initiating migration, both husbands and children have to adapt their daily routines to the absence of the main caretaker. Formerly male breadwinners have to adjust to the new situation and even though they receive the help of female relatives for household chores and childcare, they also have to carry out part of the tasks. Male testimonies suggest that this situation has weakened some masculinity mandates.

Consequences of migration: long distance motherhood

Long distance motherhood or transnational families has become one of the most salient aspects of women's international migration. Increasingly, the economically driven migration of women implies that they have to leave their children and families behind in order to support them. Even though there is a growing interest on this topic, empirical data is scarce and sparse, limiting the possibilities of comparative international research.

Partly as a consequence of the current relevance given to the study of remittances, figures on remittance recipients and the use they made of them have called the attention and made more visible the numerous children that remain in countries of origin and are being supported by migrant parents.

In the Southern Cone, data from the ECMI 2002-2003, provides estimates of the magnitude of this phenomenon, since the survey included a question on the number of immigrant women who have children younger than 15 living in their countries of origin. As expected given the specificities of Bolivian migration to Argentina, the proportion of those who have at least one child living in their country of origin is very small. Only 7.6% of mothers aged 18-45 who arrived to Argentina at the most seven years before the survey had at least one child living in Bolivia (Table 5)⁵⁴. The fact that among recent female immigrants aged 18-45 77% are mother, but only a minority have left them behind is again indicative of the family character of Bolivian migration to Argentina.

In contrast, and in accordance with previous evidence, the situation is different in the case of female immigrants from Paraguay. Among them the proportion of long distance mothers defined with the same criteria is considerable larger, 21.7%. This means that one in every five Paraguayan mothers residing in Argentina has young children in Paraguay.

⁵⁴ It should be emphasized that 77% of recent immigrants women from Bolivia (arriving to Argentina from 1995 to 2002) aged 18-45 are mothers, the rest are childless.

Table 5. Immigrant women aged 18-45 with seven or less years of residence in Argentina, by country of origin, children ever had, and place of residence of children.

Long distance motherhood	Bolivia	Paraguay
% of mothers (have children)	77,1	64,6
Among mothers:		
Average number of children	2,4	2,2
% having at least one child in origin country (1)	7,6	21,7

Source: INDEC, Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales, 2002-2003.

(1) Children aged 14 or younger.

Context of reception: types of jobs and labor conditions

Against native Argentine women, immigrants, particularly from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru concentrate in very few sectors of activity, performing low skilled occupations. The exploitative character of immigrant labor demand, more severely in the case of female immigrant labor, is noticeable in several aspects of their employment: low incomes, deficient labor conditions, work environments (including context of slave work), and lack of fringe benefits.

The vast majority of Peruvian and Paraguayan women work in the personal service sector (69.0% and 58.1%, respectively) (Table 6). This concentration in one of the most exploitative occupations (Goldsmith, 2007) is one of the highest in the region, and probably in the world⁵⁵. It contrasts with considerably smaller proportion of native women who are employed in domestic services (15.7%).

⁵⁵ The percentage of female Colombian migrants in Venezuela working in the whole service sector was in 1990 48% and among Nicaraguans in Costa Rica it was 49% in the year 2000 (estimations from ECLAC, 2006).

A considerable demand for immigrant domestic and child-care labor partly explains why Peruvians, who have the highest educational levels among recently arrived regional immigrants, are the ones with the highest level of segregation and occupational concentration. Still there may be other factors favoring this situation, such as their limited social networks (as shown by the classic study of Hagan, 1998).

Bolivian women work in a broader range of sectors, most of them also low paid and precarious, such as agricultural production (particularly horticulture), informal commerce, manufacturing (specifically in garment industry), and to a lesser extent in domestic services⁵⁶. This access to a more diversified occupations relates to the greater significance of economic activities performed in the context of family production (Benencia and Karasik, 1994; Benencia 1997, 2005).

Migrant women are significantly more likely to be working in unskilled occupations than native workers. Whereas 76.2% of Peruvian, 66.4% of Paraguayan and 45.0% of Bolivian female workers are employed in unskilled occupations, among native women the proportion is 28.0%.

⁵⁶ The fact that compared to Peruvians and Paraguayan migrants only a fraction of Bolivian immigrant is employed in the personal service sector is puzzling. On the one hand could reflect migrants' preferences to work in immigrant niches of activity as they have done for a long time. However this can be also the result of employers' practices who ban the entrance of Bolivian women to this activity.

Table 6. Argentina 2001. Employed workers classified by sector of activity, sex and country of birth.

Sector of Activity	Men				Women			
	Native	Bolivia	Peru	Paraguay	Native	Bolivia	Peru	Paraguay
Agriculture	11,8	23,0	1,1	6,5	2,2	12,8	0,2	0,8
Manufacturing	14,2	19,4	14,2	17,1	6,9	13,6	3,7	6,3
Construction	9,5	26,6	16,0	31,4	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,3
Commerce	18,9	12,6	26,5	14,9	15,2	23,2	7,6	9,9
Hotels and restaurants	2,5	1,2	7,6	3,3	3,2	2,9	2,4	2,9
Domestic services	0,9	0,7	2,1	1,6	17,1	26,9	69,0	58,1
Other sectors	42,3	16,5	32,5	25,3	54,9	20,2	17,0	21,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: INDEC, Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2001.

Immigrant's disadvantages in the labor market are further shown by the relative number who do not receive fringe benefits or work in the informal sector (Table 7). The vast majority of these women also work in very small establishment, on the streets or in private homes.

Table 7. Argentina 2001. Labor conditions of female immigrant workers from Bolivia and Paraguay.

Labor conditions	Female Workers	
	Bolivia	Paraguay
% in unskilled occupations (1)	45.0	66.4
% in small scale establishments (2)	74.8	85.7
% with no fringe benefits (3)	86.2	78.9
% working on the street, house, etc. (4)	57.8	72.1

(1) National Population Census 2001.

(2) ECMI 2002-2003. In establishments with less than 6 workers

(3) ECMI 2002-2003. Do not contribute to Social Security

(4) ECMI 2002-2003. Workers whose place of work is their own or their employers house, street vendors or with a street cart.

In regard to remunerations, Cerrutti and Maguid (2007) find a wide income gap between native and immigrant workers, for both men and women. Using data from a household survey⁵⁷, they show that even in a period of economic recovery, and after controlling for individual, human capital and labor variables, there is a substantial income gap between native and immigrants from neighboring countries and Peru. Differences are somehow wider among men than among women (16.5% vs. 12.1%, respectively). However, returns to education of immigrant women were the lowest. This result could be indicative of difficulties faced by immigrant women (particularly of those with some education) to transfer their human capital and to access more qualified jobs.

Context of reception: access to public services

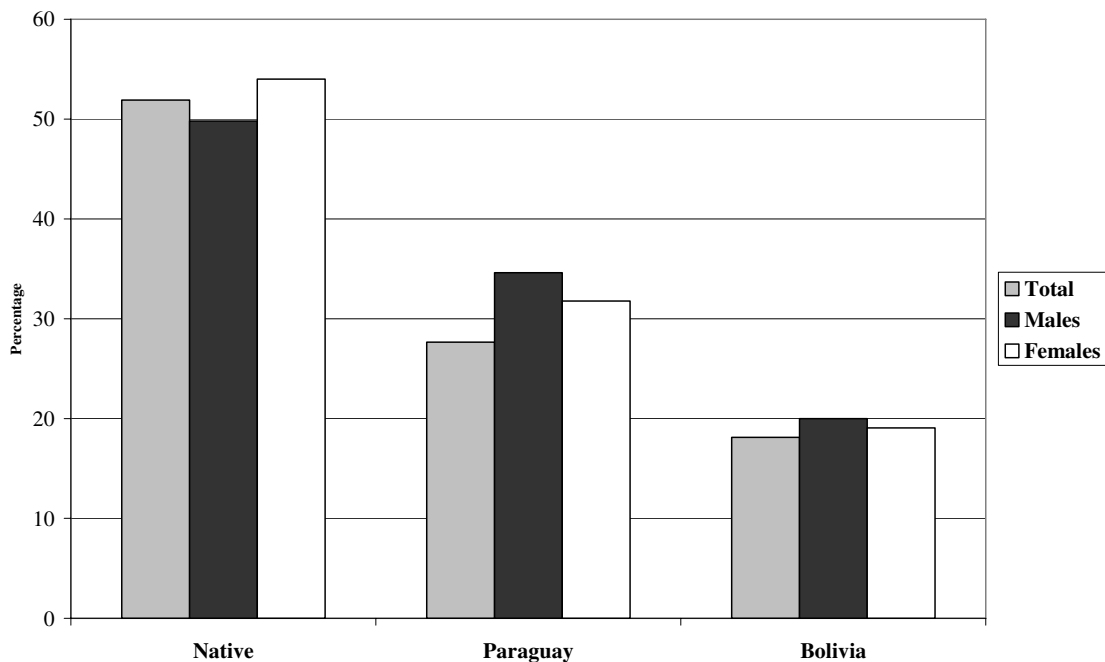
Immigrants who remain in receiving countries may benefit not only from the higher wages they would receive in comparison to those in their origin countries but also from having access to other types of social resources and goods. Even though elements such as access to public health care and education may be not necessarily present when migrants first balance the decision to move, they surely are significant when they decide to stay.

In Argentina access to public health care is universal, including for irregular migrants. Although immigrants can use these public resources they have a much limited access to private medicine compared to the native population. Private health care in Argentina is obtained through formal wage jobs or by paying out of pocket. Due to the fact that immigrants work mainly in informal-type of jobs, they have solely access to public clinics or hospitals. Figure 2 illustrates the lower health care coverage among Paraguayan and Bolivian immigrants in Argentina.

⁵⁷ INDEC, Encuesta Permanente de Hogares, 2005.

Even though migrants mainly go to public health care institutions and often feel discriminated by hospital staff⁵⁸, there are evidences on their high regard of the care they receive compared to that of their countries of origin. Results from a survey conducted with 511 Paraguayan and Peruvians immigrants in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires clearly illustrate this point 94% of Paraguayans and 84% of Peruvian stated that they have a better health care in Argentina than in their origin countries.

Figure 2
Percentage of population who have other forms of health care coverage besides public hospitals and clinics by origin



Source: INDEC, Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales, 2002-2003

⁵⁸ Only recently scholars have started examining the relationships between international migration and health in Argentina. Several qualitative studies conducted in public hospitals in Argentina show the existence of stereotypes and prejudices among physicians in regard to immigrants from neighbouring countries and Peru (Caggiano, 2007; Cerrutti, 2006; Jelín, Grimson and Zamberlin, 2006; Mombello, 2006).

It is important to mention that immigrant women in Argentina have a similar preventive health care behavior than natives, particularly regarding reproductive health. A study based on a nation-wide survey collected in Argentina showed no differences in the percentage of women receiving regular gynecological exams. Immigrants were only slightly more likely of not having ever performed a mammogram (47.4 vs. 41.9) (Cerrutti, 2006). In public hospitals and clinics, immigrants have the right to receive free contraceptive methods as stated by Argentina's National Reproductive Health Law.

Foreign born children and youth have also access to public education, irrespectively of their legal status. Most of children attend schools, as it is shown in Table 8. School attendance is practically universal until age 14, age at which most of children are expected to complete primary school. At the 15-19 age group school attendance is much lower, indicative of a significant drop out during high-school, higher than among native students.⁵⁹ Among those expected to be attending tertiary or college education (ages 20-24), only a minority continues in the educational system. Yet a very interesting phenomenon can be observed: the rate of attendance of Bolivian immigrants aged 20-24 is almost the same as that of natives. This is a significant finding provided that the average socioeconomic level of this immigrant group is relatively low⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ A small proportion of those who are not attending school probably have never entered high-school and another fraction is likely to have finished that cycle.

⁶⁰ Unfortunately due to the format of their census data it was not possible to compare the attendance rate of young people in Bolivia with that of Bolivian immigrants in Argentina.

Table 8. Argentina, percentage of population attending school by age group and country of origin.

Age groups and country of origin	Male	Female	Total
Age group 5 to 9			
Bolivia	93,2	99,0	95,3
Paraguay	92,1	100,0	97,0
Argentina	93,9	94,3	94,1
Age group 10 to 14			
Bolivia	100,0	99,4	99,7
Paraguay	99,2	97,2	97,9
Argentina	96,2	96,9	96,5
Age group 15 to 19			
Bolivia	65,5	50,6	57,3
Paraguay	58,7	54,8	56,6
Argentina	66,3	70,9	68,5
Age group 20 to 24			
Bolivia	30,6	29,5	30,1
Paraguay	11,9	15,2	13,9
Argentina	28,0	33,7	30,8

Source: INDEC, Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones, 2002-2003 and Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2001

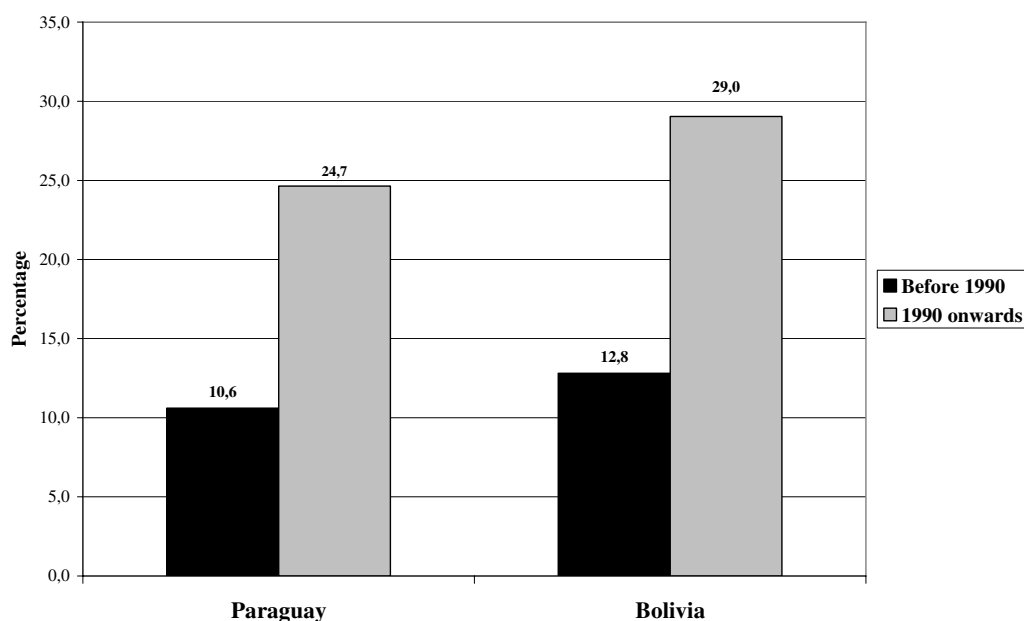
Finally, another aspect to take into account that also relates with public welfare systems as well as private charity that provide help and assistance to immigrants. According to the ECMI, 15% of all Bolivian immigrants live in households receiving institutional help from public or private organizations. Among Paraguayans the proportion is lower, about 11%. However, this type of help is more frequently offered to recent migrants who live in Buenos Aires City or in its metropolitan area. A third of recently arrived Bolivians who reside in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires live in households receiving institutional help

Context of reception: housing conditions

Over time, immigrants arriving to Argentina have increasingly headed to Buenos Aires City or the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires. At the same time, housing costs, particularly in central areas, have been growing. As a consequence, immigrants particularly those who arrive more recently end up living in deprived neighborhoods or shantytowns. Table 9 shows the proportion of immigrants from Bolivia and from Paraguay living in an inconvenient dwelling and/or in overcrowded rooms.

Figure 3

Percentage of immigrants from Bolivia and from Paraguay living in inconvenient dwellings and/or overcrowding rooms by year of arrival to Argentina



Source: INDEC, Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales, 2002-2003

Time spent in the receiving country seems to significantly improve immigrants' chances of residing in better housing, since the proportion of recent immigrants living in poor housing more than doubles that of immigrants who have spent long years in the country.

Another significant trait of immigrant's residential patterns is their significant spatial concentration. As it is common in various areas of the globe, regional immigrants in Argentina are more prone to live in close to people from the same national origin. Even though it is characteristic of most recent and dynamic immigrant groups, spatial segregation is higher among particular groups, for example Bolivians. Almost six out of ten Bolivian immigrants in Buenos Aires City live in just two of the sixteen communes in which the city is divided (Cerrutti, 2005). These two areas are one of the poorest of the city. Furthermore, within each of these areas there are two large shanty towns.

In sum, regional immigrants integrate to Argentina's society in a segmented manner, particularly among those who have arrived to the country recently. They have mainly access to informal-type of jobs, live in poor neighborhoods and have inconvenient dwellings. Yet, many chose to remain in the country, suggesting that in comparative terms they feel better than in their home countries, or plan to return in better conditions than when they left. Irrespectively of their sex, the vast majority of Paraguayan (87%) considers that they have a better standard of living in Argentina than the one they would have in Paraguay. Among Peruvians the percentage is lower but still significantly high (74%)⁶¹.

Relations with origin communities: remittance behavior

The sending of remittances is one of the most tangible aspects of international migration. According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) remittance reception is vital for Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. In the year 2006, Bolivia received about 1 billion dollars in remittances and in 2005 the amount that was equivalent to 8.5% of the Bolivian GDP, and exceeded all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows. Paraguay in 2005 received 550 million dollars in remittances, what constituted 7.2% of its GDP, eight times the total FDI and almost the same revenues of Paraguayan most

⁶¹ Data from 511 interviews collected in Buenos Aires with Paraguayan and Peruvian migrants aged 18-65.

important export (soya). Finally, in 2006, Peru received approximately 2.8 billion dollars in remittances in One year before remittances exceeded Peru's revenues from tourism and all agricultural exports and were equal to FDI⁶².

Even though numerous emigrants from these three countries live in the region, most of the remittances are originated in the developed world. Surveys conducted by Bendixen & Associates in several Latin American countries indicate that in Paraguay only 34.5% of recipients get remittances from a relative residing in Argentina or Brazil. Of the \$650 million dollars received in Paraguay, only \$140 million were originated in Latin America.

In Bolivia 49% of recipients received transfers from relatives in Latin America (and half of them from Argentina), although the average amount of money they get each time is significantly lower compared with the average amount sent by relatives in US or Europe (\$120 and \$210, respectively). Finally, in the case of Peru, almost half of recipients receive remittances from United States, 26% from Europe, and 18% from Latin America⁶³.

Three interrelated factors may explain differences in both the propensity to send remittances home and the amount sent by regional migrants and migrants in developed countries. The first one and, more obvious, relates to differences in average income levels that immigrants received in the developing and developed world. The second factor relates to effects of migratory trends overtime. As indicated before, emigrants from South America are increasingly heading to the developed world, affecting the composition of recently emigrated migrant cohorts. Among recent emigrants, who are the ones more likely to send money back home, those in United States and Europe are over-represented, affecting therefore the origin of remittances. The third factor relates to the nature of regional migration, particularly in the Southern Cone and the probabilities

⁶² Data from http://www.iadb.org/mif/remesas_map.cfm?language=English&parid=5

⁶³ It may well be possible that remittances from Argentina to Paraguay and to Bolivia are undercounted due to the extensive use of informal transfer methods.

for family reunification. It is very likely that due to both lower costs and lower controls and barriers to immigration, immigrants in Argentina will be more likely to reunify their families or bring close relatives –that is potential receivers of remittances- sooner.

The fact that today more women are migrating on their own or as main economic providers has increased the interest on a gender perspective on remittance behavior. Ramirez, Dominguez and Morais (2005) have pointed out that the sending of remittances is conditioned by women's position in the household in their country of origin. If women migrated as main providers they will very likely undertake long, arduous shifts and send as much money home as they can. Those who migrate autonomously, not to provide for the family, will remit less and for other purposes (such as family investments or education of siblings). Finally, women who migrate as dependents of a male partner will send less, although they will indirectly contribute through reproductive labour to their families.

Evidence on remittance behavior of regional migrants, particularly on differences between of men and women is scattered. In a study of gender differences on remittance behavior of Paraguayan and Peruvian immigrants in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Cerrutti (2008) found that although the percentage of active remitters (that is those who were sending remittances at the time of the survey), was not significantly different between by sex, women were more likely to send money home on a regular bases. Also, the study shows that among active remitters, women send a higher proportion of their income (in spite of their earning lower average earning compared to men).

Migrants' situation influences remittance behavior of both men and women. The most obvious is that having children in their country of origin increases the propensity to send remittances. Nevertheless, this likelihood is higher among women who are the main providers and are single (Table 8).

Studies conducted in developed countries have pointed out a set of hypothesis on remittance motivations and behaviors. Amuedo-Dorantes, Banska y Pozo (2004) point out five potential motivations to remit: *altruism*; *consumption-smoothing* (as part of a risk management strategy); *target savings*; *insurance purposes* and *loan repayment*. In general it is expected that recent migrants and circular migrants will be more prompt to be active remitters. This is because they have stronger commitments to sustain their families, they have to keep a reputation in case they have to return or they have to give back the money borrowed to migrate. However, these hypotheses have not been tested systematically neither separately for men and women, nor in other migratory contexts with more flexible migratory policies or less strict borders control, such as in the Southern Cone. Since the fear to be deported or the penalties of being undocumented are lower, it could be argued that motivations to remit are driven basically for altruistic purposes. Cerrutti (2008) found that among Paraguayan and Peruvian immigrants in Buenos Aires, recent migrants are more frequently active remitters than those who have spend more time in Argentina, with the exception of Paraguayan men. Also, found that those who have migrated back and forth more than once, and are more likely to keep stronger links with origin communities are more likely to be active remitters (Table 8).

In any case, it is important to point out that the evidence of the expected use of remittances when sent by female or male migrants to Paraguay or to Peru are not essentially or significantly different. Generally money transferred will be used for household maintenance, and additionally to pay for educational and health expenses. Only a tiny minority of migrants send money home with investment or construction purposes⁶⁴

⁶⁴ However, in the case of Paraguayan migrants, 36% of those who returned to their country with saving employed them in buying or repairing a house and about 18% in a business or in land (Cerrutti and Parrado, 2006).

Table 9. Proportion of immigrants from Paraguay and Peru who send remittances by sex and other selected characteristics.

% of active remitters by selected characteristics	Paraguay		Perú	
	Males	Females	Males	Female
TOTAL	31,1	34,1	37,4	34,8
Single (no partner)				
Childless	23,1	28,6	41,4	35,3
With a child in origing country	50,0	69,2	45,5	66,7
All chidren in Argentina	14,3	20,7	0,0	13,6
With a partner				
Childless	30,0	10,0	33,3	57,1
With a child in origing country	69,2	44,4	68,4	52,0
All children in Argentina	20,2	38,3	20,5	16,7
Time in Argentina				
Less than 5 years	33,3	50,0	45,1	43,6
5 years or more	29,3	33,3	31,3	31,3
Number of migrations				
One	27,6	30,5	35,0	31,8
Two or more	36,1	44,2	58,3	48,0

Source: extracted from Cerrutti, 2008.

Evidences on female trafficking in South America

Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation as well as for forced labor is a criminal activity and major concern internationally. The South American region is not an exception, and migrant women have been silent victims of this tragedy. The 2006 UNFPA report on the State of World Population devoted to the migration of women worldwide points out: “Trafficking constitutes the ‘underside’ of globalization. The opening-up of national borders and international markets has led not only to increased international flows of capital, goods and labour, but also to the globalization of organized crime. Improved information technologies and transportation allow transnational syndicates to operate as never before. The majority of victims are migrants in search of a better life who are usually lured by the false promise of a decent job. Increasingly restrictive immigration policies limit the possibility of legal entry, which is in turn driving more and more would-be migrants to unwittingly entrust themselves to traffickers”.

According to UNFPA the majority of people forced into labor are women. Of the 12.3 million people forced into labor worldwide, the ILO contends that women and girls form the majority: 56 per cent of those in forced economic exploitation, and 98 per cent of those in forced commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficked women are usually forced into prostitution and sex tourism, commercial marriages and other "female" occupations such as domestic work, agricultural and sweatshop labor. Human trafficking is the third most lucrative illicit business in the world after arms and drug trafficking.

As clandestine activity, gathering reliable estimates is extremely difficult. Consequently the estimation of its prevalence in specific countries is usually incomplete and subject to a significant margin of error. Yet there are many reports by international agencies and NGO's providing evidences that Latin American countries serve as source, transit and destination for trafficking victims.

Ribando (2005) points out, that even though trafficking for forced labor is a serious problem in Latin America, trafficking for sexual exploitation constituted a more widespread and pressing regional problem. In her report she states that “Most victims are trafficked for prostitution, but others are used for pornography and stripping. Children tend to be trafficked within their own countries, while women between the ages of 18 and 30 are often trafficked internationally, sometimes with the consent of their husbands or other family members. Major source and recruitment countries include Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Suriname. Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United States are commonly identified as countries of destination for Latin American trafficking victims. Although flows are significant, some observers question 2004 and 2005 TIP report estimates that some 70,000 Brazilians, 45,000-50,000 Colombians, and 50,000 Dominicans are engaged in prostitution in Europe and may be trafficking victims, noting that the figures have not been corroborated by European police officials. In addition to Europe and the United States, the Organization of American States (OAS) estimates that 1,700 women from Latin America, primarily Colombians, Peruvians, and Brazilians, are trafficked each year to Japan”.⁶⁵

There are several studies conducted in South America on women’s trafficking. According to the 2007 report on human trafficking by the State Department of the United States, Argentina is a country of origin, transit and destination of men, women and children victims of trafficking with purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Most of these activities are carried out internally, although many women and children who are victims of sexual exploitation are brought from Paraguay and Brazil. Peruvians and Bolivians citizens are brought to the country and forced to work in clandestine workshops and agriculture.

⁶⁵ UNFPA 2006 report coincides stating that most women are trafficked from Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Mexico and are taken for sexual exploitation mainly to North America and Western Europe and to a lesser extent to Japan. However it also states that children from the region are also trafficked into the sex and drugs trade or exploited as domestic workers.

Recently, there have been a series of public accusations of the use of immigrant labor under slavery conditions in Argentina; particularly in the garment industry (which concentrates a high proportion of Bolivian women)⁶⁶. In the last years human rights organizations and migrant groups have filed formal complaints to the authorities and organized several public protests.⁶⁷

An International Migration Organization report (2008) refers to trafficking for sexual exploitation in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Using press releases (from 2000 and 2006), judiciary records, interviews with key informants and with victims of abuses it describes the functioning of the activity, the types of networks (internal and international), the actors involved and the strategies used to get their victims. Besides extensive internal networks, victims particularly from Paraguay and to a lesser extent from Dominican Republic were also identified. As it has been suggested by other reports, these types of activities have to have the “consent” of government authorities in order to operate. The same report (IOM, 2008) presents evidences of victims of sexual exploitation in Chile. Most victims came from Argentina (40%), Peru (25%) and Colombia (24%). Practically all of them were aged 18 and older with economically disadvantaged origins.

Roth and Fernandez (2004) report on human trafficking in Bolivia state that it is a considerable problem in the country⁶⁸. Bolivia has been indicated as both origin and destination, and trafficking is linked to internal as well as international migration.⁶⁹ The report identifies two main forms of international trafficking from Bolivia: illegal adoption of babies and traffic for labor exploitation. Illegal demand for children has

⁶⁶ Diverse forms of immigrant slavery work have been detected in Argentina, being one of them the “debt servitude” (*servidumbre por deudas*), particularly common in clandestine garment workshops. Victims are obliged to work (together with their families) long hours a day in order to pay for migration travel expenses. Generally employers retain immigrant identification documents and hold their salaries, paying just very small weekly amounts in order to keep control over them.

⁶⁷ In 2006 a garment workshop went on fire and six Bolivian immigrants were killed (including four children). After that the National Ministry of Labor and the Buenos Aires City Government started an investigation.

⁶⁸ This report was conducted for the Organization of International Migration, OIM and the Organization of the American States, OAS,

⁶⁹ The State Department of the US has rated both Bolivia and Argentina as level 2 in terms of human trafficking.

considerably grown and it is estimated currently intermediaries charge between 5000 and 30.000 thousand dollars per child. Concerning human traffic for labor exploitation this report identifies three main destinations: Argentina, Brazil and Spain. In the case of Argentina, under the new migratory law, requirements to enter the country have decreased substantially and it is expected that will have a positive effect reducing the operation of smugglers.⁷⁰

Trafficking people from Bolivia to Brazil is also common, particularly to Sao Paulo. Bolivians had to work long hours (between 14 and 16) under rotten conditions. Finally Roth and Fernandez also report some evidence on cases of human trafficking from Bolivia to Chile, particularly of boys and girls to work as domestic servants.

Another study on woman's trafficking in for sexual exploitation in Paraguay conducted by the International Organization of Migration (2005) depicts the complexity of the problem and the linkages with migration. Of the cases that had been gathered in the report, almost half (52%) of Paraguayan women force to prostitution were located in Argentina, and 25% in Spain. Teenagers (younger than 18) constituted 38% of cases, although among those in Argentina the proportion was much higher (about 60%).

Conclusions

During the last years patterns of international migration in South America have changed. The largest migratory streams from the region headed to Europe, particularly to Spain. Yet, nowadays migration streams from the region are being affected by stricter migratory policies and controls by the European Union and will probably slow down.

⁷⁰ Before this change in legislation, in order to enter the country Bolivians had to pay a fee and to prove having financial means. Therefore, impoverish people or those with no substantial social networks that could help them had to "contract" services of corruption networks. These illegal networks would lend money to immigrants who wanted to cross the border charging a fee. These Bolivians and Argentines networks operate providing transportation, housing, documents and work (in different low skilled jobs such as harvesting, construction workers, etc.). In many instances, Argentina's police agents were also involved.

Intra-regional migration, on the other hand, has grown at a much slower pace, unfortunately not as an indication of a decreasing emigration propensity of South Americans but as a result of the emergence of other more viable destinations. Still, and in relation to the political and economic situation of origin countries, some of the historical regional flows have continued, new arise and others virtually ceased.

As in other regions of the world, South American women have increased their share as international intra-regional migrants. As it was described, significant forces are driving the autonomous or the economic migration of women, mainly related to the limited structural opportunities for social and economic advancement offered in their countries of origin. Yet, as it was also discussed the demand of immigrant labor by receiving societies, particularly in the personal service and caring occupations is together with migration policies and border controls significant explanatory factors.

Women migrate in search of better opportunities but also escaping from unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, civil armed conflicts, and in the case of many Latin American countries also from crime and insecurity. Migration decisions are not easy, since frequently they involve leaving their families and children behind. Immigrants have to face new environments with little information and resources. Since opportunities for legal migration are restricted, often migrant women are subject of abuses for being undocumented.

For many women emigration means liberation from traditional restrictions imposed in origin communities, and consequently greater autonomy. Commonly it means escaping from dreadful romantic relation, domestic violence or strict control of parents. By migrating they seek to satisfy freedoms of human development needs. The search of better opportunities for personal development and upward social mobility drive more autonomous and independent women to migrate.

Yet, compared to men, once in destination, migrant women face greater obstacles than men. This paper has shown that female migration within the region has increased and

that the autonomous migration of women became a common phenomenon. Yet for the vast majority of female workers the types of jobs they can obtain are very limited, low skilled and meagerly remunerated. Their restricted opportunities relate to the type of migrant networks that women rely on -predominately strong ties with limited access to other segments of the labor market. Also to their skills profiles, since many intra-regional female migrants have attained lower levels of education. Due to their limited resources and contacts, those who migrated with their children also face difficulties to work and care for their families, and make them more prone to accept flexible and informal types of jobs,

There is no doubt that being undocumented is a key factor explaining disadvantages in the labor market. In Argentina, undocumented migrants are either independent workers or easily and typically hired for informal type of jobs without fringe benefits and with no protection from the labor laws. However, due to the fact that many native workers also are employed in the same conditions, the social stigma of working in irregular jobs is probably lower than in the developed world.

The increasing presence of migrant women despite their disadvantaged situation in the labor market suggests that they may obtain additional benefits to the migration process. The vast majority of them has either brought their families to Argentina or formed their new ones in this country. Long-distance motherhood is uncommon among Bolivian mothers and even though it is more likely about recent Paraguayan migrants, the vast majority of mothers have their children with them. These traits are indicative of a more stable or permanent female migration with an orientation to remain in the reception country. Part of the attraction to live in Argentina has to do with having access to public education and health, as it evidenced by migrants' opinions. Most of them consider that the public educational and health system is better than the one in their country of origin.

Nevertheless, as it has also been shown, immigrants face a series of abuses. Human rights violations of undocumented migrants in the region are not uncommon and there are numerous evidences of the pervasiveness of human trafficking in the region,

particularly women and girls. Promoting the regularization of undocumented migrants and facilitating labor mobility throughout the region would be the first and unavoidable step in the struggle against immigrant abuses of all kinds.

Auspiciously a series of MERCOSUR agreements are making significant progress in improving legal mobility of citizens of country members. Argentina has made the first and most concrete step by changing its migratory law and allowing citizens of MERCOSUR associated countries to obtain legal residence in Argentina. The new program called “Patria Grande” has already regularized half million immigrants in Argentina. The social and economic benefits for immigrants will be without doubts numerous, as well as for the receiving country. The “Residency Agreement” signed by MERCOSUR countries and the implementation of Argentina’s initiative are indicative of a newer and progressive view on international migration in the region.

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