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# **Processes of Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (1950-2008)**

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# Abstract

The main characteristic of the Latin American migration on the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the change of flow. Until the 1950s, Latin America received migrants from Europe and the Middle East. As a result of economic change, political instability, and economic crisis, Latin America started exporting migrant workers. Now, Latin American migrants mainly go to the U.S., and in less extend to Europe (i.e. Spain, Italy, and Portugal), and in some cases to Japan as it is the case of Peru and Brazil. Several migrant patterns follow this process, which is characteristic to the massive emigration at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Keywords: Latin America, immigration, emigration, United States, Europe.

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## **Introduction**

History shows that migration processes are reversible. Countries receiving immigrants can turn into countries of emigration, and countries that people were emigrating from may become countries attracting immigrants. This is what has happened to some countries in Europe and the opposite is now occurring in Latin America. In the last fifty years, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has stopped being an attractive destination for immigrants from Europe, the Far East and the Middle East, and is now emerging on the international scene as a source of emigration.

The process has been slow to develop, but now involves all the countries of the region. Although there is a general dynamic, the behaviour of each country may be very different. Some migration processes definitely head towards a single direction, while others have several possible destinations and others again have many points of arrival. In a microcosm as small as the Hispanic Caribbean Islands three types of migration process to the United States may be distinguished in terms of the migrants' legal status: Cubans tend to emigrate as refugees, Puerto Ricans with an American passport and Dominicans either legally or without papers. Its heterogeneity is a special characteristic of Latin American and Caribbean emigration, but it is still possible to mark stages, define processes and study in depth particular patterns that are common throughout the region.

The aim of this article is to approach the subject from a historical and sociological perspective. The general picture is given precedence over the specifics of each country. Obviously, much will have to be left out, and many particularities left to one side. The migration adventure is a personal adventure undertaken by people with names and surnames, which for reasons of space and focus we have had to ignore so as to be able to concentrate on the most relevant processes. Processes that gain relevance because they are important numerically. The quantitative dimension is a basic characteristic of the phenomenon of migration, more especially when it is realized that migration is not only an academic subject but also a matter of public policy.

The paper is divided into four parts. The background section gives an account of the initial phase, when Latin America and the Caribbean was a land receiving migrants, a place of immigration. The second part explains how the processes, patterns and general tendencies of emigration from the region have developed. The third section addresses the impact of migration on human development, with particular emphasis on remittances. The fourth section develops the subject of migration policies and the capacities that Latin Americans have for migrating and learning to live in different places around the world. Finally the article concludes with a brief summing-up.

### **1.- Historical background.**

For four-and-a-half centuries, from the sixteenth century to half way through the twentieth, Latin America and the Caribbean was a territory receiving immigrants, about 20 million people from all over the world. There are at least four reasons that can explain such a long process of racial and cultural exchange. First of all, the history of colonial relations with Spain and Portugal, and later the interest of other European powers in the region (England, France and Holland). Secondly, the spread of the system of slavery, which planted some eight million Africans as slaves, most of whom were concentrated in Brazil, Peru and the West Indies. A third factor has to do with the vastness of the region's natural resources and the endless unoccupied lands that were offered up for colonization, in order to attract immigrants. Finally, during the first half of the twentieth century, there was a significant development of the economy in the region, and a number of Latin American countries had a GDP that was equal to or higher than that of the European countries with the largest numbers of people emigrating. In the 1920s, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay had a per capita income higher than in Italy, Spain and Portugal. Between 1940 and 1970 Latin America grew at an average rate of 5% a year. In the same period Mexico had her economic miracle and Venezuela experienced an oil boom. In 1950 Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela, Peru, Mexico and Colombia, had a GDP rate above that of Spain and Portugal (Solimano, 2008).

The case of the Caribbean is somewhat different. Although these general factors apply, it is necessary to recognize that the history of the West Indies is far more complex, owing to

processes of delayed independence, the large number of small nations, the continuance of colonial and neo-colonial relations and the permanency of the notion of overseas territories.

During the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean received immigrants. However, the cases of Argentina, Brasil and Venezuela stand out. The Immigrants Museum of Argentina, *el Museo del Inmigrante Argentina* (2009), has records of about 5 million people who arrived at her ports between 1857 and 1920. Other calculations estimate that between 1870 and 1950 Argentina took in around 6 million European immigrants, especially from Italy and y Spain (Solimano, 2008).

Further, the Immigration Museum of Brazil, *el Museo de la Inmigración en Brasil* (2009) which has records for entries into the country through the principal ports of entry, reports that between 1870 and 1953 just over 5.2 million immigrants came in, of whom 4.5 million were of European origin, mainly from Italy, Portugal and Spain; and half a million came from other parts of the world (Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Koreans and Greeks), while around 200,000 were from Japan and started to arrive at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Later, in the middle of the twentieth century, Venezuela was also to become an attractive place for immigrants. From the sixties till after the seventies, people arrived mostly from Portugal, Italy and Spain. Then came the intra-regional migrants, mainly from Colombia and to a lesser extent from Ecuador, Peru and the Dominican Republic. Migration flows came to an end in 1983 with the oil price crisis (Van Roy, 1987).

As well as immigration from Europe, immigrants came from the East and the Middle East. Those of Japanese origin settled for the most part in Brazil and Peru; the Chinese are spread over many countries but have a significant presence in Peru, Panama, Brazil and Cuba. Immigrants from the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey, etc.) tend to be scattered, but they have a significant presence in Chile, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Mexico and Central America (Le Monde, 2008; Marimoto, 1999; Masato, 2002; Cuche, 2001).

The final waves of immigrants into Latin America and the Caribbean took place in the context of the Second World War. Refugees from the Spanish civil war came over and were



welcomed as such in Mexico (20,000), the Dominican Republic (3,000) and Chile (2000). Tens of thousands of immigrants also arrived with visas obtained in other Latin American embassies. Subsequently the second world war brought over as immigrants another batch of displaced persons from different parts of Europe. In the fifties, the flow of immigrants to Latin America and the Caribbean almost dried up, with the exception of Venezuela which would continue to receive people from Spain, Italy and Portugal until after the seventies.

After four and a half centuries of immigration to Latin America and the Caribbean, the flow of migrants changed direction, with, first, the intense processes of internal migration, from rural to urban and especially to the capitals and metropolises of Latin America. In the seventies migration flows started between countries in the region and to the United States and Canada. Finally, towards the end of the twentieth century, emigration to Europe and other parts of the world got underway.

## **2.- Processes, patterns and tendencies. Internal and international migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (1950-2008).**

There are a number of global and regional factors that have influenced the start and the development of the Latin American migration process in this period: the geopolitical context of the Cold War in the region, the high rates of demographic growth, the limitations and contradictions of economic models and the demand for cheap labour from industrialized nations with a high rating on the human development index (HDI).

### **The geopolitical context**

After the Second World War, international migration flows changed and were redirected according to the situation in different regions. In Europe there were two processes: the recruitment of temporary workers and the immigration of workers who came from colonies and former colonies. Latin America participated in this process with the emigration of workers from the West Indies to their various colonial metropolises: in England, France and Holland (Martin and Zucher, 2008).

In the continent of America, the United States implemented a dual migration policy: hiring cheap labour in the nearby region of Mexico and the Caribbean, and the political control of migration from other countries in accordance with various conjunctions marked by the development of the Cold War in the region. For the U.S.A., Mexico and Puerto Rico were regarded as natural reserves of labour, which could be made use of according to the needs of the U.S. labour market. Puerto Rico operates in the sphere of colonial relations, and Mexico in the sphere of dependence and immediate proximity. The colonial relation with Puerto Rico makes it impossible to disdain or deport labour, while, to the contrary, in the case of Mexico labour is both readily available and disposable. (Duany, 2002; Durand, et al. 1999). Mexico is the chief supplier of cheap labour to the United States which right up to the present comes in three different types: legal migration, undocumented migration and temporary migration with various kinds of H2 visa (Durand, 2007).

In addition to the hiring of workers from Mexico, Puerto Rico and the West Indies, another determining factor was that played by geopolitical considerations, in the context of the cold war, on the migration flows from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and, later, Central America. In the case of Cuba, even today there is an ample refugee policy. In the case of the Dominican Republic, the U.S. had recourse to military intervention (1965) and legal emigration was encouraged as a means of exercising political control. It was in Central America that the last battles of the cold war were fought in the eighties, and in some cases a refugee policy was applied and in others it was the political control of undocumented migration (Durand, et al., 2007; Pedraza, 2007). For the rest of Latin America, migration flows operated basically motivated by economic factors and those of domestic policy, and this would apply to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. The military interventions in Granada and Haiti also provoked migration flows, but on a much smaller scale.

On the other hand, the indirect intervention of the United States in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela served to some extent as a retaining wall for mass emigration. The dictators and the military tend to put blocks on free transit and tend to lean on popular sectors for their support. In the dictatorships of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia, those who emigrated were basically left wing dissidents and

these preferred to seek asylum in France, Canada, Sweden, Mexico and Venezuela, rather than the United States (Angell and Carstairs, 1987; Wright and Oñate, 2007).

### **The demographic factor**

Also determining the migration processes were the high birth rates in the region. During the fifties and sixties, population growth in Latin America was explosive. In 1950 the total fertility rate was 5.88 children per woman, which increased to 5.93 in 1955 and kept rising till it reached its maximum of 5.97 in 1960. Yet every country had its own peculiarities. In Mexico, the total fertility rate (children per woman) was very high (6.70) as it was in Brazil (6.15), while in Argentina it was much less (3.45). In the United States the rate from 1950-1955 was at 3.45 and in the next period, which was that of the “baby boom” it rose to 3.71. Whereas in Europe the rate from 1950-1955 was 2.66 and in Latin America and the Caribbean taken as a whole, the rate was 5.88, just over twice as high. Half a century later, in the period of 2000-2005, Latin America and the Caribbean reached a fertility rate similar to that of Europe in the fifties. In absolute terms the HDI tripled in fifty years and the size of the population grew from 167 million in 1950 to 523 million in the year 2000 (United Nations, 2007).

In some cases, such as that of Mexico, birth control policies were highly successful, and the birth rate came down from 6.80, the highest figure in the period 1955-1960, to 2.40 in the period 2000-2005. However, there are other countries where birth control policies have not been applied with the same rigour, such as Guatemala, which had a rate of 7.00 children per woman in 1950-55, which came down to 4.60 in the period 2000-2005. In the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, there is a decrease in the birth rate, but the rhythms and tendencies are different (United Nations, 2007).

Table 1. Birth rate (children per woman) for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, United States and Europe. 1950-2005

	<b>50- 55</b>	<b>55- 60</b>	<b>60- 65</b>	<b>65- 70</b>	<b>70- 75</b>	<b>75- 80</b>	<b>80- 85</b>	<b>85- 90</b>	<b>90- 95</b>	<b>95- 00</b>	<b>00- 05</b>
<b>LAC</b>	<b>5.88</b>	5.93	5.97	5.54	5.04	4.48	3.92	3.41	3.03	2.73	<b>2.52</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>6.70</b>	6.80	6.75	6.75	6.50	5.25	4.25	3.63	3.19	2.67	<b>2.40</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	<b>3.15</b>	3.13	3.09	3.05	3.15	3.44	3.15	3.05	2.90	2.63	<b>2.35</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>6.15</b>	6.15	6.15	5.38	4.72	4.31	3.80	3.10	2.60	2.45	<b>2.35</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>3.45</b>	3.71	3.31	2.55	2.02	1.79	1.83	1.92	2.03	1.99	<b>2.04</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>2.66</b>	2.66	2.58	2.36	2.16	1.97	1.89	1.83	1.97	1.40	<b>1.41</b>

Source: original elaboration based on data in United Nations, 2007.

In one way or another, the demographic growth of LAC from the fifties to the eighties, led to there being a largely young population that was three times bigger than before. The demographic boon of Latin America has allowed it to become a net exporter of labour since the end of the twentieth century. However, the flows of immigrants in Latin America tend to be intra-regional, so it is possible that in twenty years the population may stabilize at a rate of replacement without increase. If this demographic process were to be accompanied by sustained economic growth then Latin America and the Caribbean might cease to be a region producing flows of emigration quite soon.

### **Economic models**

Finally, it is necessary to consider the permanent background of a critical economic situation in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century. According to Park (1995) The Alliance for Progress, an ambitious programme of the United States for the development of the region (1961-1970), did not reach the objectives hoped for and was considered a failure. The import substitution model reached its limits in 1970, and its chief exponents, Mexico and Brazil, sunk into sizeable and prolonged economic crises. The eighties is considered a “lost decade” for the whole region. A number of related factors contributed to the debacle: the exorbitant sizes of foreign debt, uncontrolled inflation, recurring devaluations,

political instability and the opening to foreign markets (deregulation) (Klikberg, 2001). The combination of several factors: poverty, inequality and the precarious condition of the labor market, along with foreign demand for labor, created the right conditions for emigration (Solimano, 2008).

Furthermore, with the new economic model of neoliberalism, which started to spread in the eighties, came the dismantling of national industries, banking crises and a worsening of the situation in the rural environment. Only a few exporting sectors have benefited substantially. At any rate, half way through the nineties the economic recovery for Latin America began and it entered a phase of political stability. With the end of the Cold War, the United States moderated her political interventionism in Latin America and became a fervent promoter of democracy. At the very same time, the U.S. refashioned a new economic policy that was based on the “Washington Consensus” and consisted of a general alignment to neoliberal policies and to joining world markets.

It looked during the first years of the twenty-first century as though the sun had begun to shine on Latin America. The economy of the region as a whole had started to grow. For the year 2007 the estimated growth rate was an average of 4.5 for the whole region. Chile, Brazil and Peru had sustained high growth rates for more than five years. On the other hand, Mexico and Argentina still had not got off the ground. But the growth of Latin America in these years was due more to the push from China and India as consumers of raw materials, than to successes of the new economic model and the effects of being in tow to the North American economy.<sup>1</sup> The bonanza did not last long. The financial and economic crisis of 2008 inverted the tendency and hard times are expected ahead.

The particular conditions of Latin America’s political economy have a direct impact on migration flows. During the three decades of 1950 to 1980, the most significant migration flows in Latin America were of a domestic character, resulting in the explosive growth of megalopolises like Mexico City, Buenos Aires and San Paulo, and big cities like Rio de Janeiro,

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<sup>1</sup> While Chile, Peru, Argentina y Brazil, linked to the European and Asian markets, grew at rates of 6 and 7%; Mexico, tightly linked to the North American market, grew at a rate of 2% between the years 2000 and 2007. *El País*, 6 de mayo de 2008.

Bogota, Santiago, Caracas and Lima (García Canclini, 2004). During the eighties, the lost decade in Latin America, the economic and political crisis reached its lowest level and international migration processes, to the United States, Canada and Japan, began to form and develop (Takenaka, 2005, Lesser, 2006, Durand and Massey, 2003). During the nineties and the first five years of the twenty-first century the opportunity to emigrate to Europe, especially to Spain, Italy and Portugal, is given, and intra-regional migration to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica, is intensified.

For the first decade of the twenty-first century, we can distinguish three fully consolidated international migration processes in Latin America: intra-regional migration, South-North migration, and transoceanic migration. In each of these processes certain patterns may be distinguished for each case in particular.

### **3.- Domestic, intra-regional and transit migration**

#### **Domestic migration**

During the nineteen fifties and sixties Latin America received the first impact of a demographic explosion which was reflected in the growth of capital cities. This was a process of rural-urban migration, but also of migration from provincial cities or towns to national capitals. The metropolitan centers were a great pole of attraction, where the best labor, health and education options were concentrated. But at the same time, they did not have the urban services necessary to cater for the arrival of hundreds of thousand of domestic migrants (see Table 2). Neither were governments prepared to manage and resolve urban problems provoked by the chaotic unplanned urbanization of the *barriadas*, *favelas*, and irregular settlements.

Table 2

Urban growth in certain Latin American cities (1940-1960)

	Rio de Janeiro	San Paulo	Lima	Mexico City
1940	2,136.682	1,429.574	614,345	1,757,000
1960	4,691.654	4,368.603	1,641,221	4,589,792

Source: Unikel, 1975

When the demand for urban services in the cities was politicized there arose urban social movements which would become fundamental protagonists in Latin American urban politics during the seventies and eighties. However, it was the economic crisis of the eighties that provoked a contraction in employment and put a brake on the explosive growth of these big cities.

As the years and the decades passed, these *barriada* quarters became popular settlements inhabited by lower middle class laborers, industrial workers and employees. Urbanization took shape and allowed formal housing, and many small businesses and family enterprises to develop. Not only did the number of inhabitants of the big cities increase, so did the number of automobiles. In 1960 there were 248,000 vehicles in Mexico City and in 1970 there were 680,000 (Bataillón and Riviere D’Arc, 1973). In 2005 the number of automobiles in the Federal District had risen to 2.1 million and in the Metropolitan Zone there were 3.5 million.<sup>2</sup>

The unrestricted growth of many cities generated innumerable problems: traffic, pollution, overcrowding, water shortage, violence, insecurity. In this context, the medium sized cities of Latin America became a viable option as they had all the services, greater security and a better quality of life.

The full scale of the consequences of rural-urban migration in Latin America come to be appreciated at the end of the twentieth century, when the region ceased to be predominantly rural and became urban. For example, the urban population in Brazil was only 31% in 1940 and by

<sup>2</sup> Diagnosis of mobility in Mexico City: <http://www.fimevic.df.gob.mx/problemas/1diagnostico.htm>

2000 it was 81.2% of the population lived in cities (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia y Estadística, 2008). In the case of Mexico a similar tendency is observed, with 42% of the population living in zones considered urban in 1950, and in 2005 it was reported that 76.5 % of the population ought to be considered urban (INEGI, 2008).

At the same time, and as part of the same process, thousands of small populations disappeared from the map. The process is still proceeding and with considerable intensity as another factor has been added: international emigration. In Mexico, for example, in states with a high density of international migration, the depopulation of small localities is worrying: in Durango 76.9% of the municipalities had negative growth in the period 1990-2000, 57% in Zacatecas, 26.1% in Guanajuato and 25.8% in Jalisco.

### **Intra-regional migration**

During the seventies and eighties a number of factors contributed to the development of intra-regional and international migration processes. These were the deferred impact of the high rates of demographic growth from the forties and the fifties, recurring economic crises and generalized political instability. This combination of factors first encouraged intra-regional and then in the nineties, international migration processes.

According to our definition of the intra-regional migration process, this includes all Latin American and Caribbean countries and excludes the United States and Canada which we regard as South-North.

The intra-regional migration process is characterized by its age and diffusion, but also by its moderate intensity. Flows have been predominantly between neighboring countries and to a lesser extent between the various sub-regions. Until the seventies movement was mostly within Meso-America, the Caribbean or South America. Due in good measure to the limitations of that particular time and to the lack of routes of communication. It was also more difficult to travel because passports and visas were required. Perhaps the exception was Argentina, which always kept its doors open to immigration, did not require a visa and where it was easy to prolong one's stay and work informally. Later, during the seventies and eighties and with dictators of every



kind, it became more difficult to travel, but the number of refugees forced to leave increased. It was in the nineties that travel, commerce and tourism began to be liberalized.

Two patterns of migration can be distinguished in the intra-regional context: migrations of a short distance and for a limited period of time across borders, and those of greater distances and medium length stays directed to cities.

Border migration is of a temporary nature, over a short distance, and linked in many cases to the rhythms of harvest seasons, especially of coffee, tobacco, fruits, vegetables and sugar cane. Such are the cases of Bolivian migrant families who work in the sugar and the tobacco harvests in Northern Argentina (Danler and Medeiros, 1991); the Paraguayans who go to the subtropical crops, the horticultural and fruticultural villas of North-Eastern Argentina (Balán, 1988); the Peruvians who harvest banana and mango in Ecuador, because the wages are paid in dollars; the Nicaraguan peasants and the Ngöbe indigenous peoples of Panama who go to harvest coffee in Costa Rica (Alverenga, 2000; Rosero, 2002); the Guatemalans who harvest coffee and fruits in the plantations of Chiapas in Mexico (Mosquera, 1990); the Colombians who work in agriculture in the frontier regions of Zulia and Andes, in Venezuela (Van Roy, 1987), the people of the Dominican Republic who go to the sugar cane and coffee harvests in Puerto Rico (Pascual and Figueroa, 2000) and the Haitians who go to cut the cane and harvest the coffee in the Dominican Republic (Catanese, 1999; Grasmuck, 1982).

In Latin America border migration is made much easier because often those who take part are indigenous populations whose ethnic territories lie both sides of the border. Thus the immigrants from a neighbouring nation can blend in with people from the same ethnic group living in the country they have come to. Such is the case of the Mayans of Mexico and Guatemala, the Yanomami of Venezuela and Brazil, the Guajiro of Colombia and Venezuela, the Quechua of Bolivia and the North of Argentina, the Ayamara of Peru and Bolivia, the Guarani of Paraguay and Argentina. In many of these cases one cannot even speak of migration, because it is a question of mobility across ancestral lands. Similarly with certain Mexican, and certain Canadian tribes, who not only have free transit but also dual nationality, which is the case of the Kikapoo (Durand, 1994). Further, in the case of mestizo border migrants, these tend to have the

same phenotype, culture and language as their neighbours. Which makes processes of integration in border zones much more fluid and dynamic than in cities (Durand and Massey, 2009).

Intra-regional migration to cities, in turn, has two modalities: that of migrants of middle class and professional status, and that of workers and peasants, which is the larger group. The distinction is justified because in most cases the two types of migrant do not mix. The migrants in the first group with technical or professional qualifications tend to go to capital cities. Usually the decision to migrate is a personal choice, in search of a better job, better education and better prospects for professional development prospects. The other type is connected to migration networks, old family ties and mixed marriages. Finally, there are constantly more cases of migration induced by firms that have representatives and businesses in various countries.

A number of countries in the region have been receiving professional Latin American migrants: Venezuela, Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Chile, Brazil and Argentina. In the case of Venezuela, the oil boom of 1950 to 1980 created an unusual demand for both professionals and unqualified workers. According to the migratory regularization figures for 1980, 12.3% of Bolivian immigrants had university qualifications; as did 10% of the Peruvians, 7.8% of the Chileans and 8.9% of the Argentineans (Van Roy, 1987). At present the number of people born abroad is close to one million, and they represent 4.4% of the population, which is the highest indicator for Latin America. On a much smaller scale, Mexico as well as Ecuador, Chile, Argentina and Brazil attracts professional migrants because it can offer relative improvements in terms of salaries. This category of city migrants should include migrants exiled for political reasons, usually left wing dissidents who emigrated in order to seek asylum in the seventies and eighties. Such is the case of the people from Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia and central America who sought and found asylum in other Latin American countries.

In effect, dictatorships and authoritarian regimes tend to be very suspicious of emigration by their citizens and also of foreigners coming in. One common practice is to deport the dissidents and then shut the gates. This way the situation tends to calm down and both departures and arrivals are restricted. Leaving the case of Cuba which is an extreme example, the

Dominican Republic provides a paradigmatic case. During the dictatorship of Trujillo, any possibility of emigrating was virtually shut down and the political police directly controlled the issue of passports (Gardiner, 1979). In the case of Chile, during the dictatorship of Pinochet, around 200 people fled and the foreign population diminished from 90,441 people in 1970 to 84,345 in 1982. Dictatorships tend to emphasize domestic control of the population and justify their migration policies with arguments of national security (Mármora, 1987).

The pattern of migrations to cities within the region from rural areas, or by the urban populace, is of an established rather than temporary type like border migration; and it is a migration over greater distances, to places far from the point of origin, something that makes returning difficult. These migrants go into a secondary labor market: as domestic servants, taking care of the elderly, cleaning jobs, building, *maquila*, services and informal commerce; another feature is the tendency to develop ethnic economies, in streets, zones or neighborhoods with national identities; finally, they appropriate particular niches or labor spaces. Such is the case of the Peruvian “nannies” in domestic service who go to Santiago de Chile; as it is of the Peruvians and Paraguayans who work in the building trade in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Colombians in the Caracas textile industry; the Nicaraguan pickers who go to San José de Costa Rica and the Dominicans who work in cutting cane in Puerto Rico. (Duany, 1995; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Cardona, 1983; Rosero, 2002; Sassone, et al., 2004).

The case of Argentina is perhaps the most relevant because of its age and diversity. People from Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia and more recently Peru, have a significant presence in various cities, but most especially in Buenos Aires, where indeed they have neighborhoods with a high degree of ethnic concentration on the basis of national origins (Vior, 2006; Bertone de Daguerre, 2003, Vargas, 2005, Sassone, 2004). In the case of Caracas, Venezuela, intra-regional migration was important in the eighties, in particular that of Colombians and Ecuatorians, but it ceased to be a pole of attraction at the end of the twentieth century. To the contrary, the emigration of high and middle sectors for political reasons has commenced.

Intra-regional migrations have the peculiarity of being closely linked to the ups and downs of the economy and a complicated system of social networks, through which there is a

flow of information about the labor market. The bonanzas and economic crises of Argentina and Venezuela are matched by significant flows of migrants to and from neighboring countries. Migrant flows are also related to regional exchange rate differences. The dollarized economies of Ecuador and El Salvador and at certain times in Argentina, attract or repel migrants depending on the advantages and disadvantages of the exchange rate. Economic booms energize the construction and services sectors, which are both niches for migrant workers to come to. Information flows not only through the press but also across social networks of migrants, who have the capacity to moderate or encourage the flow depending on circumstances. The construction industry tends to employ contractors or gang leaders who run teams of workers of the same nationality, which is how Mexicans work in the United States, Paraguayans and Bolivians in Argentina, Peruvians in Chile, and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica (Massey, et al., 1987; Vargas, 2005).

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, intra-regional migration in Latin America is a delimited process that is significant in very few countries. Currently the most extreme example is that of Costa Rica, where the foreign population from Nicaragua amounted to 7% of the total and represented 70% of the foreign population (Rosero, 2002). In Argentina the foreign population amounted to 4.2% of the total, and intra-regional migration from Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru accounted for 2.8%. In Chile, immigration is a very recent process and the foreign population account for just 1.2% of the total; of these 26 % are from Argentina, 20.5% from Peru, 6% from Bolivia and 5.1% from Ecuador, with 42% from other countries (MPI, Data Hub, 2008).

Today intra-regional migration in Latin America has been facilitated considerably by the liberalization of migration requirements, as a direct consequence of processes of economic integration through MERCOSUR, la Comunidad Andina, el CARICOM, the free trade agreements in Central America and the recent Unión de Naciones Sudamericanas, UNASUR, promoted by Brazil in 2008.

## **Migration in transit**

A third modality of intra-regional migration is of persons who are in transit. This is a relatively recent phenomenon and is directly related to the flows of migrants headed for the United States who use the Mexican border as a way in. The border is over 3,000 kilometers long, and has always been used by undocumented migrants as their way to get in. However, in recent years the process has become massive with migrants not only from Mexico but also from Central America, the Caribbean, South America and different parts of the world joining in.

Colloquially it is said that the U.S. border has come down from the Rio Bravo to the Rio Suchiate between Mexico and Guatemala. And there is some sense in the remark, as Mexico's restrictive policies with regard to the majority of Latin American countries, are basically aimed at stopping the in-transit migration heading for the United States. In the year 2005 the National Migration Institute, *Instituto Nacional de Migración* (INM) of Mexico reported the number of people who were detained, apprehended or deported for having entered into the country without papers as 240,695, of whom the vast majority (94%) came from Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador). However, according to the census for 2000 the number of Central Americans living in the country legally was only 40,436. So the number of Central Americans circulating through Mexico is 5 times greater than the number of those that have a residence. Not counting the migrants who cross without being caught.

At any rate, the highest point for transit migration in ten years is marked by the year 2005. Since then, the number of undocumented migrants detained has fallen significantly, and in 2008 the total was 94,891 people. Central Americans continue to be the primary source of in-transit migrants, but the volume is considerably reduced. The only country increasing the number of migrants in transit to any great extent is Cuba. In the case of Cuba, a change in the route taken by undocumented migration has been noted, as easy access to the coast of Mexico allows migrants to then head for the United States and ask for asylum. Asylum is granted to them widely and generously. In 2008 there were 2614 cases of Cubans being detained.

There is a clear tendency for in-transit migration to be decreasing, according to reports from the INM, but the same tendency is also reflected in the figures reported by the United States

for Mexicans, Central Americans and South Americans deported between 2005 and 2007. The number of citizens from El Salvador and Honduras deported has come down to practically half, and for South America the reduction is much greater as the number of people from there deported by the U.S. has come down from 38,140 in 2005 to 8,672 in 2007.

This tendency for the numbers to reduce is due to several factors: a saturation of job offers in some areas of the labor market, migration restrictions on granting visas, border controls, a mood of hostility to migrants and raids on undocumented workers. In 2008 the economic crises pushes the tendency even further down. What is more, the main countries providing migrants in transit (Guatemala and Honduras, and El Salvador) are small and have in fact expelled a large part of their population. It was estimated that by the year 2000, 14% of the population of El Salvador were living abroad. By the same year, it was reckoned that 4.7% of the population of Guatemala and Honduras had gone to live abroad. There are no estimates for 2008 but the tendency has definitely been upwards (Solimano, 2008; Acosta et al., 2006).

Finally one should consider that Central American countries are themselves also transit countries, especially Guatemala, which is crossed by migrants from neighboring countries and also receives migrants from South America and other parts of the world hoping to reach the United States by crossing the border with Mexico.

#### **4.- South-North migration process**

South-North migration tends to be referred to in the literature in terms of hemispheres rather than geographically, with the aim of stressing the asymmetry of the relation between the developed industrialized nations, generally found in the north and the poor developing countries that are usually in the south (Zolberg, 1999; Portes, 2007).

According to this definition, the emigration of Latin Americans to Japan might be considered a South-North migration. However, for the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the choice of this term is not the most adequate, as it makes the subject more complicated, makes analysis more difficult and does not correspond to historical and geographical reality. Applying the same criterion to the history of transoceanic immigration into Latin America from Europe,

the process would have to be considered South-North, i.e. from less developed to more developed countries. In the case of Latin America, the dynamics of South-North migration are established, historically and geographically, in the context of the dependence, domination, disparity and attraction exercised by the United States over the whole region. Emigration to the United States is a historical process generalized throughout the region, with a large tradition and on a massive scale. In this sense, there are a number of factors that distinguish the South-North process from more recent migration flows destined for Europe, Japan and other industrialized nations, that we would prefer to call transoceanic migrations.

Other scholars refer to migration directed to OECD countries, but Mexico, the principal country exporting labor, is itself a member of the OECD (Solimano, 2008). In fact Latin American emigration in all these cases is directed to countries with a very high index of human development; for example, Canada which comes fourth, Japan (8), U.S.A. (15), Spain (16), Italy (19) and Portugal (33). The same is also true of intra-regional migration, where the principal destinations are countries with a high rating for human development like Chile (40), Argentina (46) and Costa Rica (50). However, there are also countries with a high human development rating that produce significant migrant flows, such as Cuba (48), Mexico (51), Trinidad and Tobago (57), Panama (58) and Ecuador (72).

The South-North migration process involves both the United States and Canada, the two countries with the highest human development ratings, but there are significant differences between them. While nearly half of the foreign population in the United States (48.5%) is accounted for by Latin American migration, the Latin population in Canada amount to less than 3% of immigrants. In other words, the Latin Americans are the most significant group of migrants and larger than any other group in the United States, which gives them great economic, political and cultural weight. Quite the reverse in Canada, where they are a small minority, and the largest group of migrants is that of those from Mexico but only represents 0.75% of all foreigners, followed by those from El Salvador (0.69%) and Chile (0.44%), many of whom came in as refugees in the seventies and eighties (MPI, Global Data, 2008a; MPI, Data HUB, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2008; García, 2006).

There is plenty of information on Latin American migration to the United States, but the data needs to be handled carefully, because different population categories are used: by generation, by racial classification, by legal situation. The best statistical information in the United States refers to Hispanics and not exactly to Latin Americans, and excludes many Caribbean countries where Spanish is not the main language. It is possible to get information on Hispanics for the year 2006, but to get information for the whole of Latin America, it is necessary to go to the census of 2000. Due to this peculiarity, information analyzed in the text will be on Hispanics, and general information for the whole of Latin America will be included in the Statistical addendum.

It was estimated for the year 2006 that the migrant population of the United States born in Latin America and the Hispanic West Indies, amounted to 23.4 million people. Mexican migrants come in first with 11.5 million, followed by Puerto Ricans at 3.9 million, Salvadorans at 1 million, Cubans at 932 thousand, Dominicans at 764 thousand and Colombians at 589 thousand. It is striking that El Salvador should have more migrants than Cuba and the Dominican Republic. However, the regional structure remains unchanged, with Mexico at the head followed by the Caribbean, then Central America and finally South America, which grows at a slower rate of growth as a region migrants come from, because of the greater range of destinations they choose to go to.

Table 5. Latin American migrant population (born abroad), by region, in the U S, 2006

Region	Year 2006
Mexico	11,534,972
Hispanic West Indies	6,725,448
Central America	2,669,558
South America	2,499,467
Total	23,429,445

Sources: Pew Hispanic Center, 2008, based on the 2000 census and the American Community Survey, 2006. The figure for the Caribbean is our own, as it is limited to the Hispanic West



Indies, and is based on the data of the PHC for Cuba and the Dominican Republic and census data for Puerto Rico.

With respect to the Caribbean population not included in the sub-group of Hispanics three cases should be noted. In 1970 the U.S. census registered 28,026 Haitians and in the year 2000, counted 419,317. A similar process is observed for Jamaica, with 68,576 in 1970 and 553,827 in the year 2000. Finally, it is necessary to point out the case of Trinidad and Tobago, which reported 20,673 in 1970, and 197,398 in the year 2000. For the other Caribbean Islands though there was an increase in the number of emigrants, the figures are much lower. Migration to the United States from the Caribbean region in general, not counting Puerto Rico, grew at an accelerating pace, from 1,803,970 immigrants in 1970 to 16,086,974 in the year 2000 (Census Bureau, 1970 and 2000).

When we consider the growth of the Hispanic-Latin population in the United States in the last four decades, it has been startling. Between 1960 and 2000 the number of people of Latin American origin multiplied fivefold, from 6.9 million to 35.3. Apart from the remarkable increase in the numbers in absolute terms, symbolically the most relevant change is that they became the largest minority in the U.S.A., just above the Afro-American population, according to the 2000 census. Six years later the gap has widened, with the Latin population reaching 44.3 million, or 14.8 % of the total, while the number of Afro-Americans has virtually stood still at 12.2% of the total (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). The Latin population has the highest growth rate in the United States, as it increases both by natural growth and through migration, and it is estimated that by 2050 it will be above 100 million and will be the second largest concentration of Spanish speaking people in the world. All the same, one should be careful with such projections, as there are clear signs that Latin American migration to the U.S. reached its peak in 2005 and a decrease in the volume of the flow has started to be observed. The postponement of a migratory reform and the financial and economic crisis of 2008 have further encouraged this tendency. Finally, the thesis of a migration hump has begun to be clearly demonstrated for the case of Latin America.

With regard to estimates of the undocumented migrant population, Latin Americans are in a large majority. According to Passel (2005), 81% of the undocumented population come from Latin America. Most of them were from Mexico (57%) and the rest (24%) from other Latin American countries.<sup>3</sup> As well as being numerous, the migration processes that feed the Latin community in the United States are very heterogeneous and diverse. Every country has its history, its peculiarities and its own rhythms.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant national group in the Latin community has been Mexico, due to the particular historical and geographical relation with its neighbour in the north. The 2000 census reported that there were 20.6 million Latins of Mexican origin, 58.5 per cent of all the Latin population. A particular feature of the Mexican population in the United States has been the ambivalence of its legal condition, with two significant groups: the legal and the undocumented (Massey et al., 2002)

The Caribbean hispanics come second and in the year 2000 accounted for 15.3% of the total Latin population. The migration process developed in the Caribbean in different stages. It started with the emigration of Puerto Rican workers after the Second World War, in response to an aggressive recruitment program; this was followed by a massive influx of Cuban refugees in the sixties and seventies, and, finally, there was the immigration of Dominican workers in the seventies, eighties and nineties. It should be mentioned that there are significant differences with regard to the legal condition of migration flows. The Puerto Ricans arrive as citizens, the Cubans as refugees, and the Dominicans as immigrants, with or without papers (Duany, 1995; Grasmuck y Pessar, 1991; Pedraza, 2007).

The number coming from Central America amounted to 4.8% of foreigners in the U.S.A. in 2000 and their history is from a later period, from the eighties. The civil wars in Nicaragua (1976-1979), El Salvador (1979-1991) and Guatemala (1980-1996) detonated intense migration processes to the United States. Later the crisis deriving from the passage of hurricanes in

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<sup>3</sup> Passel has developed a special methodology for estimating the undocumented population, using the ten-year censuses, the Current Population Survey, figures for births and deaths and legal migration, which includes a sector of undocumented. It is an indirect measure based on demographic methods that are widely recognized in the academic world. Passel is considered the top specialist in this kind of demographic analysis.

Honduras (specifically Mitch in 1998) encouraged and facilitated the flow of migrants from this nation as environmental refugees. The contribution by people from Central American countries to the Latin American population of the U.S.A. is uneven. The most important nations are El Salvador and Guatemala, followed by Honduras and to a lesser extent by Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica (Hamilton and Stoltz, 2001; Menjivar, 2000).

Finally, the members of the Latin American population coming from South America amount to 3.8% of the total and have a more recent history. Although the original migrations go back to the sixties, the wave of migration only really gets started at the end of the twentieth century, especially in the eighties and nineties when Colombia got above the half million mark and Ecuador and Peru tripled their numbers in just two decades. When the process started in the fifties and sixties, Latin Americans could easily get residence visas, then they applied through the quota system and finally came in on the grounds of reuniting families (Reimers, 1992). In other cases, migrants from South America came in on tourist visas and overextended their stay (Altamirano, 1992 and 1996; Cardona et al. 1980). Finally, in special situations, when there are specific needs for determined niches in the labor market, they are granted special (H2) visas, as in the case of temporary immigrants of Mexican origin who work in agriculture and services (80,000) and that of the nearly 3000 Peruvians of indigenous origin, who work as shepherds in the West of the United States (Paerregaard, 2005).

On the East coast there is significant immigration from the Caribbean, coming in from Haiti and Jamaica. For many years Haitians and Jamaicans were recruited to work in cutting sugar cane in Florida. Many of them came with H2A visas, only for temporary agricultural labor. In due course with the mechanization of sugar cane harvesting and the urban and hotel development of Florida they went on to work in services. Jamaicans also go to Canada, under a temporary worker scheme, but the major flow of emigration from Jamaica goes to the United Kingdom. The total size of the Jamaican diaspora is estimated to be of 680,000, which amounts to 26.4 % of the country's population (Solimano, 2008). With respect to Haiti, it has a significant diaspora around the world, which comes to over half a million people and represents 6.4 % of the population (ibid.). The main destinations are the Dominican Republic and the United States.

Summing up, the South-North migration is definitely the most important for Latin America and the Caribbean, because of its size, and also because of its age, the impact it has on the destination society and the amount of remittances it generates to send back. On a regional scale, South-North migration is especially important for Mexico and Central America, as the flows are only to one destination, while South America and the Caribbean, excluding Puerto Rico, have a greater diversification in destinations.

Three cases may be regarded as extreme: that of Mexico, that of Puerto Rico and that of El Salvador. The Mexican case is exceptional because of its size: more than 11 million immigrants were born in Mexico; but also for its legal impact on the destination society where it has an undocumented population of around 6 million people, and a particular weight among the Hispanic-Latin population, of whom 20.6 million are of Mexican origin. Further, the impact of this process on Mexico is relevant as 10.5 % of the population live abroad and the country receives over 24,000 million dollars a year in remittances. It is however difficult to compare the Mexican case with those of other countries in Latin America because of its proximity to the United States, the age and the size of the migration process and its particular historical relations with the Northern neighbor (Durand and Massey, 2003; Massey et al., 2002).

Puerto Rico is even more of an exception, because of its status as a “freely associated country”, which is quite difficult to understand and explain, but in historical and sociological terms amounts to the relationship of a colony. Puerto Rico’s exceptionality has three characteristics: citizens of Puerto Rico have an American passport, Puerto Rico is poorer than any state of the Union and 50.5 % of her population live on the mainland, an impressive figure but one that needs qualifying (Duany, 2002). Puerto Rican migration may be considered international if Puerto Rico is thought of as being part of Latin America, and it can be considered domestic if the island is considered part of the United States, in which case the figure is not exceptional, as a number of States have over 50% of their population living in other parts of the country.

El Salvador may also be considered an extreme case because a large part of the population (14.5 %) lives outside the country (Pellegrino, 2001, Solimano, 2008). From our point

of view when over 10% of the population lives abroad this should be regarded as a case of mass migration. Excluding the special case of Puerto Rico, El Salvador is the country with the most intense rate of emigration in Latin America. Yet even these numbers fade when we look at the situation in the Caribbean, where the general rate of emigration reaches 14.5% of the population, which is four times the rate for Latin America of 3.5%. Some of the Caribbean cases have extremely large proportions of the population emigrating; for example Granada, where 69.1% of the population live abroad, in the Dutch Antilles 54.9%, in Surinam 43.8% and in Guyana 41.0% (Solimano, 2008).

In addition to migration to Europe, an important flow has been developed to Japan. Strictly speaking it is a flow back as it consists of a second and a third generation of Japanese migrants who came to Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and other countries earlier on. It is estimated that in Japan there are some 300,000 migrants from Brazil and 90,000 from Peru. In spite of the common cultural origins and similar phenotype, there are important difficulties for these groups to integrate (Takenaka, 2005).

In the case of the Brazilian *nikkeis*, their use of the language is not perfect, even though they spoke Japanese at home and went to Japanese schools, and this makes them objects of discrimination. Furthermore, their idea of the body is completely different, as in Brazilian culture it is something to be displayed, while in Japanese culture it is to be concealed.

As a matter of fact, even in the case of the children and grandchildren of Spanish emigrants, they find problems of cultural adaptation and of discrimination when they return to live in Spain. Certainly knowing the language makes adaptation easier, but integration has not been easy; especially in regions of Spain with a very strong regional sense of identity.

## **5.- The impact of migration on human development**

The impact of migration on communities at the receiving end is a subject that has been widely treated in the academic world. Processes of integration and assimilation have been studied systematically, since the Chicago School marked the lines of research and methodological approaches at the beginning of the twentieth century (Burgess, 1926; Park, 1921, 1922; Palmer,

1928). The impact of migration on the places emigrated from has been studied less, but since the twenties, the impact of remittances sent back from abroad has been of academic interest. The work of Manuel Gamio, on the amount sent in remittances back to Mexico in the twenties, was a pioneering study (Gamio, 1930).

In Latin America more attention was given to analyzing the impact of internal (rural-urban) migration on capitals and big cities. The formation of *barriadas*, *favelas*, popular settlements and belts of misery around Latin American cities was a permanent concern for social scientists. Urbanization, for the most part irregular, questioned the right to land use, ownership, municipal regulations and access to services. The seventies and eighties were very intense for urban growth and urban popular movements demanding the regularization of land and access to services. The over-supply of labor in Latin American cities generated intense processes of tertiarization and informal work (Alonso, 1980; Durand, 1983; Matos Mar, 1968; Hardoy and Schaedel, 1976).

Internal migration led to international emigration. Those among the poor who had found better work, health and education opportunities in the cities proceeded to settle definitely. Unlike these, middle and lower middle class sectors that had started to feel the crisis considered the option of international migration. When emigration from Latin America increased abruptly at the end of the twentieth century, and the range of destinations was widened, the subject of remittances became the focus of attention once more. Analysis at local level can be separated into studies emphasizing the negative impact of migration (Wiest, 1983, 1984; Dinerman, 1988; Bindford, 2002 ) and those that relativized that position and expressed their opinion that there were also positive impacts and that a small but relevant proportion (8%) of remittances was dedicated to productive investments, broadly speaking (Durand, 1988 ; Durand, Parrado and Massey 1996; Jones, 1998 ).

Later, the remarkable increase in remittances at world level, especially from Latin Americans, caught the attention of analysts at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and they tried to establish a connection between remittances and

development. The remarkable increase in remittances to developing nations in the form of money sent to families, might be channeled somehow into productive projects (Banco Mundial, 2008).

According to World Bank figures, Latin America and the Caribbean received around 61 billion dollars in 2007 in the form of remittances, giving the region first place in the world, followed closely by the Asia-Pacific region (58 billion). The figure shows that LAC countries were receiving about a quarter of all remittances in the world (24.3%).

At the same time Mexico is third in the world as receiver of remittances (25 billion in 2007) a little below India (27 billion) and China (25.7 billion). Nevertheless, the Bank of Mexico has reported a drop of 4.2% in remittances received in 2008, due to the economic problems of the United States, the mortgage crisis there, increasing unemployment, especially in construction and services, and the restrictive measures both inside the United States (raids) and at the border. The recession in the United States will have a very severe impact on certain regions of Latin America, where a markedly one-direction migration pattern had developed, as in several countries of meso-America and the Caribbean. On the other hand in South America there is a pattern of much more diversified destinations which to some extent will make it possible to bear the impact of the global crisis better (Banco Mundial, 2008).

In many countries the economic impact of remittances is on the regional level, and is concentrated basically on the communities used to exporting labor abroad. There are also large differences in the amounts of money sent, depending on the destination the migrants send them from. Remittances in dollars and euros are considerably greater than those coming from intra-regional migration, which have a much smaller impact. Such is the case, for example, of Nicaragua, where the vast majority of migrants go to Costa Rica, while El Salvador gets remittances in dollars. Similar examples are provided by Paraguay and Bolivia with respect to Argentina, and Haiti with respect to the Dominican Republic.

At any rate, the impact of remittances is much greater in the poorest countries of LAC where income from remittances is an important slice of GDP. According to figures from the World Bank (2007), four Latin American countries are among the ten in the world with the largest proportion of GDP provided by remittances. The relation between remittances and GDP

in Honduras is 24.5%, in Guyana it is 23.5%, in Haiti, 20%, and in Jamaica, 19.4 %. The cases of El Salvador and Guatemala are also significant but to a lesser extent (World Bank, 2007).

In recent years it has been debated in international forums whether remittances might not make a considerable contribution to generating development. In the year 2004 remittances accounted for 70% of direct foreign investment (DFI) and this sum represented 500% more than the support provided by international aid organizations. Between 2004 and 2007 remittances grew at an annual rate of close to 15% (World Bank, 2008). But in 2008 the pace at which remittances increased appears to have stopped. Under the current conditions of the world economy, more foreign investment in the region is not foreseen, and much less any larger international subsidies for developing nations. Any help will serve to alleviate somewhat the effects of the crisis, rather than necessarily generating development.

Anyway, the empirical facts cannot be evaded. Mexico has received remittances consistently for over a century. Also the Dominican Republic has been receiving them for over half a century. In neither case can it be said that remittances have had a significant effect on the development of the country. According to Solimano (2008), remittances have little effect on reducing poverty, as they only reduced the poverty rate by 1.4 % and extreme poverty (indigence) by 1.5%. On the other hand it is known that extremely poor sectors do not tend to emigrate as much as sectors that do have some resources.

Information obtained from observation in the field allows us to state that remittances have had an effect on the family and even on the regional scale, generating improved welfare and better living conditions for the families of migrants. In these concrete examples, there has been a direct impact on the diet, housing, education and health of families receiving remittances. In the eight countries where the Latin American Migration Project has conducted research it has been possible to determine that the families of migrants have better domestic installations, which results in greater well being and better opportunities for human development. To have electricity, drinking water, sewerage, a refrigerator, an automobile, a telephone or the internet does not only improve daily living conditions, it allows children to do better at school, makes it possible for



food to be prepared in more hygienic conditions, and provides improved resources for dealing with effects of the weather (LAMP, 2008).

There is no doubt that the first impact of remittances is on improving the living conditions of migrants and their families, and they have a direct effect on mitigating the wants of a large sector of the migrant population. On a second level, the impact can be appreciated directly in the education projects of families, and improved conditions of access to health and housing. A third effect has to do with the creation of employment. There is a sector of migrants that is able to save, and upon return is capable of generating self-employment or employment for the family. Far less common are examples of jobs being created through small and medium sized firms. A small firm does in fact have a considerable effect if installed in one of the communities of origin. There is a place in Zacatecas, in Mexico, for example, where a migrant set up a roadside restaurant employing 40 of people from the locality and is now the company generating the most employment in the community. Finally one should consider the multiplying effects of remittances on the local, regional and national economies. As most of the money is spent on consumption, it definitely provides direct support to the development of the domestic market. This impact can be seen, for example, in the building trade at local and popular levels (Durand, 2003; Espinosa, 1998; Durand, Massey and Parrado, 1996).

Obviously remittances also have impacts that may be described as negative. A number of scholars have pointed out that remittances are a fundamental cause of social differentiation within many rural communities. These generate inequality and at the same time greater expectations which result in more migration (Bindford, 2002).

They may also have a differential or ambivalent impact. In some cases remittances have generated intense urbanization processes and the development of local infrastructure while in others migration has been the principal cause of depopulation and the gradual abandonment of investments and of the possibility of investing in the community (Durand, 1988). As we said, remittances can generate processes of social differentiation and encourage individualism and abandoning the community, and also there are many cases of individuals contributing to the development of the community, for example with social remittances and the help given by

migrants to infrastructure in their communities and the organization of various cultural activities and civic and religious festivities (Fernández, 1988). This collective side of remittances has been most developed and promoted in Mexico with the 3x1 Program (Moctezuma, 2005).<sup>4</sup>

The impact of remittances is differentiated according to space and according to time. The causes and the conditions for success or failure in the investment of remittances in family or productive projects can vary significantly depending on local conditions, infrastructure, political and economic conjunctures and the windows of opportunity or the lack of any.

All the same if one had to make a balance of the positive and negative aspects of remittances in Latin America, I consider the positive aspects to have much more weight as they improve the human development ratings of communities, families of migrants and individual migrants. Migrants invest their remittances in nutrition, clothing, housing, education and health. The impact on the level of human development is considerable. Even if only invested in nutrition, clothing and housing, they still manage to have a big impact on family health and the education of the children.

Apart from remittances migration has other costs and benefits for receiving countries as well as for countries of origin that should be taken into account. In Latin America we can distinguish two different patterns at regional level that have to do with the educational level of the migrants. In Meso-America and the Caribbean, migration is basically by popular and rural (peasant) sectors, while in South America, migrants tend to be from middle class and lower middle class sectors, who definitely have better standards of education.

In Latin America the topic of a brain drain is not as big as in other regions, especially Africa and Asia. Neither does it have the same level of return that China takes particular advantage of in getting its citizens educated abroad (Cohen, 2008). In the case of Taiwan the loss of human capital which left to be educated abroad lasted for several decades, but without reducing the country's growth and development rates. While Asia gets 64% of the United States

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<sup>4</sup> The 3x1 Program encourages the participation of organized migrants who contribute a little something to infrastructure works and the municipal, state and federal governments add their bit. Many projects in the communities of migrants have been financed in this way.

H1B visas, the number given to immigrants from South America qualified in computer systems accounts for only 6.4%, some 12,000 jobs of work (Solimano, 2008).

It is in the very poor countries without options that the brain drain has a strong impact. In the Caribbean there are situations like those lived in Africa, and practically all the small islands are losing professionals. In the case of Haiti and that of Jamaica, 8 out of 10 professionals live abroad. Panama also has a high rate, of 57.7, and Venezuela, with a rate of 60.1, is losing professionals at an accelerating rate because of the political situation. The case of Cuba is different as many professionals seek asylum abroad but the country has a specific policy of exporting professionals to several countries in Latin America under bilateral agreements.

In countries such as Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, the impact of the brain drain is not very striking but does leave a significant vacuum. In the case of Mexico for example, it is reckoned that around 6,000 professionals with PhDs, work outside the country. If this group were to return to Mexico to teach in universities or work in industry, it would certainly make a significant contribution to the development of the nation. The opposite happened in the forties when Spanish intellectuals came over as refugees, and in the seventies with the arrival of Latin American left-wing intellectuals. In both cases their contributions to knowledge, culture and science were fundamental. According to CONACYT, 5% of those awarded grants in Mexico to study doctorates abroad do not come back (La Jornada, 17 de abril de 2007).

## **6.- Migration policies in Latin America and the Caribbean**

In Latin America there has been a great turnaround in migration policies. Following the second World War, and to some extent reflecting the economic model of import substitution, countries closed their doors to foreign products and obstructed the passage of people. There were obviously exceptions to this policy. The clearest examples are Argentina and Venezuela which had an open door policy to immigration from Latin America. Both cases led to a growth in the numbers of undocumented people and subsequent regularization procedures.

With regard to emigration, the policy in nearly all countries of the region was one of free passage. The exceptions would be related to periods of dictatorships. In the case of Cuba, which

may be considered an extreme example, it has been very difficult to get permission to leave for half a century or more.

In the nineties and in relation to the trade openings and free trade agreements in Latin America (Mercosur, Comunidad Andina, Sistema de Integración Centro Americano SICA and the Caribbean Community CARICOM, also the Plan Puebla Panamá) free transit between member states is facilitated. Except when there are conjunctional problems or conflicts between countries, in South America it is possible to travel freely without visa and even without passport. Only a national I.D. of some kind is required. In Central America, the CA4 agreement permits free transit between Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Exceptions to free transit in Latin America are few. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico applies the U.S. policy which is very restrictive. In Mexico a double standard is used to cover migrants in transit and the drug trade. Citizens of all those countries that send either migrants or narcotics to Mexico on their way to the United States, must have a visa; thus the countries that do not need a visa are Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela. Finally in Costa Rica, citizens of Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Colombia must have a visa, but here there is an exception: “visa not required if a valid USA one is held” (*no necesitan visa si tienen válida de EUA*). It may be appreciated that the restrictive policies in Latin America tend to have a connection with US migration policy, especially in the Meso-American area which is a corridor for the passage of immigrants and shipments of drugs headed for the United States.

In conclusion one may assert that in Latin America there is a clear tendency to free circulation, and indeed the movement of people is seen as a fundamental element in the development of the region. Quite the opposite in North America, where Mexico, the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada consider migration to be an element that has to be controlled and restricted. It is obvious that Mexico and Puerto Rico are places where the transit of undocumented migrants has substantially increased. While the United States and Canada are countries regarded by migrants as final destinations.

In Europe we observe a tendency to unite restrictive policies against Latin American migrants. Spain, Italy and Portugal, which had been quite open to immigration from Latin

America and the Caribbean have started to impose certain restrictions on free transit. The countries with the greatest restrictions on travelling to Europe are Colombia, Belize, Barbados, Cuba, Haiti, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. In most of these cases there are substantial immigrant communities of their citizens living in Europe. In general in Europe if the flows of migrants are not very large, there is an open borders policy with LAC countries.

In the Far East the most relevant case is that of Japan, which opened its doors in the eighties to immigration by the descendants of Japanese people, known as Nikkei's, who were living in Latin America. It was mainly the Nikkei of Peru and Brazil who opted to emigrate back to the land of their ancestors. However, to go to Japan as tourists, Peruvians and Brazilians need a visa, just like the Cubans, Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Haitians, Jamaicans, Nicaraguans and Panamanians.

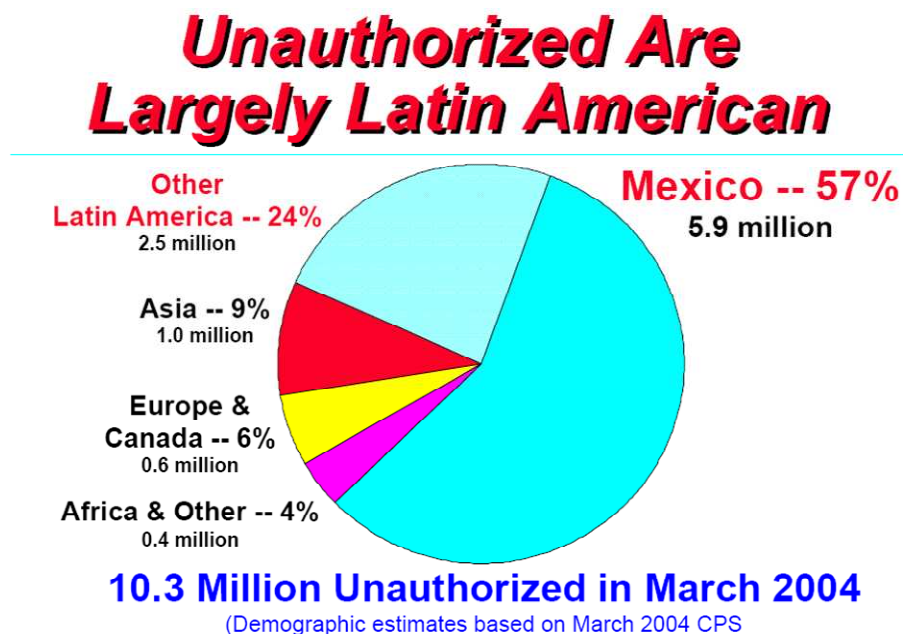
Citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean can move with considerable ease in the subcontinent, but most countries have restrictions on travel to North America and just a few on travelling to Europe. In South America the countries with the greatest restrictions are Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In Central America there are restrictions on travel to the United States and Canada, but citizens can travel freely to other continents. In the Caribbean there are restrictions on travel to the United States, Canada and Europe for most countries, except for Puerto Rico. The countries with the greatest opportunities for establishing relations and moving freely are the largest and those with a relaxed economy and a higher human development rating such as Chile (40) Argentina (47), Uruguay (47), Costa Rica (50) and Mexico (51).

Visa requirements are not only restrictions on certain nationalities but also limit access by certain social sectors. Middle and upper class people tend not to have serious problems with travelling and moving around the whole world, but those who cannot prove they have permanent employment, economic resources and property, are systematically excluded. This policy explains in part why a wide sector of undocumented migration tends to be from the popular classes.

The largest contingent of undocumented migrants in the United States is made up of Latin Americans. According to the estimates of Passel (2005), 81% of undocumented

migrants are of Latin American origin. Of these over half come from Mexico. The undocumented flow of migrants from Mexico to the United States has been going on for a long time, it may be said for over a century. There is a close relation between the market for cheap labor in the United States, and particular regions in Mexico. The passage of workers without papers has historically been allowed, occasionally encouraged and at certain times repressed. The most relevant example historically is that of agriculture. At present more than 80% of agricultural workers in the United States were born in Mexico, another 5% are of Mexican background and nearly 60% of the total are without papers. In this sense the relation is one of mutual dependence (Durand and Massey, 2003). However, Mexican migration has gone on into other markets, such as services, the poultry industry and manufacturing.

Table 6.- Unauthorized migrants from Latin America



Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2005. Estimates elaborated by J. Passel

The number of immigrants without papers has increased significantly largely due to the migration policy of the United States which has broken off the migration pattern of coming and leaving that had worked for around a hundred years. Currently undocumented migrants do not go

back as they used to until the nineteen nineties. The dissuasive border policy applied against migrants since 1993 has increased the costs and the dangers of surreptitious migration tenfold, which prevents the migrant who has managed to cross the border from going back again. In the 1986 the cost of crossing the border with a coyote guide was USD \$200, in 2008 it cost USD \$3,000. Further, the number of people who die crossing the border has gone up from 241 in 1998 to 472 in 2005 (Fieldman and Durand, 2008).

The last time undocumented migrants were regularized was in 1986, 22 years ago writing today, which means a good number of migrants have been living as such for 15 to 20 years and have been forced to bring their families over without permission. In the eighties undocumented Mexican migration was added to by that coming from the region of Central America and in the nineties accentuated by that of people from South America, especially originating from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

At any rate the tendency seems to be for the numbers to be coming down. According to estimates by the Pew Hispanic Center (2008) between the years 2000 and 2004 some 800,000 undocumented migrants came to the United States every year. However in the period 2005-2008 the number came down to 500,000 per annum. The number is expected to decrease in 2009 due to the economic crisis. Not only this, but the general volume of undocumented migrants in the country has come down from 12.4 million in 2007 to 11.9 in 2008 (The Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). The figures for foreigners deported also corroborate this tendency, whether for the United States, country of destination or for Mexico, country of transit. According to official data of the DHS (2008), the number of people from Central America (including Mexico) deported in 2005 was 1,093,382, along with 38,140 South Americans. In the year 2007 the number of Central Americans deported was 854,261, including the Mexicans, and the number from South America was 8,672. The same phenomenon is observed in transit migration passing through Mexico. According to figures from el Instituto Nacional de Migración (INAMI), the number of foreigners deported in 2005 was 240,269, mainly people from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. And in 2008 the number deported was 94,891. Migration in transit from Central America has decreased to half. Only that of Cubans has increased, as they now use Mexico as the main and the safest route to get to the United States.

Undocumented migrants in the United States and in Europe are in an extremely vulnerable situation. Not only because they may be subject to deportation at any time but because they have more difficulties than legal migrants in dealing with economic circumstances. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2009) seven out of ten Latin Americans who used to send remittances have stated that they have had to reduce the amounts sent and the number of times they send them, because of the economic crisis. Alongside which they have reduced certain practices drastically, such as eating out or going on vacations. Lastly, a quarter of the population interviewed (28%) say they have had to help a member of the family or a friend who was in a difficult economic situation.

## **7.- Conclusions**

As the first decade of the twenty-first century begins to draw to a close, the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to international migration amounts to some 30 million people, or 15% of the estimated 191 million migrants worldwide. The migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean represent 5.5% of the population of the region, which is estimated to be 523 million. For the most part these migrants have chosen to migrate within the continent, with 23.5 million living in the United States and 3.5 million in various countries of the region. Additionally, in recent times they have been making their way to Europe where 2 million live and to Japan which has taken in just under half a million.<sup>5</sup> A similar calculation is provided by Solimano (2008) who estimates the number of legal Latin American migrants living in OECD countries at 25 million.

Estimates of undocumented migrants are a black box and they need to be analyzed for each concrete case and cannot be generalized. In many countries, census figures include undocumented migrants, as in the United States; in other countries, like Spain, municipal records include irregular migrants. On the whole figures for legal or recorded migrants underestimate the total number, as they do not account for all undocumented migrants. And yet figures given by the

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<sup>5</sup> Calculations for the Hispanic Caribbean are from Duany, 2008; for Mexico, Central America and South America from the Pew Hispanic Center, 2008; for world population figures, the information is in United Nations, 2008.



media, NGOs and political representatives tend to overestimate the number of undocumented migrants.

Irregular migration is certainly a problem for migrants who are in this situation and for the countries receiving them. However, a different rod is seen to be used for judging or qualifying undocumented workers and the employers who contract and exploit them. In many rich developed nations the living conditions of the workers are not only questionable but unacceptable. The downside of the remittances is the austere life style of the migrants, overcrowding, interminable working hours, double shifts and obviously the hardest, most dangerous and most badly paid jobs. The vast majority of those who earn money for remittances are earning minimum wages. Which says a lot about the solidarity they show to the family and community of origin.

Migration is willingly undertaken but in many cases it is also a necessity, a desperate search for a way out, an attempt to flee from the conditions of poverty, marginalization and overexploitation in the countries and regions of origin. If there is one thing the proposals of the PNUD and of those who treat the phenomenon of migration as an academic subject have in common it is the idea of the person as the central focus of interest, as it is in the end individual people who take the decision to migrate and in so doing exercise their sovereign right to make this choice. At the same time, the decision is taken in the context of structural limitations, both in the countries of origin and in those receiving migrants.

Latin America and the Caribbean have been marked by the migration flows of millions of people who came over from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Far East and the Middle East. The social, economical, political and cultural impact of migrations is already part and parcel of the identity of each country and of the region as a whole. The final balance, after more than a century of migration flows to the different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is highly positive. One might even say that the processes of integration of many very different nationalities in Latin America have not only been smooth but exemplary. The attitude of immigrants and the ease with which they have adapted are surprising. Migrants of all races and cultures have integrated with amazing ease and the second generations have simply ceased to be isolated, segregated,

differentiated. With no great integration projects, education plans or astronomical investments, the children of immigrants from anywhere in the world have become citizens.

But in spite of the strength and the vigor of mestizos in all Latin America, at the bottom of society there are still the indigenous and the black minorities. The blacks and the indigenous people are still the poorest and most discriminated against stratum as they have been since the conquest. The son of an Italian, Spanish or Japanese peasant can become President, but it would be hard for the son of a Black or Indigenous person to do so. Why is it, one wonders, that the poorest countries of Latin America have the largest proportions of indigenous people among their populations, and the lowest human development ratings: Bolivia (111), Honduras, (117), Guatemala (121). Why is Haiti so poor and why does it have a human development rating very close to that of most African countries (141) if it was the first country in the American continent to gain its independence (1804) even before the United States, and when it is a country of ethnic and racial homogeneity?

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean provide the most elaborate and most developed example of racial inter-mixture in the world. But they still owe a historical debt to the black and indigenous populations, who continue to be excluded and marginalized and have the lowest human development ratings.

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