

**KEYWORDS**

Internal migration  
Rural-urban migration  
Urbanization  
Demographic trends  
Migration policy  
Economic development  
Social development  
Demographic statistics  
Latin America  
Caribbean

# Spatial distribution, internal migration and development in Latin America and the Caribbean

*Jorge Rodríguez Vignoli*

**A**n examination of the links between migration and development using census micro data for 15 Latin American countries reveals that: (i) internal migration is diminishing, which was not foreseen in the specialist literature, (ii) internal migration, while apparently helpful for individuals and beneficial for successful regions, erodes the human resources of poorer regions, and (iii) as a result of increasing urbanization, urban-urban migration is replacing rural to urban migration as the predominant flow and other types of migration are on the increase, an example being intrametropolitan migration which, unlike the traditional kind, is driven by residential and not occupational factors. Where policy is concerned, the governing principle is freedom of movement within a country's borders, without restrictions or resettlements. Governments have to resort to incentives and indirect measures if they wish to influence migration decisions; however, local measures and regulations do influence intrametropolitan migration choices.

Jorge Rodríguez Vignoli  
Research Assistant  
CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC  
✉ [jorge.rodriguez@cepal.org](mailto:jorge.rodriguez@cepal.org)

# I

## Introduction

Latin America and the Caribbean have undergone major transformations in the past 30 years, several of them associated with migration within countries, i.e., internal migration. The present article examines some trends in this migration over the last 25 years and attempts to relate them to national and subnational development processes and to the living conditions of the population.

As used here, the term “internal migration” refers only to changes of residence that involve the

crossing of a predetermined subnational geographical boundary, be this politico-administrative, socio-ecological or of some other kind (Macció, 1985). In the general context of internal migration, which takes on many different forms, this study concentrates on movements between administrative divisions (major and minor), between urban and rural areas, and between cities. Most of the information presented was obtained by processing census micro databases in REDATAM format.<sup>1</sup>

# II

## Frame of reference

The ultimate purpose of this paper is to review some of the current debates on internal migration and contribute to them with some new information on Latin America, obtained by processing the migration modules of census micro data. Accordingly, the aim of this section is not so much to present a unified theoretical framework as to put the debate in context by seeking to identify the contending positions and arguments.

### 1. Internal migration and economic and social development

Ever since Ravenstein (1885), the predominant view has been that material progress stimulates migration

because it results in a greater choice of transport methods and routes and lower travel costs (Aroca, 2004; Greenwood and Hunt, 2003; Cardona and Simmons, 1975).

While this is still the hegemonic view (Van der Gaag and Van Wissen, 2001), a study by Zelinsky (1971) raised some early doubts about the possibility of predicting internal migration by reference to economic and social development. Zelinsky argued that the relationship between the two was complex, since in the long run economic and social development favoured certain types of internal migration but discouraged others. The result is theoretical ambiguity about the relationship between development and the intensity of internal migration.

These doubts have been reinforced recently by new arguments. Some of these are that: (i) development tends to reduce disparities between different territories in a country, thereby attenuating one of the main causes of internal movement, (ii) development reduces movement costs, with the result that internal migration is replaced by international migration and commuting, (iii) development increases family incomes and thus makes it easier

---

□ This study is a revised version (with less empirical content but an expanded frame of reference and final policy analysis) of a paper presented by the author at the Expert Group Meeting on Population, Distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and Development held by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 21 to 23 January 2008. Neither this article –which systematizes and summarizes several years’ work supported by institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)– nor the original paper necessarily reflects the institutional position of CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC. The author is grateful for the comments of an anonymous reviewer, which were extremely useful in the drafting of this final version, and of course accepts responsibility for any omissions, limitations or failings.

---

<sup>1</sup> CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC computer program which is used to process hierarchical census and other databases and has a great capacity to operate at different geographical levels. Available at [www.eclac.cl/redatam/](http://www.eclac.cl/redatam/).

to purchase a home, which is a powerful incentive to stay in one place, (iv) one feature of today's development is the appearance of virtual spaces, and the ability to be present somewhere without physically travelling there is a factor working against migratory movement, and (v) development usually promotes urbanization and as this proceeds, rural to urban migration runs its course, with lower migration the direct result (Van der Gaag and Van Wissen, 2001). In short, there is an ongoing debate about the long-term quantitative trend of migration and the relationship between migration and development, on which this article will attempt to shed some empirical light.

## **2. The relationship between internal migration and development**

Territorial socio-economic inequalities are the main trigger for migration flows, from which it follows that countries with greater internal heterogeneity ought to have more migration.

Since the factors differentiating one subnational territory from another are numerous, it is necessary to identify which of them might be exercising the greatest influence on internal migration flows. The predominant theory (Rosenzweig and Stark, 1997; Lucas, 1997; Todaro, 1980) highlights the impact of employment and income gaps and argues that individuals will decide to emigrate if they calculate that the higher income expected from the move will compensate for the costs of migration. Potential migrants can also be expected to consider the likelihood of obtaining work in the place of destination, as described by Todaro (1969) in his classic model. Consequently, another working hypothesis about this relationship is that internal migration flows ought to go from less developed regions, where incomes are lower, to more developed, higher-income regions.

The dominant theory has been criticized from various sides. It neglects the issue of push factors at the place of origin, which limit the scope for an informed, rational choice of destination (Lall, Selod and Shalizi, 2006; Villa, 1991). It overlooks many causes of migration distinct from the desire to maximize income, such as moves undertaken for residential reasons, i.e., to find better surroundings or daily living conditions by moving to a more comfortable home or a more pleasant area, or to reduce commuting times (Rodríguez, 2004a). It ignores the fact that average wage and unemployment

levels at potential destinations may be irrelevant in cases of contract migration (Aroca, 2004), especially if the migrants concerned are specialized workers, in which case they usually earn above-average wages.

There are also a number of specific situations in which the dominant theory fails. One of them is that of regions undergoing colonization, whose attractiveness does not depend on better living conditions or above-average wages but on their natural resource endowment, on expectations of rapid gains and, in many cases, on policies that encourage immigration. Another example are regions that have recently made economic progress, having perhaps set out from relatively low development levels to position themselves successfully in the global economy, and that now have dynamic labour markets that make them a magnet for migrants. A third case is that of metropolitan regions undergoing suburbanization or "concentrated deconcentration", i.e., those where emigration to nearby districts is tending to create extended metropolitan areas (Pinto de Cunha, 2002; Rodríguez, 2002); despite having above-average development indices, these regions lose population because of a lack of space, worsening quality of life or urban policies and regulations. A fourth case, which is the other side of the same coin, is when emigrants from metropolitan areas move to places that have few resources but are near enough to these areas for regular contact with them.

## **3. The contribution of migration to national convergence or divergence of human resource endowments**

Considering the above hypothesis, which postulates a positive relationship between development and attractiveness to migrants, and bearing in mind the age and educational selectivity of internal migration (a subject that will be analysed further on), it can be affirmed that internal migration flows tend to entrench differences between territories in terms of their sex and age structure and the availability of human resources, which means that migration cannot be expected to be conducive to regional convergence within countries. This is not to rule out the hypothesis of territorial convergence within countries that follows from neoclassical economics. This should be examined on the basis of specific territorial economic indicators; some recent studies which have conducted this exercise suggest that what is actually taking place in the region is a process

of territorial socio-economic divergence within countries (ILPES, 2007).

Empirical analysis of the role played by migration in the evolution of territorial inequalities can take many varied forms. At the more complex end are general or partial equilibrium economic models; at the other end, comparisons of the socio-economic profiles of migrants and the local population. The results set forth in this article were obtained using a specific procedure developed by the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, and have been presented in several publications since 2004 (Rodríguez, 2004b).

#### 4. Changes in internal migration patterns and characteristics as a result of urbanization

Urbanization influences the scale and configuration of internal migration flows in a variety of ways. One of these is arithmetical, since as a country approaches 100% urbanization the relative importance of migration from countryside to city tends to decline. Conversely, the progress of urbanization leads to the predominance of migration between and within cities. By contrast with the past, furthermore, the predominant direction of movements between cities is no longer necessarily towards the largest. For different reasons (higher cost of living and lower quality of life, the decentralization of production, the spread of service networks to the rest of the urban system and other factors), the largest and most populous metropolises have become less attractive, so that migration between cities may be a force for demographic deconcentration and, in particular, for diversification of the urban system and an increase in the relative weight of medium-sized cities.

The urbanization of Latin America and the Caribbean does have a connection with the region's development, although less so than in countries that are now industrialized (Martine and Rodríguez, 2008). In practice, the region's urbanization has taken place within a context of low incomes, limited

resources and institutional failings. Furthermore, the primary and agricultural sectors of the region's economies have been the engines of growth in recent years, leading to suggestions that the migratory attractiveness of rural areas could be restored. However, the evidence available suggests that living conditions are still worse in the Latin American countryside than in the cities. It is therefore likely that net immigration into urban areas will persist, and the present study will attempt to demonstrate this.

#### 5. Organizing hypotheses

The present study has been organized around hypotheses derived directly from the earlier sections in this frame of reference. These hypotheses are as follows:

- (i) The scale of internal migration ought to be increasing as a result of economic and social development.
- (ii) Internal migration relates in ever more complex ways to the subnational development process. While the direction of migration can still be anticipated from disparities in development between subnational areas, there are a number of exceptions that call the robustness of that relationship into question.
- (iii) Given the still predominant direction of flows (see previous hypothesis) and its age and educational selectivity, migration is unlikely to diminish territorial inequalities.
- (iv) Migration is very likely to contribute to the creation of territorial poverty traps in areas that have historically struggled in socio-economic terms.
- (v) Migration from the countryside to cities is still eroding rural population growth but is a decreasing factor in urban growth.
- (vi) The region's large cities are experiencing genuine net out-migration and not merely "concentrated deconcentration".

After reviewing these hypotheses in its different sections, this article will lay out some policy implications suggested by the findings of the research.

### III

## Internal migration and development in Latin America and the Caribbean: hypotheses and evidence

### 1. Is internal migration on the increase?

Table 1 presents migration levels and tendencies by migration type. While internal migration levels may appear high at first sight,<sup>2</sup> they are considerably lower than those of the United States. As for trends, it transpires that the stock of internal migrants in the region is stable or slowly rising, but there has been a decline in the internal mobility rate,<sup>3</sup> which is the important variable when it comes to ascertaining the trend. Since developments in Brazil and Mexico have greatly influenced this outcome, figure 1 presents national situations as regards migration in the last five years between major administrative divisions (MADs), confirming that the internal mobility rate has tended to decline in most of the countries.

Further research is required to account for this trend. It is safe to say, however, that it is not due to any lessening of socio-territorial inequalities within the countries, as they remain very marked in the region (ILPES, 2007).

This finding does not mean there is no relationship between development levels and internal mobility. Indeed, the relationship is positive and statistically significant in a cross-cutting analysis, since less developed countries tend to have markedly lower levels of internal mobility. Thus, it may be that after a certain threshold development ceases to stimulate internal migration, but on the whole the figures support the contention that development facilitates mobility within a country.

TABLE 1

**Latin America and the Caribbean: internal migrants by migration type, 1990 and 2000<sup>a</sup>**  
(Percentages)

Census round	Absolute or lifelong migration		Recent migration (within the last five years)	
	Major administrative division	Minor administrative division	Major administrative division	Minor administrative division
1990	17.5	34.2	5.1	12.6
2000	17.7	35.2	4.0	8.7

Source: special processing of census micro databases, 18 countries in 1990 and 20 in 2000 (not all of them have data for all four types of migration).

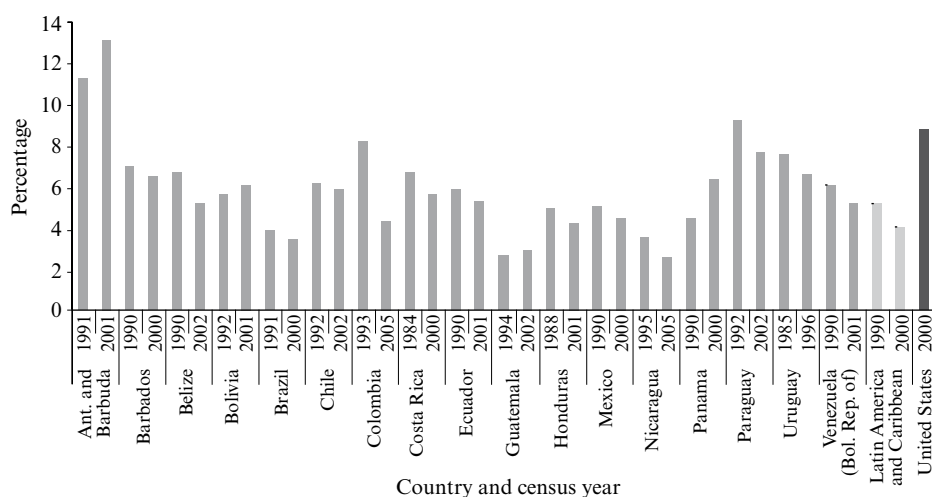
<sup>a</sup> Generally speaking, the internal migration tables created by processing census micro data require certain filters. Some are obvious and have thus been applied to all tables in this article. Thus, people who fail to provide one of the answers needed to construct the migration matrix are excluded. Again, since this essay only analyses internal migration, all the tables exclude people normally resident abroad. In the case of absolute migration, people born abroad are excluded, while in the case of recent migration, people living in foreign countries five years before the census date are excluded. Lastly, other filters are specific to particular migration types. Thus, all the tables dealing with recent migration exclude under-fives.

<sup>2</sup> The author recognizes the limitations affecting comparisons of indicators of internal migration intensity across countries (Bell, Rees and Wilson, 2005; Xu-Doeve, 2005; Van der Gaag and Van Wissen, 2001) and therefore suggests that the results be reviewed and analysed with caution.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., the proportion of the population aged 5 and over who changed residence in the five years prior to the census.

FIGURE 1

**Latin America and the Caribbean and the United States: rate of recent internal mobility<sup>a</sup> between major administrative divisions, countries with censuses available from the 1990 and 2000 rounds**



Source: ECLAC (2007) and United States Census Bureau.

<sup>a</sup> Five years before the census.

## 2. Are internal migration flows following the expected pattern and running from less developed to more developed areas?

The evidence available shows a statistically significant positive relationship in most of the region's countries between subnational development, as measured by the human development index (HDI) calculated by the national offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the MADs of their respective countries, and attractiveness to migrants, as measured by the net internal migration rate (table 2).

However, the correlation is weak and in several countries not significant, which means a closer examination is required. This can be carried out using the quadrants in diagram 1, which allow MADs to be classified by their attractiveness to migrants<sup>4</sup> in the 1990 and 2000 round of censuses. Without going into a case-by-case analysis, inspection of

<sup>4</sup> Using the net migration rate as derived from the question about people's MAD of residence five years prior to the census. The categories are (i) inward (net migration positive in both censuses), (ii) outward (net migration negative in both censuses), (iii) upward (net migration negative in the first census and positive in the second) and (iv) downward (net migration positive in the first census and negative in the second).

TABLE 2

### Latin America and the Caribbean (selected countries): simple linear correlation between the human development index and the net internal migration rate at the major administrative division level, censuses from the 2000 round

Country and year, indicator and reference year, number of major administrative divisions (MADs) with data	Index of simple correlation between the indicator and the net migration rate ( <i>p</i> value in parentheses)
Argentina, 2001 HDI 1996 24 MADs	0.407 (0.0242) <sup>a</sup>
Bolivia, 2002 HDI 1994 9 MADs	0.619 (0.0378) <sup>a</sup>
Brazil, 2000 HDI 1996 27 MADs	0.451 (0.0091) <sup>a</sup>
Chile, 2002 HDI 1998 13 MADs	-0.01136 (0.5147)
Colombia, 2005 HDI 2000 24 MADs	0.414 (0.0222) <sup>a</sup>
Cuba, 2002 HDI 1996 14 MADs	0.770 (0.0006) <sup>a</sup>
Ecuador, 2001 HDI 1999 15 MADs	0.650 (0.0044) <sup>a</sup>
Guatemala, 2002 HDI 1995-1996 22 MADs	0.442 (0.01972) <sup>a</sup>
Honduras, 2001 HDI 1996 18 MADs	0.697 (0.0006) <sup>a</sup>
Mexico, 2000 HDI 1995 32 MADs	0.408 (0.0102)
Nicaragua, 2005 HDI 2000 17 MADs	0.055 (0.4170)
Panama, 2000 HDI 2000 12 MADs	0.484 (0.0554)
Paraguay, 2002 HDI 2000 18 MADs	0.133 (0.29936)
Uruguay, 1996 HDI 1991 19 MADs	0.063 (0.60097)
Venezuela (B.R. of), 2001 HDI 1996 23 MADs	0.0686 (0.3780)

Source: migration rates: special processing of the census micro data concerned; socio-economic data: national human development reports and official subnational statistics; *p* value of the correlations: <http://home.clara.net/sisa/signif.htm>.

<sup>a</sup> Index significant at 95% (*p* value < 0.05).

DIAGRAM 1

**Latin America and the Caribbean (18 countries): classification of major administrative divisions by internal migration status in the censuses of the 1990 and 2000 rounds<sup>a</sup>**

Antigua and Barbuda			Barbados		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996		Gaining population NMR (+) 2000-1995	Losing population NMR (-) 2000-1995
NMR (+) 1992-1987	St. John's Rural, St. George's, St. Peter's		NMR (+) 1991-1986	St. Peter, St. Philip, Christ Church, St. James	
NMR (-) 1992-1987		St. Phillip's, St. Paul's, St. Mary's, St. John's City, Barbuda	NMR (-) 1991-1986	St. George, St. Thomas	St. Michael, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St. Lucy
Belize			Bolivia		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996		Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996
NMR (+) 1992-1987	Cayo District	Belize District	NMR (+) 1992-1987	Cochabamba, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Pando	Beni
NMR (-) 1992-1987	Stann Creek District	Corozal District, Orange Walk District, Toledo District	NMR (-) 1992-1987		Chuquisaca, La Paz, Oruro, Potosí
Brazil			Chile		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2000-1995	Losing population NMR (-) 2000-1995		Gaining population NMR (+) 2002-1997	Losing population NMR (-) 2002-1997
NMR (+) 1991-1986	Amazonas, Roraima, Amapá, Tocantins, Espírito, Santo, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Distrito Federal Rondônia	Pará, Sergipe, Mato Grosso do Sul	NMR (+) 1992-1987	Valparaíso, Tarapacá	Atacama, Metropolitana de Santiago
NMR (-) 1991-1986	Rio Grande do Norte, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro	Acre, Maranhão, Piauí, Ceará, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Bahia, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul	NMR (-) 1992-1987	Antofagasta, Coquimbo, Lib. Gral. Bernardo O'Higgins, Los Lagos	Maule, Bío Bío, la Araucanía, Aisén, Magallanes y la Antártica
Colombia <sup>b</sup>			Costa Rica		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2005-2000	Losing population NMR (-) 2005-2000		Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996
NMR (+) 1993-1988	Bogotá, Risaralda, Valle, Bolívar, Atlántico, Casanare, Cundinamarca, Guajira, Arauca Quindío		NMR (+) 1984-1979	Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia, Limón	
NMR (-) 1993-1988	Antioquia, Santander, Meta	Boyacá, Caldas, Cauca, Córdoba, Chocó, Huila, Magdalena, Nariño, Sucre, Tolima, Amazonas, Caquetá, Cesar, Norte, Santander, Putumayo, San Andrés, Guaviare, Vichada	NMR (-) 1984-1979		San José, Guanacaste, Puntarenas
Cuba			Ecuador <sup>c</sup>		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2002-1997	Losing population NMR (-) 2002-1997		Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996
NMR (+) 1981-1976	La Habana, Ciudad Habana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Ciego de Ávila, Camagüey, Isla de la Juventud		NMR (+) 1990-1985	El Oro, Guayas, Pastaza, Pichincha, Galápagos, Sucumbíos	Morona Santiago, Napo, Zamora Chinchipe
NMR (-) 1981-1976	Sancti Spiritus	Pinar del Río, Villa Clara, Las Tunas, Holguín, Ganma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo	NMR (-) 1990-1985	Azuay, Cañar	Bolívar, Carchi, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Esmeralda, Imbabura, Loja, Los Ríos, Manabí, Tungurahua

Diagram 1 (continues overleaf)

Diagram 1 (concluded)

Guatemala			Honduras		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2002-1997	Losing population NMR (-) 2002-1997		Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996
NMR (+) 1994-1989	Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, Peten		NMR (+) 1988-1983	Atlántida, Cortés, Francisco Morazán, Islas de la Bahía	Colón, Comayagua, Yoro
NMR (-) 1994-1989	Chimaltenango, Escuintla	El Progreso, Santa Rosa, Sololá, Totonicapán, Quetzaltenango, Suchitepéquez, Retalhuleu, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quiché, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Izaba, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Jalapa, Jutiapa	NMR (-) 1988-1983		Copán, Choluteca, El Paraiso, Gracias a Dios, Intibuca, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Olancho, Santa Bárbara, Valle
Mexico			Nicaragua		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2000-1995	Losing population NMR (-) 2000-1995		Gaining population NMR (+) 2005-2000	Losing population NMR (-) 2005-2000
NMR (+) 1990-1985	Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Colima, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Jalisco, México, Morelos, Nuevo León, Querétaro de Arteaga, Quintana Roo, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala		NMR (+) 1995-1990	Atlántico Norte, Managua, Rio San Juan	Jinotega
NMR (-) 1990-1985	Coahuila, Hidalgo, Yucatán	Chiapas, Distrito Federal, Durango, Guerrero, Michoacán, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Veracruz Llave, Zacatecas	NMR (-) 1995-1990	Masaya, Granada, Carazo, Rivas, Nueva Segovia	Madriz, Estelí, Chinandega, León, Matagalpa, Boaco, Chontales, Atlántico Sur
Panama <sup>d</sup>			Paraguay		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 2000-1995	Losing population NMR (-) 2000-1995		Gaining population NMR (+) 2002-1997	Losing population NMR (-) 2002-1997
NMR (+) 1990-1979	Panama	Bocas del Toro, Darién	NMR (+) 1992-1987	Alto Paraná, Boquerón, Canindeyú, Central	
NMR (-) 1984-1979		Coclé, Colón, Chiriquí, Herrera, Los Santos, Veraguas	NMR (-) 1992-1987	Presidente Hayes	Alto Paraguay, Amambay, Asunción, Caaguazú, Caazapá, Concepción, Cordillera, Guaira, Itaipú, Misiones, Ñeembucu, Paraguari, San Pedro
Uruguay			Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) <sup>e</sup>		
	Gaining population NMR (+) 1996-1991	Losing population NMR (-) 1996-1991		Gaining population NMR (+) 2001-1996	Losing population NMR (-) 2001-1996
NMR (+) 1985-1980	Canelones	Artigas, Cerro Largo, Montevideo, Rivera, Rocha, Treinta y Tres	NMR (+) 1990-1985	Lara, Anzoategui, Aragua, Barinas, Carabobo, Cojedes, Miranda, Nueva Esparta, Amazonas	Bolívar
NMR (-) 1985-1980	Maldonado, San José	Colonia, Durazno, Flores, Florida, Lavalleja, Paysandú, Río Negro, Salto, Soriano, Tacuarembó	NMR (-) 1990-1985	Delta Amacuro, Mérida, Monagas, Yaracuy	Apure, Falcón, Guarico, Sucre, Táchira, Trujillo, Zulia, Distrito Capital, Portuguesa

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of MIALC data, special processing of census micro data, online processing of the 2005 Colombian census and data sent by the National Statistical Office (ONE) of Cuba.

<sup>a</sup> NMR = net migration rate.

<sup>b</sup> No information is available on the major administrative divisions (MADs) of Guainia and Vaupes in the 1993 census.

<sup>c</sup> No information is available on the Orellana MAD in the 1990 census.

<sup>d</sup> No information is available on the MADs of Comarca Kuna Yala, Comarca Emberá and Comarca Gñobe Bugle in the 1990 census.

<sup>e</sup> No information is available on the MADs of Vargas and Dependencias Federales in the 1990 census.



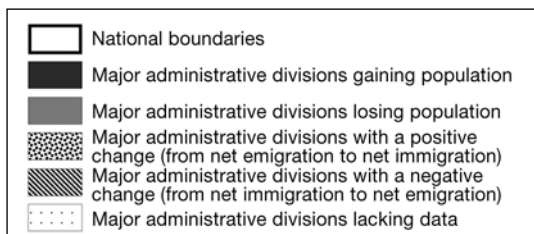
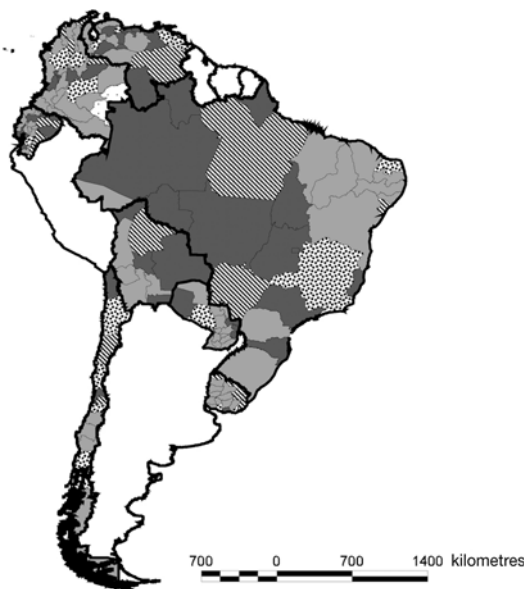
these quadrants reveals a set of MADs that do not conform to the usual relationship between development and migratory attractiveness. A number of these exceptions can be explained by additional factors, suggesting that there is indeed scope for theoretical prediction and analytical modelling, provided specific conceptual frameworks are used. These anomalous MADs whose migratory behaviour might be explained by factors other than their degree of development include: (i) regions undergoing colonization, (ii) regions that have recently progressed economically, (iii) “metropolitan” regions undergoing suburbanization and/or deconcentration

and (iv) regions close to metropolitan ones that are undergoing suburbanization.

Until the 1980s, the attractiveness of colonization regions largely derived from policies to promote them (ECLAC, 2007; CELADE, 1984). Now, however, such policies are almost non-existent, either because they have been hit by public-sector financial constraints, or because their results were judged to have been poor, or because they were criticized for being too unmindful of people’s rights, or because their adverse environmental consequences became an issue. In some countries, the eclipse of colonization programmes has turned the area concerned into one of net emigration, as has happened, for example, in the Aisén Region in the south of Chile and Beni in Bolivia; a number of others have maintained their attractiveness, however, examples being eastern Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay, the Brazilian Amazon and the far south of Argentina (maps 1 and 2). This suggests that an abundance of natural resources, especially land, and expectations of rapid gains are pull factors

MAP 1

**South America (selected countries): major administrative divisions by migration status, based on censuses from the 1990 and 2000 rounds**

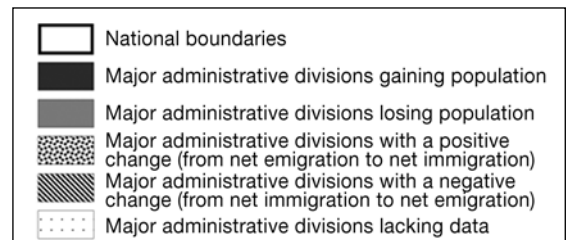
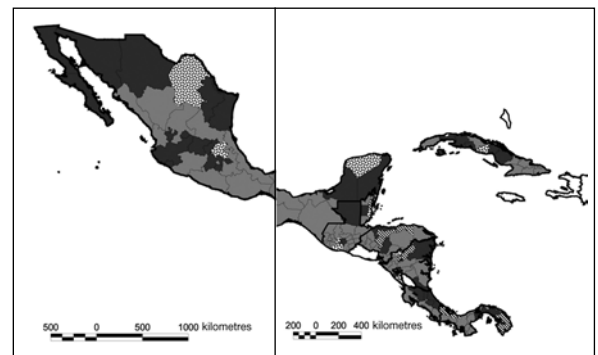


Source: CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, using rates obtained from the MIALC database and information supplied by the countries.

The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

MAP 2

**Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (selected countries): major administrative divisions by migration status (1990 and 2000 census rounds)**



Source: CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, using rates obtained from the MIALC database and information supplied by the countries.

The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

that can outweigh some more traditional ones such as wages and living conditions.

In regions of recent economic progress, wages and living conditions may actually be below the national average because they have started from a low base. However, these regions are distinguished by rapid job creation and good prospects, which in turn generate expectations of personal and regional progress. The dynamic of production, and thus of migration too, is closely tied to the world economy as their vigour is usually due to successful participation in global markets thanks, for example, to primary products from fisheries and forestries in the Lakes Region of Chile; to tourism in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo; to industry in the Argentine province of San Luis; or to remittances in the province of Azuay in Ecuador (maps 1 and 2). In future, the economic dynamism of these MADs may lead to high wages and good living conditions, so that their attractiveness will cease to be an anomaly. Since this attractiveness depends critically on world markets, however, they could turn into anomalies again in the event of world recessions that affect external demand for their main product, but in a different way from now: they would be wealthy but crisis-hit regions and thus potential net out-migration regions.

The other two types of anomalous MADs represent two sides of a single underlying process: the suburbanization of metropolises. As land for residential use in city centres runs out, cities spread sideways. This is a complex process that can take many different forms. In Latin America, it has traditionally been manifested in rapid growth on the outskirts of metropolises, where the low price of land or its availability for settlement has attracted immigrants, most of them poor, from other parts of the country or from within the metropolises themselves. As a result of such peripheral growth and of suburbanization in particular, the MADs containing the main city in a number of countries (e.g., Buenos Aires in Argentina, the Federal District in Mexico, Montevideo in Uruguay, the Capital District in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) have experienced net emigration, despite having the best pay and living conditions indicators in their respective countries (maps 1 and 2). This behaviour is actually due in large part to an extrinsic factor, namely the fact that these MADs cover a relatively small area, so while the cities they contain covered only a small part of them in the early twentieth century, rapid growth over the past 100 years has overflowed their boundaries and

urban sprawl has spread to neighbouring MADs. Precisely for this reason, the latter have come to exercise a very powerful migratory attraction (maps 1 and 2) that contrasts with their rather poor pay and living conditions.

Thus, any review of the relevant migratory behaviour in the case of metropolitan MADs should take account of all the MADs affected by the urban sprawl of the metropolis. For operational purposes, this means analysing migration at a more disaggregated level (e.g., that of municipalities), and this will be done further on to ascertain whether metropolitan emigration is still taking place once the effect of suburbanization is considered. If it is, the areas that have traditionally been the most developed will have become areas of net emigration. This might be because their relative development position has been worsening (in which case there would be nothing anomalous about this behaviour, assuming outflows are going to areas that are now more developed) or because different factors have come to the fore, a prime example being quality of life, the quest for which appears to be playing a key role in internal migration flows.

In summary, better living conditions are still one of the most potent magnets for migrants. However, these conditions, which are the outcome of a long process, may become misaligned with economic dynamism and job creation, which are more volatile, making the combinations of factors to be considered in migration decisions more complex. Furthermore, the scope for benefiting from economically buoyant or socioculturally attractive local areas without living there has increased owing to suburbanization and long-distance commuting. Thus, the relationship between living conditions, area of residence and migration is more complex than it used to be and can no longer be described merely in terms of a functional transfer of population between disadvantaged and well-off areas, as it could when migration from the countryside to cities was the rule.

### **3. Does internal migration narrow or widen territorial disparities?**

The first effect of migration on the origin and destination areas is seen in the size of their populations. Generally speaking, it tends to contribute to the convergence of population growth between subnational areas since, as already seen, inward migration regions tend to be the most developed, to

be further advanced in the demographic transition and thus to have lower natural population growth. But the impact of migration is also qualitative. Depending on their characteristics, migrants may alter the population profile in both the origin and the destination area. Consequently, migration is a decisive influence on sociodemographic disparities between subnational territories. For example, if women migrate to areas with a larger proportion of men, subnational disparities in sex composition will be moderated.

Considering the existing evidence for a persistent positive relationship between development and migratory attractiveness, and bearing in mind the historical selectivity of internal migration in Latin America by age, sex and education level (Rodríguez, 2004a), whose continuing relevance will be examined later on, internal migration would be expected to enlarge territorial differences in sex and education level composition. This is because there is a cumulative disparity in both attributes, owing to earlier migration and the economic and social development process. Thus, the most developed regions have a lower proportion of males and higher levels of education. And since they continue to be net recipients of migration flows in which women and people with above-average education predominate, migration will accentuate territorial disparities in both attributes. In the case of the age structure, this can be expected to heighten disparities in the burden of child-rearing, since net emigration from less developed areas is mainly of young people, which raises the proportion of children in those areas.<sup>5</sup>

The procedure for empirically assessing this hypothesis was devised by CELADE and has been expounded in a variety of publications since 2004 (Rodríguez, 2007, 2004a and 2004b; ECLAC, 2007). The main idea is to take the matrix of flow indicators (derived from the recent migration matrix), compare the marginals<sup>6</sup> and use the difference to deduce

whether migration had a (net and exclusive) upward or downward effect on the attribute. As it is beyond the scope and aims of this essay to study the situation of every MAD,<sup>7</sup> a synthetic indicator was used to show how this effect impacts on territorial disparities. This indicator is the simple correlation coefficient between the net and exclusive effect of migration and the starting level of the attribute affected (masculinity, age structure, education level). If there is a positive correlation between the net and exclusive effect of migration and the starting value of the attribute, it can be concluded that migration is widening territorial differences, as MADs with higher starting levels of the attribute (five years before the census) would tend to see greater increases in it as a result of migration. A negative correlation, on the other hand, would show that migration was tending to close territorial gaps. Table 3 shows these correlations for selected countries in the region (those for which the data needed to carry out the calculations were available).

First, in the great majority of countries migration between MADs generally widens territorial disparities in the proportion of children. The marked prevalence of positive coefficients suggests that those MADs with the highest initial proportion of children (typically the poorest) are the ones where that proportion increases most on average as a result of migratory exchanges with other MADs. The mechanism whereby this effect is produced is indirect, as already indicated, as it is the large-scale departure of young people, rather than the arrival of children, that increases the proportion of children under the age of 15 in such MADs.

Migration between MADs also accentuates disparities in the territorial distribution of the population by sex. Already shaped by migration flows, particularly those from rural to urban areas, this distribution has long displayed a fundamental imbalance: a female majority in the most urbanized MADs, which have traditionally been poles of attraction. According to the ratios shown in table 3 (most of which are significant at 95%), recent migration has entrenched inequalities. A positive sign indicates that in MADs with a higher initial proportion of men, that proportion has tended to increase as a net and exclusive result of migration.

<sup>5</sup> The proportion of children is generally higher in less developed regions, as fertility tends to be higher there.

<sup>6</sup> The marginals of an origin-destination matrix are the vertical and horizontal totals of the cells, which identify current residents and past residents. One of the marginals represents the attribute at the time of the census, i.e., the effect of actual migration, and the other represents the same attribute, but with the territorial distribution it would have had if migration had not occurred in the reference period. The comparison is between a current observed situation and a counterfactual scenario. The key assumption in the procedure is that the attribute is constant over time (with variables such as sex, for instance) or that variations are common to the whole population (with variables such as age).

<sup>7</sup> For a more thorough analysis, readers are referred to chapter IV of the *Social Panorama of Latin America 2007*, which deals with this subject of internal migration in the region (ECLAC, 2007).

TABLE 3

**Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries): correlations between selected sociodemographic variables and changes in these as a result of recent internal migration, censuses from the 2000 round<sup>a</sup>**

Country	Simple correlation between the starting level of the indicator and the exclusive net effect of migration on the same indicator				
	Average age	Percentage of children	Percentage of older adults	Masculinity ratio	Average years of education (ages 30-59)
Argentina, 2001	-0.27	<i>0.61</i>	-0.04	<i>0.64</i>	0.02
Bolivia, 2002	0.26	-0.32	<i>0.67</i>	0.17	<i>0.85</i>
Brazil, 2000	-0.05	0.00	<i>0.47</i>	<i>0.46</i>	-0.02
Chile, 2002	0.08	0.18	<i>0.61</i>	<i>0.78</i>	-0.71
Costa Rica, 2000	-0.19	0.42	0.35	0.27	0.06
Dominican Republic, 2002	-0.43	<i>0.80</i>	0.20	<i>0.92</i>	-0.16
Ecuador, 2001	-0.27	-0.13	0.43	<i>0.47</i>	-0.55
Guatemala, 2002	-0.67	0.21	-0.21	<i>0.48</i>	-0.04
Honduras, 2001	-0.32	<i>0.62</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>0.43</i>	-0.70
Mexico, 2000	-0.17	0.29	<i>0.5</i>	0.19	-0.22
Panama, 2000	-0.34	-0.24	0.23	<i>0.87</i>	0.31
Paraguay, 2002	-0.11	0.26	0.17	<i>0.84</i>	-0.38
Venezuela (Bol. Republic of), 2001	0.19	<i>0.49</i>	<i>0.46</i>	<i>0.36</i>	0.14

Source: prepared by the author using data from the Database on Internal Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (MIALC) and procedures as described in the text.

<sup>a</sup> Coefficients significant at 95% have been shown in italics.

Lastly, the ratios for attributes related to human resource skills are less conclusive. Although they are mainly of negative sign, suggesting that migration helps to reduce territorial disparities in education levels, in only three cases are they significant at 95%, and in one case the ratio is positive. In any event, the evidence does not suggest that migration might contribute to a more balanced territorial distribution of skilled human resources.

#### 4. Does emigration from chronically poor areas worsen the situation there?

Chronically poor MADs tend to be areas of out-migration and to be grouped geographically, forming one or more vast subnational areas that clearly lag the rest of the country in socio-economic terms (maps 1 and 2). Typical examples are north-east Brazil, western Bolivia, south-central Chile and southern Mexico.

Table 4 presents a summary for six countries in the region whose depressed subnational areas are relatively easy to identify. Going by the most recent census, individual results are given for each administrative division in these areas (a few that

recorded positive net migration are excluded). The migration to which these poor subnational areas are subject systematically remodels the age structure to their disadvantage, as the tendency is for the working-age population to decline, increasing the representation of children and older adults. Thus, emigration increases the demographic dependency ratio among the population of these depressed areas, which aggravates their already difficult situation yet further. In addition, the migration experienced by the great majority of the MADs studied tends to reduce the average level of schooling, eroding already scarce human capital.

While emigration may provide a way out for the migrants themselves, then, it worsens the situation of these regions and has adverse effects on those who remain in what are now territorial poverty traps.

#### 5. Is there still a rural exodus?

In the 2000 census round, only four of the region's countries (Brazil, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay) included questions that can be used to directly estimate rural to urban migration and thus identify the four potential flows between city and countryside.

TABLE 4

**Latin America and the Caribbean (six countries): net migration rate and net and exclusive effect of internal migration on the age and education structure of the population in major administrative divisions (mads) forming part of subnational territories that have historically been depressed and experienced net emigration**  
*(Rates per thousand and effect expressed as percentage point change in the attribute)*

North-east Argentina (2001)				Bolivian altiplano (2001)				South-central Chile (2002)						
Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads	Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads	Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads
Salta	-0.91	0.69	0.70	-0.082	Chuquisaca	-6.27	0.76	1.73	1.724	Del Maule	-0.42	1.73	1.22	0.19
Jujuy	-2.09	1.30	1.05	-0.735	La Paz	-3.11	0.14	0.20	-0.393	Bio Bio	-2.21	1.15	1.18	-0.46
Tucumán	-0.27	0.04	0.29	-0.006	Oruro	-8.88	2.38	2.94	-2.268	Araucanía	-0.48	1.66	1.19	0.25
Santiago del Estero	-1.40	0.87	0.71	-0.143	Potosí	-14.76	1.67	3.34	-2.168					
North-east Brazil (2000)				Ecuadorean sierra (2001)				Southern Mexico (2000)						
Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads	Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads	Net emigration MADS	Net migration rate (per thousand)	Proportion of children	Proportion of older adults	Education level of household heads
Maranhão	-6.88	0.77	2.52	-0.248	Carchi	-13.13	2.91	2.27	-1.9833	Oaxaca	-4.24	0.79	1.68	0.039
Piauí	-4.06	1.32	1.83	-0.657	Imbabura	-1.89	1.08	0.85	0.23049	Guerrero	-6.42	0.36	2.14	-0.149
Ceará	-0.72	0.47	0.57	0.599	Cotopaxi	-5.13	1.40	0.99	-0.2953	Chiapas	-2.85	0.69	0.99	-0.268
Paraíba	-3.92	0.82	1.86	-0.173	Tungurahua	-1.79	0.94	0.20	-0.2927	Puebla	-1.14	0.28	0.37	0.068
Pernambuco	-3.21	0.49	1.14	-0.072	Bolívar	-15.16	3.67	2.36	-3.0228	Veracruz	-6.89	1.66	2.98	-0.971
Alagoas	-5.70	0.40	2.61	-0.033	Chimborazo	-9.01	1.91	2.56	0.15052					
Sergipe	-0.61	0.31	1.13	-0.063	Loja	-9.30	2.47	2.30	-0.5514					
Bahia	-4.50	0.42	1.95	0.081										

Source: prepared by the author using MIALC data (censuses from the 2000 round) and procedures as described in the text.

TABLE 5

**Latin America and the Caribbean (four countries,<sup>a</sup> population aged 5 and over): direct estimates of recent migration between urban and rural areas, 2000 census round<sup>a b</sup>**

Country and census	Current area of residence	Area of residence five years earlier		
		Non-migrants at the MIAD level <sup>b</sup>	Urban	Rural
Brazil, 2000	Urban	111 027 460	10 775 021	3 244 288
	Rural	24 965 713	2 168 599	1 161 891
Nicaragua, 2005	Urban	2 109 103	67 567	338 008
	Rural	1 744 706	119 443	64 210
Panama, 2000	Urban	1 297 825	152 089	74 836
	Rural	832 551	40 798	29 741
Paraguay, 2002	Urban	2 175 943	248 014	31 361
	Rural	1 734 786	91 592	53 867

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of specially processed census micro data.

<sup>a</sup> The censuses of these four countries include questions that allow this figure to be estimated.

<sup>b</sup> Brazil and Paraguay record rural to urban migration in minor administrative divisions (MIADs), whereas Nicaragua and Panama do not.

Table 5 summarizes the results. As might be expected from the high level of urbanization in the region's countries, the data show migration between urban areas predominating.<sup>8</sup>

The figures confirm, meanwhile, that counter-urbanization is not taking place, as there is still a net transfer of population from countryside to city,<sup>9</sup> while flows from city to countryside are mainly the result of suburbanization (Guzmán, Rodríguez and others, 2006) and urbanization in the countryside (Ferrás, 2007), so that the "return to the countryside" hypothesis is not borne out in these countries.

Migration between rural areas tends to be the least significant in volume. This is partly due to advancing urbanization, the decline of colonization programmes and the depletion of the agricultural frontier in many countries. It is perhaps being underestimated, however, owing to the seasonal nature of many flows that are not captured by

censuses. Whatever its level, this form of migration deserves special attention because of the severe impact it can have on the environment, particularly in the case of movements towards agricultural or settlement frontiers (Reboratti, 1990; Pinto da Cunha, 2007).

Given that there are direct estimates for only four of the region's countries and that the results appear inconsistent in two of these, the use of indirect procedures provides a fuller picture of the net balance of rural to urban migration.<sup>10</sup> The figures in table 6 are based on the application of the indirect procedure known as "survival ratios". A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results. First, all countries in the region continue to register net rural emigration. Second, this migration is no longer the main source of urban population growth, as its share in that growth fell from 36.6% in the 1980s to 33.7% in the 1990s.<sup>11</sup> Third, the situation varies greatly between countries: predictably enough,

<sup>8</sup> With the exception of Nicaragua, where the rural to urban migration flow is the largest. There is good reason to conclude that this movement was overestimated by the Nicaragua census, however, as it does not tally with other sources such as the 2001 National Survey on Living Standards (ENNV) or with the moderate pace of urbanization in the country between 1995 and 2005.

<sup>9</sup> The exception is Paraguay where, according to the question that was used, the countryside gained more than 60,000 people as a result of internal migration in the 1997-2002 period. This finding has been called into question by the organization responsible for the census, however (Sosa, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> These estimates are orders of magnitude and not precise figures, as they are based on procedures whose assumptions are not robust. What they provide, furthermore, is the net rural to urban population transfer rate, which combines the net rural-urban migration balance with the reclassification of localities. The latter usually means rural localities being "upgraded" to urban status as a result of population growth, so these results tend to be overestimates.

<sup>11</sup> Figures compatible with other studies (United Nations, 2001). This finding does not rule out rural to urban migration still being the driving force of urbanization, given the greater natural growth in the countryside (ECLAC, 2005 and 2007).

TABLE 6

**Latin America and the Caribbean: net rural-urban migration of population aged 10 and over and urban population growth, 1980 to 2000**

Country	Net rural-urban migration		Growth in the urban population aged 10 and over		Relative impact of rural-urban migration on urban growth	
	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-1990	1990-2000
Argentina	1 248 867	829 981	4 146 455	3 414 868	30.1	24.3
Bolivia	565 718	341 525	882 210	1 174 625	64.1	29.1
Brazil	9 167 628	9 483 867	22 868 322	26 856 555	40.1	35.3
Chile	146 535	382 623	1 447 011	1 939 951	10.1	19.7
Colombia	–	–	–	–	–	–
Costa Rica	82 656	338 002	194 507	717 006	42.5	47.1
Cuba	735 083	370 110	1 525 671	918 531	48.2	40.3
Dominican Republic	218 172	553 575	709 784	1 096 408	30.7	50.5
Ecuador	647 934	612 251	1 341 021	1 598 897	48.3	38.3
El Salvador	294 277	–	535 196	–	55.0	–
Guatemala	226 021	824 486	525 724	1 384 850	43.0	59.5
Honduras	258 003	303 742	501 918	685 610	51.4	44.3
Mexico	3 997 266	4 183 486	12 108 257	13 103 802	33.0	31.9
Nicaragua	139 920	–	484 649	–	28.9	–
Panama	113 677	234 038	292 298	432 624	38.9	54.1
Paraguay	280 103	296 914	504 441	652 302	55.5	45.5
Peru	1 001 406	–	2 990 661	–	33.5	–
Uruguay	83 300	34 446	233 238	132 306	35.7	26.0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic)	735 042	847 392	3 171 190	4 235 917	23.2	20.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>19 941 608</i>	<i>19 636 438</i>	<i>54 462 553</i>	<i>58 344 252</i>	<i>36.6</i>	<i>33.7</i>

Source: author's calculations, using the intercensal survival ratios procedure.

the significance of rural to urban migration for urban population growth tends to be higher in less urbanized countries. Fourth, in terms of the rural population itself, the net transfer from countryside to city is far from negligible (figure 2). Indeed, in some countries, such as Brazil, emigration from the countryside could still be described as a mass exodus, given the proportions of the total rural population involved.

#### 6. Cities and their attractiveness to migrants: concentrated deconcentration?

This article has already looked at the deconcentration of urban systems now taking place in Latin America (Rodríguez, 2008). The present section will conduct a more detailed analysis, focusing on the three largest cities in 10 Latin American countries. To add value to the analysis, a distinction is drawn between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations so that specific migratory patterns can be identified for each group.

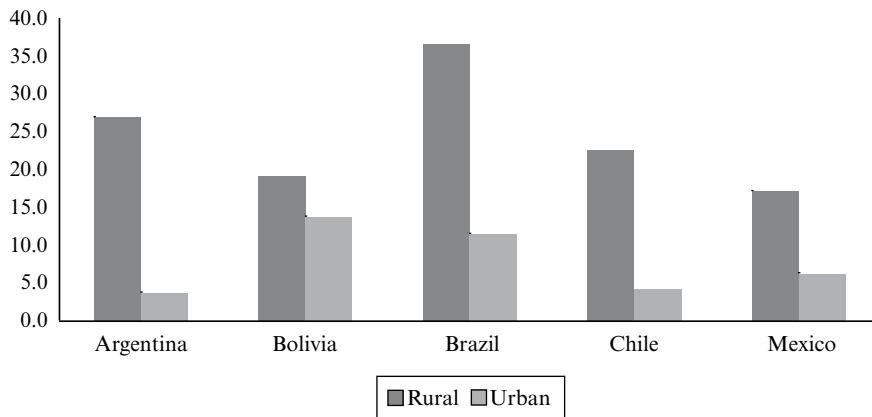
The results shown in table 7 demonstrate that this top segment of the region's urban systems remains attractive, with most of its components continuing to register net immigration. In countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama and Paraguay (in almost all of which the percentage of the population living in cities is below the regional average), the most populous city (or the two most populous) still exercise a powerful draw, so that they continue to exhibit macrocephalous or bicephalous tendencies.<sup>12</sup> However, one city in three registers net emigration, which suggests that this situation (unheard of in the region before the late 1980s) could be gradually spreading among the countries' main cities.

In particular, most of the region's metropolises (cities with 5 million inhabitants or more) have been

<sup>12</sup> In these latter cases, the index of primacy may be declining, but the concentration of the urban system in the two largest cities may be increasing.

FIGURE 2

**Latin America (five countries): ratio between net rural-urban migration in 1990-2000 and the rural and urban populations in 1990**  
(Percentages)



Source: author's calculations, using the intercensal survival ratios procedure.

experiencing net emigration, several of them since the 1980s. Among other factors, this turnaround appears to be due to diseconomies of scale and the redirecting of public and private investment (UNFPA, 2007; Montgomery, 2004; Henderson, 2000), difficulties of governance and the proliferation of urban problems such as public safety issues, traffic congestion and pollution. Nonetheless, these cities continue to receive strong inflows of immigrants; what has changed is that they have lost much of their ability to retain their existing populations.

As the above may be directly related to the “concentrated deconcentration” hypothesized, with people emigrating to nearby areas as part of a process of suburbanization or the creation of low-density cities or city-regions (Diniz, 2007), flows issuing from metropolises were divided into two components, one of migrants going to nearby destinations (“near migration”) and another of migrants going to more distant destinations (“far migration”) (table 7). The main conclusion from this exercise was that “concentrated deconcentration” only appeared to be operating in the metropolises of Brazil, as net emigration from Greater São Paulo and Greater Rio de Janeiro was indeed exclusively due to people moving to other municipalities in the same state, while both conurbations continued to gain population as a result of net migration from other states. In all other countries, cities experiencing population loss evinced net emigration to both near and far destinations or the latter alone,

meaning that deconcentration was real and not just apparent. However, the migratory patterns of several large cities that are still attracting migrants fit the concentrated deconcentration hypothesis and are apparently a manifestation of ongoing suburbanization. This is the case with Guatemala City and Quito, for example.

Lastly, the negative or positive sign of net migration tends to be the same for indigenous and non-indigenous groups, which suggests that the push and pull factors of cities usually have no ethnic bias. However, cities where there are differences associated with ethnic origin include La Paz and Cochabamba, Tegucigalpa, Mexico City, Guadalajara and Asunción. The situation in the Bolivian and Mexican cities is particularly striking, not only because of the size of the indigenous population in the two countries, but because all the cities concerned are losing non-indigenous population while gaining indigenous population. This is obviously increasing the proportion of indigenous people in these cities; perhaps more importantly, indigenous people are taking up residence in cities that are no longer attractive to non-indigenous people. The reasons for this two-way movement and the implications that stem from it should be the subject of further research, which could be undertaken as part of a further-reaching effort to identify and define the links between migration and social segmentation in metropolitan areas (Rodríguez, 2007).



**Latin America (10 countries): internal migration indicators for the three main metropolitan conurbations, censuses from the 1990 and 2000 rounds**  
(Number of people and rates)

Country and year	Metropolitan conurbation	Indigenous			Non-indigenous			Total			
		Net migration	Rate (per 1,000)	Net migration	Rate (per 1,000)	Net migration	Rate (per 1,000)	Net migration	Rate (per 1,000)	Net migration	
Bolivia, 2001	La Paz	12 212	2.9	23 961	-6 978	-3.8	3 140	-10 118	5 234	27 101	-21 867
	Santa Cruz	24 279	17.9	-338	21 532	7.0	2 110	19 422	45 811	1 772	44 039
	Cochabamba	752	0.6	-1 159	-2 528	-3.0	-1 242	-1 286	-1 776	-2 401	625
Brazil, 2000	São Paulo	-164	-1.1	-747	-231 657	-2.9	-339 707	108 050	-231 821	-340 454	108 633
	Rio de Janeiro	435	3.1	-175	-29 854	-0.6	-49 505	19 651	-29 419	-49 681	20 262
	B. Horizonte	311	4.3	89	61 886	3.4	42 691	19 195	62 197	42 780	19 417
Chile, 2002	Santiago	-411	-0.5	-947	-49 306	-2.1	-30 945	-18 361	-49 717	-31 892	-17 825
	Valparaiso	231	5.4	24	8 927	2.5	1 361	7 566	9 158	1 385	7 773
	Concepción	-387	-5.4	-46	-7 438	-2.5	711	-8 149	-7 825	665	-8 490
Costa Rica, 2000	San José	-78	-2.6	-13	-13 849	-2.8	229	-14 078	-13 927	216	-14 143
	Heredia	6	2.1	5	4 442	5.4	-2 265	6 707	4 448	-2 260	6 708
	Cartago	28	36.8	8	2 874	3.9	644	2 230	2 902	652	2 250
Ecuador, 2001	Quito	5 005	28.6	-592	18 198	3.0	-29 157	47 355	23 203	-29 749	52 952
	Guayaquil	3 068	23.9	31	41 068	4.3	11 609	29 459	44 136	11 640	32 496
	Cuenca	714	49.1	147	11 322	9.4	2 968	8 354	12 036	3 115	8 921
Guatemala, 2002	C. Guatemala	10 666	14.4	-3 028	489	0.1	-28 459	28 948	11 155	-31 487	42 642
	Quetzalten	1 007	3.8	681	98	0.4	216	-118	1 105	897	208
	Escuintla	-152	-6.7	-9	-2 556	-5.2	-561	-1 995	-2 708	-570	-2 138
Honduras, 2001	Tegucigalpa	-219	-12.7	-32	11 671	3.2	1 218	10 453	11 452	1 186	10 266
	San Pedro Sula	181	3.7	-42	6 708	3.1	-11 439	18 147	6 889	-11 481	18 370
	La Ceiba	258	6.7	-10	1 089	2.1	203	886	1 347	193	1 154
Mexico, 2000	México City	1 137	1.7	1 226	-72 063	-1.0	17 596	-89 659	-70 926	18 822	-89 748
	Guadalajara	41	1.1	-46	-14 719	-1.0	-8 256	-6 463	-14 678	-8 302	-6 376
	Monterrey	1 965	52.9	-2	40 656	3.0	-148	40 804	42 621	-150	42 771
Panama, 2000	Panama City	8 101	67.7	161	74 220	14.5	5 979	68 241	82 321	6 140	76 181
	Colón	270	17.3	8	1 499	2.1	2 105	-606	1 769	2 113	-344
	David	651	62.2	287	266	0.5	5 402	-5 136	917	5 689	-4 772
Paraguay, 2002	Asunción	-219	-12.7	-32	11 671	3.2	1 218	10 453	11 452	1 186	10 266
	C. del Este	88	200.0	11	-2 257	-2.4	-1 861	-396	-2 169	-1 850	-319
	Encarnación	4	20.0	-2	-3 592	-8.7	-1 213	-2 379	-3 588	-1 215	-2 373

Source: special processing of the census micro database.

<sup>a</sup> Definition of metropolitan area derived from the Database on Spatial Distribution and Urbanization in Latin America and the Caribbean (DEPUALC), available at [www.eclac.cl/celade/depualc/](http://www.eclac.cl/celade/depualc/). Population aged 5 and over living in the country five years before the census and with valid answers to the questions about usual place of residence and place of residence five years earlier.

## IV

### Policy implications

Until the 1990s, identifying policies and programmes to influence internal migration in different countries of the world and the region was fairly straightforward. This was because the public agenda focused on two forms of migration (from countryside to city and to areas of colonization) for which a range of instruments and measures were available. These policies generally fell into two types, direct and indirect. The former exercised control over where people lived and settled, and included provisions prohibiting people from moving to or away from certain places, restrictions on certain types of movement and compulsory resettlement. The latter aimed to influence the push or pull factors of particular places, usually by improving living conditions, offering specific incentives or stimulating job creation in areas experiencing population loss (Oberai, 1983). Colonization programmes, which were so important in the region during the twentieth century, fell somewhere in between: while in principle they were not coercive, they aimed at massive resettlement via population movements directed and in some degree controlled by the authorities (Oberai, 1988). Lastly, a wide range of public policies had the potential to affect migration decisions, if only because they involved the territorial allocation of resources, investment and equipment.

This description does not imply that these policies had unanimous support or were only applied in one way. Furthermore, the foregoing list is not to be taken as meaning that these policies were successful; indeed, there are numerous examples of failures, unmet goals and expectations, and collateral damage (Martine and Rodríguez, 2008; UNFPA, 2007; Henderson, 2000; CELADE, 1984).

This unfavourable evidence cast doubt over these policies and undermined confidence in them, particularly once the economic and social crisis of the 1980s had broken out. The growing dearth of fiscal resources, the discrediting of large-scale public initiatives and the urgency of other economic and social issues resulted in the progressive abandonment of major territorial population redistribution programmes, to the point that by the mid-1990s they were almost extinct.

Now, however, there is a renewed interest in public-sector interventions relating to territorial issues (ILPES, 2007) and thus to population mobility. This is partly because governments are still dissatisfied with the spatial distribution of their populations and the persistence of situations deemed problematic, including acute regional inequalities, diseconomies and difficulties of various kinds in larger cities and the continuing depopulation of historically poorer areas (United Nations, 2008). It is also due, however, to the appearance of new issues, such as changes in subnational regional economies as part of the globalization process, the creation of ever more complex city systems, the emergence of extended metropolitan areas and the growing visibility of residential segregation.

However, the international normative framework for action in the field of migration is substantially different from the one that existed up until the 1980s. This framework was redefined at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, whose Programme of Action contains a specific chapter on “Population distribution, urbanization and internal migration” (<http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd-programme.cfm>). Although this chapter continues to emphasize some earlier themes, such as more balanced spatial distribution of population and a lessening of push factors, particularly those driving migration from countryside to city, it partakes of the spirit of the Programme of Action, which is one of respect for human rights when it comes to population policymaking. This is made explicit by the first action proposed in this chapter, which reads: “Governments formulating population distribution policies should ensure that the objectives and goals of those policies are consistent with other development goals, policies and basic human rights.” Generalized as it is, this first action establishes three key points: (i) the tendency of action on migration is not predetermined, since it plays a supporting role in a development process that is politically guided; (ii) action on migration cannot be taken in isolation but must interact with other official measures; (iii) action on migration cannot run counter to the exercise of human rights.

It is easy to see that this last point deals a heavy blow to direct internal migration policies. Because freedom of movement within a country's borders is a right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, limitations on such movement or resettlement measures (particularly when coercive) can be upheld only if there are other rights involved, or public prerogatives with clear legal backing. Although there are still countries that exercise administrative controls on internal movements, perhaps the best known being the Hukou system in China (Chan, 2008), the tendency is towards abolition of policies of this type, at least where movements between regions, cities or urban and rural areas are concerned.

Meanwhile, the diversity of internal migration in the region today stands in contrast to the clear predominance of rural to urban migration on the public agenda until the 1990s. This diversity of internal migration significantly expands the range of policies, programmes and measures available to act upon it. For example, the interventions relevant to labour migration between regions, which have come to the fore again in parallel with the renewed vigour of regional development policies (ILPES, 2007), are different from the interventions that can usefully be applied to intraurban movements or those that have an impact on urban-rural migration. Consequently, and although this may appear to contradict our earlier assertion about the abandonment of direct migration policies, normative and administrative instruments can now be essential when it comes to acting upon certain types of migration, such as intrametropolitan migration.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear, then, that the growing diversity of internal migration calls for greater knowledge, accuracy and judgement on the part of policymakers, who must choose their interventions on the basis of the type of migration they are seeking to influence.

In any event, strategies must adhere to the principle of combining the exercise of the right to migrate within the country under the best possible conditions with efforts to combat the kinds of territorial discrimination that tend to create poverty traps. The four pillars of the internal migration strategies that need to be followed are incentives for individuals and companies, geographical allocation of infrastructure and public services, use of territorial land use planning and economic regeneration instruments, and proper understanding and management of the unforeseen migratory effects of different social policies.

A clear example of this are urban recovery and resettlement programmes in city centres. To attract immigrants to these, decision-makers and technical experts have a huge range of instruments at their disposal, ranging from the economic (subsidies) to the social (location of services) and the administrative (amendment of land use regulations). This obvious advantage has a negative side, however, in that these instruments were not designed to influence intrametropolitan migration but to organize the city and optimize its functioning, and these remain the core strategic goals. Consequently, if migratory forces are very strong then using these instruments to counteract them may generate imbalances that eventually result in costs for the city and its inhabitants (rising land prices, overcrowding, congestion, urban sprawl and residential segregation). Having policy instruments is one thing, ensuring that they do no harm is another.

While using specific policies in an effort to halt advancing urbanization or rural to urban migration has proved unsuccessful, and in the view of many specialists ill-advised and unhelpful (UNFPA, 2007), redirecting migration flows between cities continues to be a goal for many countries that consider their population to be overly concentrated in the main city and that, on the basis of recent studies (ILPES, 2007; UNFPA, 2007; Cohen, 2006; Guzmán, Rodríguez and others, 2006; Davis and Henderson, 2003), believe that a solid, dense and diversified urban network is conducive to national development. However, there is an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of the programmes implemented to reduce such concentration. The natural idea of promoting some cities to the detriment (if only by omission) of others must pass several tests. It must benefit national development, be consistent with or at least not run counter to an economic dynamic defined by the market (both national and global), be acceptable

<sup>13</sup> A recent study based on the variegated experience (between states and between countries) of the United States has found, in essence, that local regulations shape the physical configuration and peculiarities of cities, towns, counties and whole regions. Zoning, overarching regulatory plans, infrastructure financing, urban restraint and moratoriums and limits on building permits can favour low-density urbanization and metropolitan decentralization, or can encourage a more compact type of urbanization. They can also have a direct impact on the socio-economic composition of the local population, opening or closing off access to renters and people on low incomes (Pendall, Puentes and Martin, 2006, p. 6).

to local stakeholders and respect individual rights. Clearly, the limitations on the freedom of action of the public authorities in this area derive from many sources.

Lastly, it is worth voicing a warning about public policies whose design fails to take account of their effects on population mobility. Policies that have such effects include those dealing with housing and transport, which have direct and sometimes almost mechanical consequences for residential

movements, particularly within cities or between cities and their surrounding areas. These effects must be taken into account when such policies are formulated. Going one step further, they can be designed to exert a desired influence on migration and mobility, obviously without neglecting their natural goal of providing good-quality transport links and living environments for the population.

(Original: Spanish)

#### Bibliography

- Aroca, P. (2004): Migración intrarregional en Chile. Modelos y resultados 1987-2002, *Notas de población*, No. 78, LC/G.2229-P, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.05.II.G.14.
- Bell, M., P. Rees and T. Wilson (2005): *Comparing Internal Migration between Countries: Who Collects What?*, Discussion Paper, No. 2003/05, Queensland, Queensland Centre for Population Research School of Geography, Planning and Architecture, University of Queensland. Available at: [http://eprint.uq.edu.au/archive/00001030/01/qcpr\\_05\\_03.pdf](http://eprint.uq.edu.au/archive/00001030/01/qcpr_05_03.pdf).
- Cardona, R. and A. Simmons (1975): Hacia un modelo general de la migración en América Latina, in R. Cardona (ed.), *América Latina: distribución espacial de la población*, Bogotá, D.C., Editorial Canal Ramírez-Antares.
- CELADE (Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre-Population Division of ECLAC) (1984): Políticas de redistribución de la población en América Latina, *Notas de población*, year 12, No. 34, Santiago, Chile.
- Chan, K.W. (2008): Internal labour migration in China: trends, geographical distribution and policies, *Expert Group Meeting on Population Distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and Development*. Available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM\\_PopDist/EGM\\_PopDist\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM_PopDist/EGM_PopDist_Report.pdf).
- Cohen, B. (2006): Urbanization in developing countries: current trends, future projections and key challenges for sustainability, *Technology in Society*, vol. 28, Amsterdam, Elsevier.
- Davis, J. and J.V. Henderson (2003): Evidence on the political economy of the urbanization process, *Journal of Urban Economics*, No. 53, Amsterdam, Elsevier.
- Diniz, C. (2007): A região metropolitana de São Paulo: reestruturação, especialização e novas funções, *EURE*, No. 98, Santiago, Chile, Catholic University of Chile, May.
- ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (2005): *Social Panorama of Latin America 2004*, LC/G.2259-P, Santiago, Chile. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.II.G.148.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007): *Social Panorama of Latin America 2007*, LC/G.2351-P, Santiago, Chile.
- Ferras, C. (2007): El enigma de la contraurbanización. Fenómeno empírico y concepto caótico, *EURE*, No. 98, Santiago, Chile, Catholic University of Chile, May.
- Greenwood, M. and G. Hunt (2003): The early history of migration research, *International Regional Science Review*, vol. 26, No. 1, London, Sage Publications.
- Guzmán, J.M., J. Rodríguez and others (2006): La démographie de l'Amérique latine et de la Caraïbe depuis 1950, *Population-F*, vol. 61, No. 5-6, Paris. Available at: [http://www.ined.fr/fichier/t\\_publication/1249/publi\\_pdf1\\_chronique\\_ameriquelat.pdf](http://www.ined.fr/fichier/t_publication/1249/publi_pdf1_chronique_ameriquelat.pdf).
- Henderson, J.V. (2000): *The Effects of Urban Concentration on Economic Growth*, Working Paper, No. 7503, Cambridge, Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- ILPES (Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning) (2007): *Economía y territorio en América Latina y el Caribe: desigualdades y políticas*, document presented at the Twelfth Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean (Brasília, 26-27 June 2007).
- Lall, S., H. Selod and Z. Shalizi (2006): *Rural-urban Migration in Developing Countries: a Survey of Theoretical Predictions and Empirical Findings*, Policy Research Working Paper Series, No. 3915, Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- Lucas, R. (1997): Internal migration in developing countries, in M. Rosenzweig and O. Stark (eds.), *Handbook of Population and Family Economics*, Amsterdam, Elsevier.
- Macció, G. (1985): *Diccionario demográfico multilingüe*, Liège, Editorial Ordina.
- Martine, G. and J. Rodríguez (2008): Urbanization in Latin America: Experiences and lessons learned, in G. Martine, G. McGranahan and others (eds.), *The New Global Frontier: Cities, Poverty and Environment in the 21st Century*, London, Earthscan Publications.
- Montgomery, M. (2004): *Cities Transformed: Demographic Change and its Implications in the Developing World*, London, Earthscan Publications.
- Oberai, A. (1983): *State Policies and Internal Migration. Studies in Market and Planned Economies*, London, Croom Helm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1988): *Land Settlement Policies and Population Redistribution in Developing Countries*, New York, Praeger.
- Pendall, R., R. Puentes and J. Martin (2006): *From Traditional to Reformed: A Review of Land Use Regulations in the*

- Nation's 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution.
- Pinto da Cunha, J.M. (2002): *Urbanización, territorio y cambios socioeconómicos estructurales en América Latina y el Caribe*, Población y desarrollo series, No. 30, LC/L.1782-P, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007): *Dinâmica migratória e o processo de ocupação do centro-oeste brasileiro: o caso de Mato Grosso*, document presented at the Seminar "O Brasil e suas fronteiras agrícolas: diagnósticos e perspectivas" (Campinas, Brazil, 2 August). Available at: [http://72.232.29.50/~ifnepo/usuario/GerenciaNavegacao.php?caderno\\_id=638&texto\\_id=849](http://72.232.29.50/~ifnepo/usuario/GerenciaNavegacao.php?caderno_id=638&texto_id=849).
- Ravenstein, E. (1885): The laws of migration, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, vol. 48, No. 2, London, Royal Statistical Society, June.
- Reboratti, C. (1990): Fronteras agrarias en América Latina, *Geocrítica*, No. 87, Barcelona, University of Barcelona, May. Available at: <http://www.ub.es/geocrit/geo87.htm>.
- Rodríguez, J. (2002): *Distribución territorial de la población de América Latina y el Caribe: tendencias, interpretaciones y desafíos para las políticas públicas*, Población y desarrollo series, No. 32, LC/L.1831-P, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.02.II.G.137.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004a): *Migración interna en América Latina y el Caribe: estudio regional del período 1980-2000*, Población y desarrollo series, No. 50, LC/L.2059-P, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.04.II.G.3.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004b): Explotando el módulo sobre migración interna de los censos de población y vivienda de América Latina, *REDATAM informa*, No. 10, LC/L.2261, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007): Paradojas y contrapuntos de dinámica demográfica metropolitana: algunas respuestas basada en la explotación intensiva de microdatos censales, in C. de Mattos and R. Hidalgo (eds.), *Santiago de Chile: movilidad espacial y reconfiguración metropolitana*, Santiago, Chile, Catholic University of Chile.
- Rosenzweig, M. and O. Stark (eds.) (1997): *Handbook of Population and Family Economics*, Amsterdam, Elsevier.
- Sosa, Z. (2007): Fuentes de datos y medición de la migración. El caso de Paraguay, document presented at the International Seminar "Migración y desarrollo: el caso de América Latina" (Santiago, Chile, 7-8 August). Available at: <http://www.ECLAC.cl/CELADE/noticias/paginas/7/29527/soza.pdf>.
- Todaro, M. (1969): A model of labor migration and urban unemployment in LDCs, *American Economic Review*, vol. 59, Nashville, Tennessee, American Economic Association.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1980): Internal migration in developing countries: a survey, in R. Easterlin, *Population and Economic Change in Developing Countries*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) (2007): *State of World Population 2007*, New York.
- United Nations (2001): *The Components of Urban Growth in Developing Countries*, ESA/P/WP.169, New York.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2008): *World Population Policies 2007*, ST/ESA/SER.A/272, New York. Available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2007/Publication\\_index.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2007/Publication_index.htm).
- Van der Gaag, N. and L. Van Wissen (2001): Economic Developments and Internal Migration Propensities, document presented at the European Population Conference (Helsinki, 7 - 9 June). Available at: <http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/toimintayksikot/vaestontutkimuslaitos/eapskonferenssi/Papers/>.
- Villa, M. (1991): *Introducción al análisis de la migración: apuntes de clase; notas preliminares*, Serie B, No. 91, Santiago, Chile, Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC.
- Xu-Doeve, W. (2005): The demographic measurement of migration and its adjustment for underenumeration, document presented at the XXV IUSSP International Population Conference (Tours, France, 18-23 July 2005), unpublished.
- Zelinsky, W. (1971): The hypothesis of the mobility transition, *Geographical Review*, No. 61, London, Sage Publications.