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RELATIONS IN THE 1980s

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## MIGRATION AND UNITED STATES-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE 1980s

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Over the past decade, "the importance of international migration for United States-Latin American relations has become increasingly apparent. In part this is because of the substantial growth in the size of such migration streams, much of which is outside both international and municipal codes of law. In addition, the same period has seen two classic "crystallizing crises" which served to highlight the connections between foreign affairs and migration from "the United States' perspective--the mass movement of 130,000 Cubans from Mariel Harbor to Florida within a few months in 1980, and the influx of 30,000-40,000 Haitian migrants by boat, both movements in violation of United States' immigration laws.

Finally, in domestic United States' terms the significance of international migration to the United States has increased in both reality and perception. The reality is that total immigration numbers (legal, illegal, refugees, asylum-claimants) increased dramatically over the same period that domestic demographic patterns experienced the dramatic fertility decline now known as the "baby bust." As a result of these two countervailing trends, international migration has become a major factor in United States' demographic change, accounting for a third to a half of United States' demographic increase (versus perhaps 15% in the 1960s). It is only fair to note that the gross annual number of immigrants is probably not larger than that around the turn of the 20th Century, before United States immigration was first numerically restricted. Since the United States' population was much smaller then, these earlier movements accounted for a larger ratio of immigrants to residents.

The perception is that the growth of illegal migration and the Cuban influx demonstrates that immigration is "out of control"--a characterization widely used by persons at all points along the United States' political spectrum.

The centrality of Latin America for these realities and perceptions is easy to explain. During the 1970s, fully 40 percent of legal immigrants to the United States originated in Latin America. If conservative assumptions are made about the size and composition of illegal immigration, this percentage would rise to at least 50

percent. Hence Latin America, comprising about 8 percent of the world's population, accounts for 50 percent or more of United States' immigrants. Moreover, the North American perception of "lack of control" is focused upon flows from Latin America and the Caribbean, although in reality there are evidently very substantial illegal flows from many other parts of the world.

The phenomenon of large-scale hemispheric migration is by no means restricted to flows to the United States. Migrations of comparable, and in some cases greater, magnitude have been experienced by Venezuela (where some experts estimate that 2-4 million of the 19 million inhabitants are international migrants), in the Bahamas (where the number of undocumented Haitians is large relative to the national population), in Panama, in the Dominican Republic, in Honduras before the 1969 "Soccer War" with El Salvador, and elsewhere in the Region.

### I. Major Contending Perspectives

As might be expected, such facts and perceptions are interpreted quite differently depending upon the perspective of the observer. Although perspectives on the significance of international migration are almost as numerous as the perceivers, it is helpful to try to categorize broadly these into: first, theoretical views of the process of international migration, and second, political perspectives of the significance of this process.

At the risk of some oversimplification, theoretical perspectives on international migration may be divided into two broad categories:

- the so-called "structuralist" theoretical perspective widely held in Latin America, and
- the so-called "push-pull" theoretical perspective more widely held in North America.

The structuralist perspective in international migration is in effect a subset of generalized dependency theory, in which the system of core (Western industrialized nations), periphery and semi-periphery countries (categories embracing developing nations) implies that wages are highest in the core and lowest in the periphery. Meanwhile, the periphery has a labor surplus relative to its depleted capital base, and the core has a capital surplus relative to its own labor supply. Moreover, there is a natural tendency of labor to migrate to the highest wage areas, where it is exploited to the benefit of the core countries. Thus international labor migrations are seen as induced and stimulated by the core nations for their own enrichment. International migration is attributed to the world capitalist system, and the countries of origin are powerless to contain it, bear no responsibility for its consequences, and should be entitled to compensation for the loss of human capital.



Both dependency theory and the structuralist migration sub-theory derive from the long theoretical tradition of Marxian or quasi-Marxian analysis of international economic relations. Their answer to the problems posed by underdevelopment in the periphery and by international migration is the transformation of the world economic system by transfer of power and resources from the core to the periphery, or to a system closer to that of a socialist model, or both.

The second major theoretical construct concerning international migration is the so-called "push-pull" theory. In this theoretical construct, international migration is stimulated both by the "push" factors in the sending countries and by "pull" factors in the receiving countries. In a sense, international migration is seen as analogous to the flow of electricity between two poles of differing potentials, or to the flow of water from a higher to a lower point. In all three cases, both "push" and "pull" are needed for the flows to occur.

The principal "push" factors are those of unemployment, limited economic opportunity, low wages, and political instability and violence in the sending countries. The principal "pull" factors are, in turn, those of lower unemployment rates, higher economic opportunities, higher wages, and more attractive political and social circumstances in the receiving countries.

The movements between "push" and "pull" are seen as facilitated by so-called "social networks"--ties of extended family, village, or larger social groups through which information about opportunities in the "pull" countries is communicated. Other intermediary networks include those of international communications (including television, radio, telephone, and mail), international transportation facilities, and service providers such as travel agents, immigration lawyers, and smugglers.

In short, the "push-pull" theory of international migration is less a theory and more an empirical generalization that seeks to describe the forces furthering international migration, without attributing blame to either "push" or "pull" sectors.

In addition to these two broad conceptual views are perspectives on international migration derived from concerns about human rights. Here international migration by individuals is seen as a basic human right, on the basis of theological and philosophical ideas often derived from axioms or first principles. As such, the right to migrate is necessarily of higher importance than the right of the nation-state to control entry. Freedom of international movement in this perspective may be comprehensively defined to include any movement which any individual wishes to make, or may be circumscribed by provisions that limit it to those seeking to escape political repression and/or desperate poverty.

## II. Political Perceptions

Although these different conceptions underlie many political perspectives of international migration, they do not fully explain or characterize such political responses. Political perceptions are necessarily value-laden, while in some respects both the structuralist and the "push-pull" theoretical constructs are (or at least claim to be) scientific and value-free. For example, a categorization of political perspectives on international migration would include at least the following:

A. Laissez-faire: Immigration is a positive force and should not be limited.

Alternative rationales include:

1) Such migration is a symptom of an inequitable economic system; the solution lies in a cure of the inequities, not in restricting the flow;

2) Labor is a factor of production, and the "invisible hand" of the market should determine the size and direction of its international migration;

3) International migration benefits both sending and receiving countries;

4) International migration is an important "safety-valve" for the unemployment of sending countries, and contributes to their development through remittances sent home and job skills learned abroad;

5) The right to move internationally is a basic human right that cannot morally be infringed upon by nation states, especially when the movement is caused by desperate poverty or political repression.

B. Positive but limited: International migration is a positively valued force, but only if it is limited and regulated to assure that it causes only minor negative consequences.

1) Immigration furthers creativity, pluralism and/or family unity in the receiving economy, but must not be allowed to affect negatively the receiving country's labor markets (a view typically held by labor unions) or to exceed its "absorptive capacity" in terms of social cohesion.

2) It provides a productive outlet for energetic people unable to find opportunity at home, but must not be allowed to siphon off the best-trained manpower from the sending countries (the "brain drain" perspective).

C. Negative: International migration of any significant size is a negative factor for national cohesiveness and development, and should be reduced or halted.

1) It inevitably damages the domestic labor force, especially the lowest-paid, and weakens organized labor in the receiving country. It also distorts the economies of both sending and receiving countries.

2) Immigration leads to serious social and political fissures along ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, or nationality dimensions.

As may be seen, several of these political perspectives could draw upon either the structuralist or the "push-pull" theoretical view for support, and some often invoke human rights arguments as well.

### III. Causes and Consequences of International Migration

We now move on from an attempt to categorize the various theoretical and political perspectives on international migration to ask a different question: What do we now know, with reasonable objectivity, about the causes and consequences of recent patterns in the international movement of peoples?

It should be noted from the outset that there is a sharp distinction, in both international and municipal codes of law, between international movements of temporary or permanent migrants as compared to those of refugees. Refugees hold a special place in international law. They fall under the protection of the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees and its associated Protocol, to which some 92 nations have now acceded. Unfortunately, some important Latin American countries (such as Mexico, Honduras, Haiti, Cuba, and Uruguay) are not among these 92, although several of these countries have a long and generous tradition of granting asylum to small numbers of political exiles.

In the United States, the Refugee Act of 1980 transformed the refugee definition from the Cold War concepts of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (in which a refugee was defined as a person fleeing "from a Communist-dominated country or area, or from any country within the general area of the Middle East"<sup>2</sup>) to one that is based almost verbatim upon the United Nations Protocol. A refugee is defined as:

any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality... and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.<sup>3</sup>

Hence both international and United States law now seek to distinguish clearly between those driven from their homelands by "persecution" and those migrating for reasons of better economic opportunity, family ties, etc. In practice, of course, it is increasingly difficult to draw such sharp distinctions with assurance, especially in cases in which countries of origin are both poor and authoritarian (a combination

that unfortunately characterizes many Third World countries today). In addition, since refugee status confers substantial advantages on prospective migrants in terms of legal and economic rights, it appears that such status is increasingly being claimed in marginal and dubious cases.

With regard to the causes and consequences of recent migration patterns of all types, it becomes quickly apparent that none of the theoretical or political perspectives described above provides an adequate analysis that draws upon all available empirical evidence. Available evidence tends to support a given theoretical or political perspective in some respects, while in other respects contradicting it. Hence an adequate response requires an eclectic approach which may be viewed as "untidy" or esthetically unsatisfactory by observers with sharply-defined world views. But the facts about international migration are in fact notoriously untidy.

#### A. Causes

At its most general level, the acceleration of immigration from developing countries may be understood as a rational response by intelligent human beings to the large and often increasing differentials in economic and political circumstances. Sometimes the perception of these differentials may exceed their reality, as in the "streets are paved with gold" mythology. Added to this are the important factors of the declining real costs of, and the growing access to, the option of international migration.

To put this proposition in economic terms, the "value" (real and perceived) of international migration is going up, while the "real price" is going down, and the availability is becoming more widespread.

The value of international migration is increasing because of rises in the level of unemployment and underemployment in many developing countries, the large and frequently increasing differentials in prevailing wages, and the growing political instability in many sending countries. While unemployment rates in OECD countries are at record levels since World War II, averaging fully 9 percent in late 1982,<sup>4</sup> these high levels are dwarfed by the 20 to 40 percent (and sometimes higher) levels of unemployment in many developing countries. Similarly, while real wages may have failed to increase or even declined in many OECD countries, the differential between these wages and those prevailing in many of the sending countries is often very large and often increasing.

To take an obvious example, the estimated unemployment and underemployment rates of Mexico exceed those of the United States by a substantial margin, and the current Mexican economic crisis seems certain to raise unemployment still higher, while at the same time reducing government subsidies on food and other essentials. Moreover, the prevailing wages for comparable jobs in the United States have long been between five and ten times as high as those in Mexico. While there recently have been some substantial wage increases, the 85 percent



devaluation of the peso in one year (from 24 to the dollar in early 1982 to nearly 150 to the dollar in late 1982) has meant that the wage differential must have increased to on the order of fifteen-to-one.

Meanwhile, and often related to these world economic difficulties, the level of political instability in many sending countries has increased, and this has encouraged both a flight of capital (thereby exacerbating existing economic problems) and of people who have the option of so departing.

The "real price" of international migration has declined over the same period. There has been a broad expansion of international transport via jet aircraft, with regular flights now reaching into the hinterlands as well as the capitals of most developing countries. At the same time, the information and contacts necessary to organize international migrations have similarly improved with the wide diffusion of telephones, television, radio and other means of international communication, as well as by the rapid urbanization process that is so characteristic of the past decades. Meanwhile, the law-enforcement capabilities of some receiving nations' immigration authorities (and particularly those of the United States) has deteriorated over the same period.

The availability of the migration option has become more widespread, in part because of the aforementioned increase in knowledge and access and the parallel decline in the real cost of such movement. In addition, however, the capital-accumulation and the growth of formal and informal money-lending institutions (banks, private money-lenders, savings of extended family) in many developing countries have facilitated the access of quite low-income persons to the capital required to finance the migration. Such borrowing has been facilitated by the frequent high appreciation of land values which now provide even small landholders with substantial collateral for a loan from a moneylending institution. Such loans, even at high interest rates, can be expected to be readily repayable out of the incremental earnings expected from higher wages in the country to which the international migrant plans to move.

Finally, it appears that the past decade has seen substantial growth of what might be termed "intermediaries" which facilitate international migration (either legal or illegal). These include the growth of the profession of immigration law, the appearance of so-called "immigration consultants," the international migration services provided by various travel agencies, the growth of labor recruiters, and the development of significant networks of smugglers and others engaged in the illicit movement of people across national borders. Intermediary networks are now quite prominent in facilitating Colombian migration to Venezuela and the United States, Mexican and Asian migration to the United States, and Caribbean migration to other Caribbean nations and beyond.<sup>5</sup>

On the demand or "pull" side, there are several economies in the Western Hemisphere that recently have been encouraging or otherwise facilitating international migration in order to staff positions that

cannot easily be filled with indigenous workers. The most obvious hemispheric examples are the oil-boom economy of Venezuela between 1974 and 1981, and certain sectors of the United States economy (especially agriculture and construction in the Southwest, the restaurant and hotel industries in some regions, and the garment industry). Employers in such settings have a strong economic incentive to recruit workers willing to work under conditions that do not require capital investment, job restructuring, or substantial increases in wages and benefits. There is only limited firm evidence that such employers have been actively soliciting the migration of potential workers from the sending countries, but it does appear that they actively recruit labor from among a labor pool provided by such immigration. It is important to note that in the United States, it is quite legal for employers to employ persons they know to be illegally in the country, and in Venezuela it is said that "work permits can be obtained relatively easily and quickly ... for a fee."<sup>6</sup>

Another factor encouraging the growth of international migration has been the effective immobilization of immigration controls in some of the major receiving countries. The most obvious case is that of the United States, which has experienced increasing problems in enforcing its own rather arcane immigration laws. The reasons for this include:

- an endemic ambivalence about immigration controls, given the mythology of the United States as a "nation of immigrants";
- a national sensitivity to accusations of "racism", (whether justified or not) growing out of recognition of past racist patterns in the United States;
- a general trend toward special interest politics, in which a small minority with strong interest in an issue often is able to prevail over a large majority with more limited interest in the subject. Such interests on immigration policy include employers of undocumented aliens, ethnic activists, and proponents of a variety of political or theological value systems;
- a national tendency toward litigiousness, encouraged generally by very large numbers of lawyers, and financed in the case of immigration issues by philanthropic funds or the availability of contingent lawyer's fees (not allowed in many other Western countries). Together these have led to a large number of lengthy court battles that have immobilized or weakened immigration law enforcement;
- accidents of history; e.b., the chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee in the early 1970s was held by a conservative Southern Democrat with personal agricultural interests, who blocked passage of "employer sanctions" twice passed by the House of Representatives.

This pattern of waning enforcement effort was true until 1980, when there was a sharp reversal of trend after the chaotic experience of the Mariel boatlift, in which 125,000 Cubans migrated to southern Florida outside of United States' immigration laws.

Another important factor contributing to the growth of international migration is past international migration. Such migrations, stimulated in part by past labor importation policies such as the so-called bracero program of the United States, have generated family, kin, and village networks which serve as sources of information and finance for subsequent international migration. Such past migrations have also led to separations of nuclear and extended families, which are "reunited" subsequently via further international migration.

Finally, there is a substantial contribution to international migration flows provided by the foreign policies of a number of hemispheric nations. An obvious example is the migration of nearly ten percent of the population of Cuba, mostly to the United States, since the 1959 accession of Premier Castro and the increase in foreign policy tensions between the two countries. Another example is that of the substantial numbers of refugees generated by internal strife in several countries of Central America, strife which has been exacerbated by the foreign policies of other states. A third, less numerically significant, example is the provision of political asylum to 20-30,000 exiles from Chile after the fall of President Allende. Finally, there is the rather fascinating example of the migration of about 300,000 Brazilian nationals into the Eastern Border Region of Paraguay, in the area surrounding the massive Itaipu hydroelectric project. This mass migration, which now dominates about one-third of the territory of Paraguay, began in the mid-1960s, accelerated after the 1972 signing of the Brazil-Paraguay treaty regarding Itaipu, and apparently has received at least implicit encouragement from the governments of both countries

## B. Consequences

Assessment of the consequences of international migration must be as eclectic as that of causes. It is important to emphasize that the consequences of such migrations must be viewed in a time-bound perspective: a migration at one time may have quite different effects from those of a similar migration at another time. For example, the movement of large numbers of Colombians into Venezuela may have had positive economic effects during the heyday of the oil boom in Venezuela, but negative effects after the onset of recession in the early 1980s.

There is also a distinction to be made between short-to-medium-term effects of international migration as distinct from long-term effects. For example, in the short-term, the appearance of labor shortages in the construction industry in Venezuela may have both stimulated migration from Colombia and resulted in a net positive contribution of such migration to the development of Venezuela. In the long-term, however, there is a question to be raised as to the

effects of an immigrant population numbering perhaps 2-4 million out of 19 million people now resident in Venezuela. This is especially problematic under circumstances in which a substantial proportion of the migrant population is resident without benefit of legal status.

With these caveats, an assessment of the consequences of large-scale immigration to the United States would look something like this: throughout the early frontier and industrial history of the United States, immigrants supplied unskilled labor to what was the classic resource-rich and labor-poor developing country of the 19th Century. Immigrants also provided important infusions of technical and entrepreneurial skills. However, the United States of 1983 is no longer resource-rich and labor-poor. Over the past decade, unemployment has stagnated at uncomfortably high levels, and at this writing (April 1, 1983) is painfully high at 10.2 percent. Unemployment is particularly high among the unskilled labor force, and especially among minority youth, where rates range up as high as 50 percent. Recent projections of the OECD and the United States' Government suggest that relief is hardly high--the OECD projects persistent high unemployment in the United States through 1983 and into 1984 at least.

Despite very high unemployment at the lower levels of the domestic labor force, jobs obviously can be found by unskilled immigrants workers. In part, their relative success is due to their willingness to work in circumstances that by United States' standards provide very low pay and benefits or other unattractive conditions, although given the aforementioned differentials between sending and receiving countries, such jobs may seem very attractive to the immigrant. Meanwhile such jobs as presently structured cannot attract great interest from the domestic labor force even during times of high unemployment, since many unemployed workers have alternative sources of income that exceed the financial rewards offered by such employment. (For example, a domestic maid in El Paso is said to earn about \$40 per week, with no Social Security or other benefits, and no limit on the number of hours worked.)

As long as a labor pool is available and willing to work for such remuneration, employers have no economic incentive to upgrade conditions and terms of employment, or to invest in labor-saving technologies that become economic only under conditions of higher labor costs. Hence one long-term effect of such continuing flows of low-skill labor may be to retard investment and restrain the growth of productivity--another economic indicator whose slow improvement causes great concern among American policymakers when it is compared to productivity growth in Japan and other competitive economies.

On the other hand, some in the United States and elsewhere believe that such migrations maintain the economic competitiveness of certain United States' industries (e.g., garments) by providing cheap and willing labor to compete with that of low-wage countries such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Hence in this view such immigration has tended to restrain unemployment, since marginal firms that are kept in business also employ United States' citizens.



An assessment of such arguments depends essentially upon one's worldview. If the goal is to sustain labor-intensive, low-productivity industries that must compete in a world market with imports from low-wage nations, then importation of cheap labor surely contributes to such a goal, as does the imposition of tariffs or quotas on such products. If, on the other hand, the goal is gradually to redirect resource toward higher-productivity industries requiring a skilled labor force, there is less concern about allowing imports from low-wage countries to prevail in industries such as garments.

Beyond these special economic segments, it is very difficult to produce convincing arguments that a highly advanced economy such as that of the United States in 1983 requires a continuing large-scale flow of low-skilled labor, although certain employers or economic subsectors surely benefit. To the contrary, the unemployment rates suggest that domestic low-skilled labor is in considerable surplus, and that relatively high education and work skills are virtual necessities for employment in high-productivity occupations. Shortages of unskilled and semi-skilled labor could arise in such an economy during a major economic boom period, such as the one that led to the gastarbeiter programs in Western Europe. But the United States' economy has been far from booming since the early 1970s, and few respectable economists are so rash as to predict a new boom on the near horizon.

Given the nature of current immigration flows to the United States, it seems likely that their major economic impacts are distributional in form. The beneficiaries of such large-scale immigration are the immigrants themselves and those employers and middle-class consumers who benefit from the availability of cheap labor in the industrial, agricultural, service, and domestic sectors. The losers are the relatively disadvantaged United States' citizens and recent immigrants who find themselves in the labor markets that attract the newer immigrants. These United States' residents are at a disadvantage in such markets, since the economic expectations of a migrant from a low-wage country are likely to be far lower than those of a United States' resident. Although there is certainly some direct displacement of United States' workers that results, perhaps a more important effect is indirect--the availability of a migrant labor force willing to work under poor conditions of employment tends to distort downward the conditions at the lower end of the labor force. This in turn produces a self-fulfilling prophecy: that these jobs will not be attractive to United States' workers, and therefore "require" the importation of foreign labor with lower expectations.

The effects of large-scale out-migration upon the sending countries are equally complex, often with variable effects in different sectors. To deal with the most obvious first, the migrant can be assumed to benefit, or at least to expect to do so; otherwise migration would have to be considered irrational. Such benefits may accrue to the migrant even if subjected to "exploitation" or other mistreatment by the standards of the country of immigration. For example, a migrant who is paid exploitatively low wages in a highly industrialized country may still be earning far more than he could expect in his

country of origin, due to the large differentials in employment opportunities and prevailing wage rates. (Indeed, such a phenomenon underlies the negative effects such migrants are posited to have upon the lower echelons of the receiving country's labor force, discussed above.)

From the perspective of the government of the sending country, the effects are usually perceived as mixed. If the migration is largely on the part of low-skilled workers in a setting in which high unemployment prevails, such migrations are usually seen as positive in economic and political terms. They relieve the government of providing services and infrastructure for such workers, and reduce unemployment and potential political pressures, while stimulating hard-currency remittances of foreign earnings.

At the same time, sending governments are often embarrassed by the apparent desire of so many of their nationals to move abroad, and are offended by the frequent mistreatment and exploitation to which they are subjected-especially if the migration is extra-legal (as in much Mexico-United States and Colombia-Venezuela migration) or "temporary" (as in Turkey-Germany migration).

Finally, there is concern in many countries of out-migration about the long-term effects upon their economic development. Such concerns relate primarily to the loss of skilled manpower to higher-wage positions abroad, which frequently leads to development bottlenecks at home. Such bottlenecks have been experienced in recent years in such countries of out-migration as Egypt and Mexico. These concerns give rise to debates about the so-called "brain drain", and as to whether the countries to which such high-skilled people migrate should be obliged to compensate the country of origin for providing the migrant with the necessary education and skills training. International conventions to this effect have been urged in such international fora as the International Labour Organization.

#### IV. Future Prospects

Future prospects regarding international migration from Latin America to the United States have one or two aspects that are relatively predictable, while most are inaccessible to reliable forecast.

The relatively predictable elements derive from demographic projections of future changes in the labor force of Latin America and of the countries comprising it. These projections are quite robust for the remainder of the present century, primarily because most of the labor force in the year 2000 has already been born. Hence the main uncertainties relate to possible changes in labor force participation rates, but the size and age-sex composition of the potential of labor force is relatively predictable, short of unexpected changes upward or downward in mortality.

Two series of useful labor force projections for Latin America have been produced by respected international agencies. The first was published in 1977 by the International Labour Organization (ILO); the second in 1979 by the Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE), a component of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America. These two series were brought together in a technical document of the Inter-American Development Bank.<sup>7</sup>

In brief summary, the projections show that for much of the Latin America region (excluding the Southern Cone and a few other small countries), the rapid demographic increase experienced in the 1960s and 1970s will engender very substantial labor force growth in the 1980s and 1990s. The Inter-American Development Bank states that the:

predominant pattern of labor force increases in the region ... is seen as a steady pace of gain on the order of 15-19 percent per quinquennium in the 1980-2000 interval. This is the case in such major countries as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and all Category III (high mortality) countries (except Haiti). In all, countries where this pattern holds contain 80 percent of Latin America's labor force.

Once again excluding the Southern Cone, all of the countries are projected to experience labor force increases of 50 percent (Trinidad and Tobago) to over 100 percent (Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador) during the twenty-year period. For most Latin American countries, the projected 1980-2000 labor force increases exceed those in the 1960-1980 period. This is notably the case for Mexico (a 103 percent increase projected for 1980-2000), Honduras (109 percent increase) and most of Central America other than Costa Rica.

There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that much of Latin America must expect exceptionally large labor force increases over the coming twenty years. Although many of the countries in question are seeking or experiencing important declines in fertility, such declines can have little effect upon labor force growth over the rest of this century, since most of the year 2000 labor force has already been born. There are, of course, some uncertainties concerning the course of labor force participation rates, but the sweep of the basic trends is reasonably clear.

Less predictable is the adequacy of projected United States' labor force growth to meet the future needs of the economy. Most United States' labor force projections show very substantial levels of growth<sup>8</sup> even though their assumptions about immigration incorporate Bureau of the Census projections that assume zero levels of undocumented immigration.

However, it appears to be almost impossible to predict the labor demand side very far into the future, given the rapid technological change now underway and the uncertainty about the path of future

economic growth. In addition, there is the conceptual problem that a gradual tightening of labor markets would be expected to raise relative wages, and thereby stimulate labor-saving innovation. Despite such problems, some analysts have argued that there are likely to be significant shortages of labor in the United States toward the end of the century.<sup>9</sup>

Economic and political trends in the sending countries are also less predictable. It is not at all clear whether the above probable increases in Latin American labor forces can be provided with productive employment in their own countries over the next twenty years. This obviously depends upon the future of economic development in these countries--not only the size of aggregate increases of gross national product, but also the kind of development path (labor-intensive vs. capital-intensive, rural vs. urban, etc.) that is followed.

If the growth of employment is as exceptionally rapid as is the projected labor force growth, unemployment will not rise. But if such job-creation does not occur, the prospects for employment for those entering the labor force can be expected to decline. Such a phenomenon would be expected to generate additional incentives for out-migration in search of work, and would further tempt governments to encourage such emigration to reduce domestic economic and political pressures.

Even harder to predict are related political questions such as those of political stability, growth or decline in repressive governments in the region, or even possibilities of international conflict. It is self-evident that very large flows of international migrants can be produced by a combination of economic hardship, political instability, repression, or international tension or strife. It is estimated, for example, that fully 10 percent of the populations of Haiti, El Salvador and Cuba have left those countries for residence abroad, mostly in the United States. In all three of these cases, it is obvious to fair-minded observers that much of the international movement is motivated primarily by a desire for better economic opportunities, and that many of the migrants therefore do not qualify under the internationally-agreed definition of a "refugee". Nonetheless, it is clear that poverty and political pressure form a powerful combination inducing departure from one's homeland.

#### V. Opportunities for Cooperation and Conflict

International migration presents substantial opportunities for both international cooperation and conflict. Movement of people between countries is, after all, one of the few instruments used to further international understanding--as evidenced by the numerous international exchange programs encouraged by both public and private organizations. Moreover, a history of substantial immigration has frequently resulted in closer relations between the sending and receiving countries, as in the case of Argentina and Italy.



Such effects are often negative, however, as vigorous nationalist emotions are raised by real or perceived threats of abuses surrounding international migration. Persistent international tensions can also be generated by international migrants leaving because of opposition to the regime in their own country: for example, relations between Cuba and the United States surely have been greatly complicated by the residence in the United States of hundreds of thousands of implacable opponents of the Castro regime. In the last analysis, the contribution of immigration to furthering international comity, or to exacerbating international tensions, will depend greatly upon the nature of international movements and on the way they are handled by national governments, the media, and other opinion leaders.

The prospects for maximizing the positive and minimizing the negative over the coming decades are complicated by the reality that some sending countries now have a policy (explicit or implicit) of favoring international migration, even if outside the law. Moreover, in many such cases there is at the same time a great national ambivalence about the policy of exporting countrymen abroad, often expressed in righteous indignation at the civil liberties violations and other abuses thought to be experienced by them in the receiving countries.

Most policies favoring emigration of citizens are benign in intent, and should not be viewed as malevolent or threatening by the receiving governments. Such policies are followed for the same basic reason that other governmental policies are adopted--they are seen by government officials as in the national interest of the sending country. Indeed, sending countries now appear to have more control over out-migration than previously thought, and indeed may visualize such migrations as a "national resource", to be managed like any other.

First, remittances sent home by those working abroad may comprise an important component of total foreign currency inflows in some countries. Egypt, India, Turkey and Mexico are major contemporary examples of that phenomena. The sums involved in these and other cases are by no means trivial. Remittances may exceed foreign currency earnings from raw material exports or tourism, for example, and may make the difference between balance of payment surplus or deficit, thereby allowing a continuation of expansionary economic policies at home. The economic significance of remittances has been greatly increased by the foreign currency drain and economic dislocations caused by high oil prices since 1974. Indeed, one economist has estimated that, excluding energy, overseas workers may be the only growth sector of third world exports over the past decade.<sup>10</sup>

Second, encouragement of out-migration may be used as an instrument of governmental policy to improve or stabilize domestic economic or political conditions. If unemployment and underemployment rates are high, for example, such departures may reduce the need for labor-intensive investments or for unemployment benefits or other income-transfer payments. If land is scarce, the rate of increase in demand may be moderated by departures of potential landowners. If governmental

expenditures on education, health or other social services are growing so rapidly as to strain available budgeting resources, these too can be moderated by out-migration. Such effects can serve to reduce the growth of political ferment favoring redistribution of resources towards the dispossessed, and thereby form the basis of what is termed the "safety valve" of emigration.

Third, many developing countries regulate departures via exit visas or other control instruments, and when emigration is highly valued the issuance of such permits may be used as scarce goods, subject to official allocation. Exit visas then may be viewed much in the same way as government employment, housing, private cars, rations, or other regulated goods. Such allocations may be made for a variety of reasons, including: to reward political supporters (as in some Eastern European countries); to remove political dissidents (as in Cuba, Vietnam, or Haiti); or as a means of obtaining the assets of the departing migrants, in the form of land, housing, gold, or hard currency (as in Vietnam, Haiti, Uganda, and possibly Cuba).

Fourth, some countries see emigration as an affirmative policy aimed at deepening and solidifying political relations with the countries to which the migrants move. This seems to be part of the basis for the policy of Pakistan and India in supplying large numbers of temporary workers to the oil-rich but labor-poor countries of the Persian Gulf.

Fifth, perhaps the most time-honored practice of outmigration is as a means of establishing effective control or outright sovereignty over land areas outside their borders. This was, of course, a central component of European colonialism, and during the nineteenth century played a role in the history of the area now comprising Texas. In recent years, such out-migration have been encouraged by Brazil to the region of Paraguay surrounding the Itaipu Dam), Israel (the settlements in the West Bank), and Morocco (to the northern part of the former Spanish Sahara claimed by Morocco).

Finally, and most malevolently, there is the tradition of governments "encouraging"--through subtle pressure or outright coercion--the departure of a despised ethnic or religious minority, or a social group or class deemed politically undesirable. Such motives surely underlay, at least in part, the coerced departure of 74,000 Asians from Uganda under Idi Amin, and the flight (after payment of departure fees amounting to several thousand dollars per person) of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1978 and 1979.

If the above propositions have any validity, the implication is that countries favoring out-migration can be expected to oppose efforts by the countries of destination to restrict entry of their nationals. However they may characterize their concern in diplomatic terms, it can be resolved down to their assessment that their national interest is best served by the continued out-migration of their citizens.

Nonetheless, there are still areas that provide opportunities for important efforts at international cooperation. These fall within four broad categories:

- 1) measures to reduce the pressures for international migration;
- 2) agreements to share the burdens produced by refugee movements;
- 3) agreement concerning control of undocumented immigration and the rights of such migrants;
- 4) measures to compensate sending countries for the "brain drain"

Reducing the pressures for international migration in the future requires, above all, the generation of sufficient employment for the extraordinarily large increases in labor force projected for many of the countries of origin. Although the prospects for such employment-generation depend primarily upon the domestic policies of these sovereign nations, the effects of international trade, investment, and concessionary assistance should not be minimized. The large size and importance of the United States' economy for Latin America are well known considerations, and given these factors there is an important role to be played by the United States in providing fair access to its markets for goods produced in Latin America, in facilitating and regulating overseas investment where it is welcome (and especially where it is likely to generate large numbers of jobs), and in offering adequate assistance on concessionary terms where circumstances warrant.

In addition to such affirmative international efforts to generate large numbers of jobs, "tension-management" functions may also be important. Briefly stated, such efforts would seek to restrain internal and/or international tensions that might eventually encourage large numbers of people to depart their homelands, whether or not they qualify under the internationally-agreed definition of a "refugee."

This leads to the second potential area for international cooperation, that of burden-sharing in refugee assistance. The influx of large numbers of refugees presents serious challenges and stresses for all nations, and especially for those with limited economic resources. Hence it is essential that such refugee movements in the Western Hemisphere be viewed as hemispheric responsibilities, to be shared by all nations whether or not they themselves experience the influx. Substantial success along these lines has already been achieved in the late 1970s during the mass outflow of Vietnamese, with a large number of countries offering temporary asylum, emergency assistance, or permanent resettlement. Given the longstanding commitment in Latin America to the principles of political asylum, similar success should be achievable with regard to the growing numbers of refugees or others fleeing civil strife in Central America.

International cooperation to restrain illegal immigration and smuggling activities will be more difficult, especially when sending countries have implicit policies favoring such departures, as discussed

above. Nonetheless, it is worth making efforts in this direction, especially with regard to countries with cordial bilateral relations threatened by continuing undocumented migration flows. It should be acknowledged, however, that most sending countries in the hemisphere have limited resources to employ for such migration controls, which are primarily the responsibility of the receiving country. That success in this sphere is possible is amply demonstrated by the cooperation the United States government has obtained from the Bahamas government regarding the transit of Colombian nationals through the Bahamas on the smuggling route known as the "Sandoval Pipeline"; from the Haitian government regarding interdiction of Haitian smugglers' boats; and from the Mexican government regarding the control of Mexican-based smuggler rings.

The rights accorded by the receiving countries to undocumented migrants should be part of these discussions. However, sending countries that encourage or "wink" at undocumented migration of their citizens have only a limited basis for nationalistic anger when these people experience abuse and discrimination. If it is the obligation of nation-states to protect the rights of their citizens while abroad, one important way to do so is to make all appropriate efforts to assure that such citizens have a legal status in the countries to which they have moved.

Similarly, countries receiving large numbers of undocumented migrants, in substantial part because of their own failure to legislate and enforce effective immigration laws, have little basis for complaint when such migrants claim access to free education, medical care, welfare, and other benefits available to other residents. The case of the state of Texas is particularly instructive here. Under current United States law, it is quite legal for an employer to employ a person he knows is illegally in the country; in substantial measure this is due to political pressure from economic interests in Texas that became dependent upon temporary imported labor during the bracero program of 1942-64 (indeed, one relevant section of current law is known as "the Texas Proviso"). Nonetheless, the Texas legislature passed a law that requires the parents of illegal alien children to pay fees for public education. This represents an obvious attempt by the political establishment of one state to allow illegal immigration to continue to serve its vested interests, but simultaneously to deny the migrants access to services provided at state expense. The United States Supreme Court ruled (by a close 5-4 decision) that such a limit on access to free education was unconstitutional. Issues such as this surely warrant bilaberal and multilateral discussion between sending and receiving countries.

Finally, there is the subject of the "brain drain" and of proposed multilateral agreements regarding compensation of sending countries for their human capital investment in the migrants. Such provisions have been developed by the International Labour Organization. There is obvious merit in the general proposition that nations which explicitly recruit manpower internationally, and thereby receive the benefits of investments by other countries in scarce skills, should be expected



to pay some form of compensation. Such provisions apply most appropriately in cases of bilateral treaties governing official temporary worker programs, such as those in the Persian Gulf, in Western Europe, and the so-called H-2 program in the United States. Indeed, there already are in existence several such bilateral and multilateral agreements that were designed to apply to these programs.

The issue becomes more difficult when the skills being exported are in excess supply in the sending country (for example, unskilled workers in most developing countries, and some quite highly skilled workers such as nurses in the Philippines or doctors and engineers in India). The matter reaches intractability when the migrants' skills are in excess supply and when the migration is illegal and (implicitly or explicitly) encouraged by the sending country. Under such circumstances it is hard to see how receiving countries could be convinced of an obligation to compensate sending countries that welcome the unlawful out-migration of their nationals.

In general; then, the many contentious problems surrounding international migration may be said to derive from differing perceptions among nation-states of their national interest. In this regard, international migration as an international issue is no different from any other issue, such as security concerns, trade policies, or the law of the sea. However, unlike most other issues of international debate, migration uniquely involves human beings, and thereby stimulates passions and concerns that do not arise about tariffs on inanimate objects. Notwithstanding such problems, there remains ample scope for international cooperation and agreement about most of the issues involved in international migration.

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<sup>3</sup>94. Stat. 102, Public Law 96-212, "Refugee Act of 1980," Section 201(42).

<sup>4</sup>OECD Economic Outlook N° 32, December 1982.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, the series of investigative reports in the Miami Herald, December 5-8, 1982, entitled "The People Smugglers."

<sup>6</sup>Mary M. Kritz, "International Migration Patterns in the Caribbean Basin: An Overview" in Global Trends in Migration: Theory and Research on International Population Movements, edited by Mary M. Kritz, Charles B. Keely, and Silvano M. Tomasi (Staten Island, N.Y.: Center for Migration Studies, 1981). p. 226.

<sup>7</sup>Inter-American Development Bank, "Population, Labor Force and Employment," internal technical paper, ca. 1979.

<sup>8</sup>Howard N. Fullerton, Jr. "The 1995 Labor Force: A First Look," Monthly Labor Review, December 1980, pp. 11-21.

<sup>9</sup>See Clark Reynolds, "Labor Market Projection for the United States and Mexico and their Relevance to Current Migration Controversies," paper presented to the American Assembly of U.S.-Mexico Relations, 1979.

<sup>10</sup>Myron Weiner, "Migration and Development in the Gulf," Population and Development Review, 8(1), March 1982, pp. 1-36.