The Peruvian Diaspora

Portrait of a Migratory Process

by
Jorge Durand
Translated by Mariana Ortega Breña

Since the 1980s and especially the 1990s, Peru has become a nation of emigrants. Emigration has become massive over the past two decades, and the Peruvian populations of the United States, Japan, and Spain have tripled in less than a decade. A survey of households in five localities, three urban and two rural, in and around Lima helps to reveal the special character of this emigration. It tends to involve older and better-educated individuals than are typical of international migration and to target a wider variety of destinations. Moreover, it is a multiclass phenomenon. The economic, political, and social crisis brought about by a change in the economic model, two decades of terrorism, and a succession of failed democratic administrations has affected the society as a whole, and international migration seems to operate as an escape valve.

Keywords: *Peru, Crisis, Emigration, Education, Class*

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, Latin America was a popular immigrant destination. Spanish migrants continued to settle intermittently in countries across the region, particularly Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela; waves of Chinese from Canton (now Guangdong) and Japanese from Yokohama arrived in Peru and Brazil; Italians (mostly Sicilians and Genoese) scattered across the region during various periods but settled in particularly large numbers in Argentina and Brazil, while the Portuguese usually opted for Brazil and Venezuela. Finally, groups of German, French, Jewish, Lebanese, and Turkish immigrants settled across the subcontinent. It was not until after World War II that Latin America eased to be an immigrant destination and the migration flow gave way to interregional migration among neighboring and close countries, South-North migration to the United States and Canada, and transoceanic migration to Europe and, from Brazil and Peru, to Japan. In Peru the change began during the 1980s and became particularly acute during the last decade of the twentieth century, turning the country into a nation of emigrants. In this case, however, the process was rapid and even explosive.

Jorge Durand teaches at the University of Guadalajara and the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica. He is the author of *Más allá de la linea: Patrones migratorios entre México y los Estados Unidos* (1994) and, with Douglas Massey and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (2002). Mariana Ortega Breña is a freelance translator based in Canberra, Australia.

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES, Issue 174, Vol. 37 No. 5, September 2010 12-28
DOI: 10.1177/0094582X10379103
© 2010 Latin American Perspectives

International migration tends to follow very clear patterns, and its root causes have been comprehensively examined (Todaro and Maruszko, 1987; Piore, 1979). Settlement and the building of social networks have also been studied (Portes and Bachs, 1985; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Massey et al., 1987); return migration has received less attention (Constant and Massey, 2002; Olesen, 2002; Durand, 2006a). International emigration is a local phenomenon linked to global dynamics and a process that involves the internationalization of the workforce. It affects both those who stay and those who leave and is therefore national in scope, as are its consequences. This is why we must study both migrants and nonmigrants and places of origin and destination and compare different countries and migration systems (Massey et al., 1998).

This paper analyzes the data provided by the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP), which conducted surveys and distributed 822 questionnaires in five Peruvian localities: Mala, a community south of Lima (184 households), Magdalena (180 households), Lince (174 households), and Pueblo Libre (135 households), three middle-class Lima neighborhoods, and Comas (149 households), a lower-class neighborhood in the Northern Cone.[1] LAMP has used the same questionnaire format and methodology in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries: Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Mexico. The purpose of this work is to establish a profile of the Peruvian emigrant and outline the social process that has resulted from massive emigration to international destinations. The method, in contrast to that used in many other studies, prioritizes research in the community of origin and complements this with information from places of destination. It also relies on other information sources and fieldwork to confirm findings.[2]

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROCESS

Peru had been characterized since the 1950s by intense internal migration, with the highlands sending migrants to the coastal cities—especially Lima, the capital. These migrants settled in the urban periphery—the hills (El Agustino, San Cosme, San Cristóbal) and the plains surrounding downtown Lima (Matute, Mendocita, Fray Martín de Porres, Comas). According to Matos Mar (1968), the 1956 census reported that Lima's slum inhabitants (120,000) made up a tenth of the total population. This dynamic, which also affected the cities of Callao, Arequipa, Trujillo, Chimbote, and Chiclayo, increased during the 1980s because of the economic crisis and escalating terrorism.

The dictatorial administrations of Juan Velazco Alvarado (1968–1975) and Francisco Morales Bermúdez (1975–1980) practically closed the door on emigration. It was very hard to acquire dollars, and for some years travelers were not allowed to leave the country with them. At the same time, emigration to neighboring countries was difficult because many of the surrounding nations also had dictatorial regimes. Diplomatic relations with Spain soured, and the latter started demanding visas for Peruvian visitors while citizens of neighboring nations such as Ecuador and Bolivia could easily travel to Spain without them.

The 1980s marked the beginning of massive international Peruvian emigration. According to our data (LAMP, 2005), it began the very year the military dictatorship ended and Peru became a democracy. Fernando Belaúnde's second term (1980–1985) was characterized by the implementation of neoliberal policies, economic opening, the bankruptcy of national firms, and the beginning of the civil war and terrorism. The 1980 U.S. Census registered 55,496 Peruvians, and this number had risen to 144,199 by 1990 (Gibson and Jung, 2006). The economic liberalism of the right wing and the political terrorism of the far left came crashing down on an overwhelmed Peruvian society. Belaúnde's democratic government could do little to manage the chaotic economic and political situation.

Belaúnde was followed by Alan García (1985–1990) and his belated populist project, which led the nation to the very edge of the abyss. Unfettered inflation, a devalued currency (which went from 33 to 250 intis per dollar in 1988), and a 50 percent reduction of the population's buying power put the country on the verge of bankruptcy (Ortíz de Zárate, 2007). The war waged by the Shining Path guerrillas further disturbed the precarious balance in cities and populations of the central highlands and led to intense internal migration and forced displacement, with people trying to flee both the terrorists and the military (Degregori, 1986). The economic and political context generated a new peak in emigration.

Next came the administration of the Peruvian-Japanese Alberto Fujimori, and the "cure" turned to be worse than the disease. The economic shock that marked the first years of his presidency affected all social sectors. During the 1990s he was reelected three successive times, carried out a self-coup, fostered escalating impunity and corruption, conducted a successful campaign against terrorism, and achieved mild economic improvement. By the end of his administration, Peruvian emigration was pervasive and diversified. During Fujimori's first term, only 899 Peruvian laborers were registered in Spain's immigration yearbook. Five years later, the number had risen to 7,922 (Tornos and Aparicio, 1997).

Finally, during the Alejandro Toledo government, hopes for substantial change were dashed by failure and political scandals, all of which clearly reflected on his extremely low approval rating (approximately 10 percent). Peruvians came to the sad and bitter realization that the reigning economic model and macroeconomic growth did not necessarily or automatically mean higher salaries or more employment opportunities. Nevertheless, it was during Toledo's administration that the economy began to recover and Peru became aware that it was now a migrant-exporting nation. New policies and support projects for those involved in the diaspora were implemented. Studies were commissioned to determine the volume of migration flow and the amount of remittances, consuls were told to change their attitude toward Peruvian communities residing abroad, the cost of consular services was reduced, and a new program of consular identification was instituted (Morillo, 2006).

The last three decades of the twentieth century were not easy for Peruvians. The ongoing economic crisis and generalized political chaos added to a profound social crisis that culminated in the inordinate levels of corruption, impunity, and political blackmail of Fujimori's administration. The final balance

TABLE 1
Percentage of Households With and Without Experience of International Migration by Locale

	Lince	*Pueblo Libre*	*Magdalena*	*Mala*	*Comas*
Migrant	14.4	17.8	21.7	1.6	9.4
Nonmigrant	85.6	82.2	78.3	98.4	90.6

Source: LAMP (2005).

was disastrous: the Truth Commission documented 69,280 cases of murder and forced disappearance between 1980 and 2000. The new century can be seen as a watershed moment for Peruvian society, which managed to oust Fujimori during his third term and embark on the difficult path toward democracy and economic growth.

The current situation strongly favors massive emigration on an individual, familial, and social level. For years Peruvians were afflicted by the loss of jobs in both business and government, political persecution by both terrorists and the government, public insecurity, economic precariousness, and theft and impunity. While internal migration put pressure on the local labor market, other sectors experienced losses as workers left in search of better opportunities. The new highland emigrants put pressure on the already deteriorated Lima labor market, leading to an excess of cheap labor and an increase in unemployment and underemployment.

According to the data collected by LAMP (2005) in the four Lima neighborhoods, these areas have a significant number of households with current and past experience of international migration, while in the rural area of Mala internal migration plays a far more significant role. In Lima, the proportion of homes with migration experience varies between 9.4 percent and 21.7 percent (Table 1). An annual breakdown of these figures shows a general increase in migration beginning in the 1980s and, in the second half of decade, two peaks that coincide with Alan García's chaotic first term. The next significant increase comes during the first Fujimori administration in the early 1990s, a direct result of structural adjustment policies and the reduction of the state's bureaucratic apparatus. Finally, the economic, political, and social crisis of 2000 gives way to another wave of *limeños* leaving Peru (Figure 1). While international emigration is characterized by consecutive highs and lows that accompany economic and political cycles, it has increased by 20 percentage points in the past two decades and seems to operate as an escape valve during times of crisis.

In contrast to the situation in other Latin American cases such as Mexico and Central America, this is a recent and fast-growing phenomenon; it bears certain similarities to the cases of Cuba and Argentina, where the crisis is comprehensive and the population, especially the middle and lower-middle class, is responding by searching for opportunities in other countries. In the Peruvian case, far-left terrorism and official repression seem to have played an important role in emigration. The evidence for this is anecdotal. For example, in 1988 a teacher wrote: "I am forced to leave the country. . . . This is not because I want to, but because

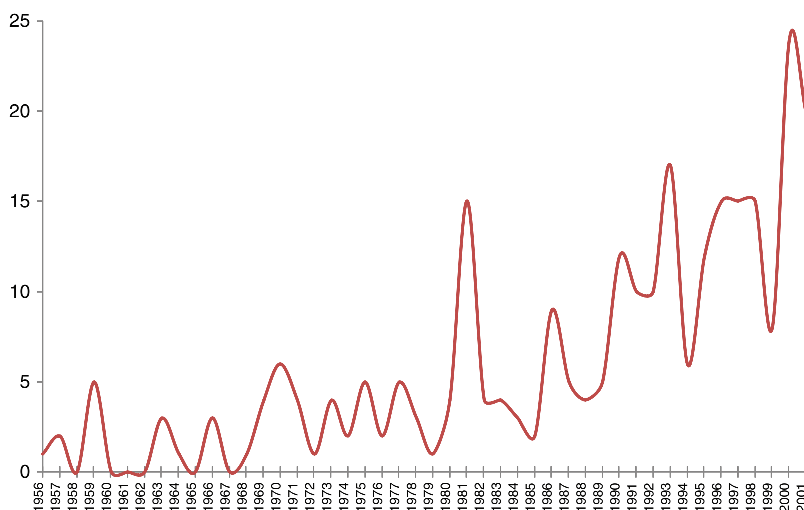

Figure 1. Peruvian Emigration to Other Countries by Year of First Trip (LAMP, 2005)

my son, a college student, is falling under the influence of a woman who wants to conscript him into the Shining Path" (*Caretas*, September 5, 2002). Again, Armando and Leticia were union leaders in the Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación Peruana (Peruvian Education Workers' Union—SUTEP), and their cell included a high-ranking leader of the Shining Path who forced people to join the guerrillas. Since they disagreed with the armed struggle, they were forced to emigrate. They fled first to Nicaragua, where they worked as literacy teachers. When the Sandinistas lost the elections they moved to the United States (interview, November 1999). The ongoing crisis that had led to their emigration also prevented their return. At the same time, a family of Peruvian refugees residing in the United States after having left a rural area near Trujillo because of threats issued by Shining Path may be forced to return there. The U.S. government, considering the situation in Peru to have changed, is challenging the validity of the family's permanent residency application.

Fujimori was able to crush terrorism during the 1990s, but the methods employed by Vladimiro Montesinos, the chief of the Sistema de Inteligencia Nacional (National Intelligence Bureau—SIN), were similar to those used by the guerrillas. The government had few qualms about killing or jailing terrorists, guerrillas, sympathizers, or parties under suspicion and attacked leftist dissidents using methods with bribery, extortion, blackmail, threats, and murder. Many were left with no choice but to emigrate; the number of internally displaced during the conflict rose to around 600,000, while fatalities have been estimated at 69,000 (Chuquimantari, 2006).

Overall, financial hardship would seem to remain the most common cause of international emigration. Juan, a Lima cab driver, had been fired after 20 years by the Banco de Crédito in 1999 and replaced by a young worker paid a fourth of his salary. He had received a substantial severance package that allowed him to pay off his mortgage, buy a car, and purchase plane tickets for his wife

and eldest son to emigrate on tourist visas to the United States. His wife now works at a McDonald's in Paterson, New Jersey, a traditional destination for Peruvian migrants to the United States, and his 23-year-old son is employed as a packer there. They stayed with a sister for a month and then rented an apartment. Eventually the rest of the family will join them; meanwhile, Juan supports the household by working 12 hours a day in his cab (interview, Lima, February 2003). Changes in Peruvian law have enabled massive layoffs in sectors that used to enjoy stable labor conditions. Finding another job has become a serious challenge. Many have turned to cab driving, a form of self-employment that can expand ad infinitum, while many others have decided to leave the country.

A comprehensive crisis (economic, political, and social), changes in the economic model, and terrorism and state repression have all played a crucial role in Peruvian emigration. Social networks, regional salary differences, and the worldwide labor market have both enabled and sustained this process.

DISTRIBUTION OF EMIGRANTS BY SEX AND AGE

Peruvian emigration involves both men and women. Some writers have suggested that the number of female migrants may surpass that of males because women can easily find work in the domestic market and as caretakers for the elderly (Altamirano, 1992; 1996). A 2001 study estimated that 63 percent of Chile's Peruvian immigrants were women (Stefoni, 2002), most of them working as "nannies." Something similar is reported for Italy, where 60 percent of migrants are women (ISTAT, 2008) and most are domestics and caretakers of the elderly. Worldwide, migrant women have an easier time finding jobs but are paid much less than men. While our data corroborate this tendency, male emigration continues to be more significant in the neighborhoods surveyed (55 percent).

The age distribution of the emigrant population follows the normal pattern, characterized by an increase after 15 years of age and a decrease after 35. In the case of the Lima neighborhoods surveyed, there is a slight increase among males aged 50 and women aged 55. The average age of Peruvian emigrants on their first trip abroad, 28.9 years, is higher than usual (LAMP, 2005). Fieldwork indicates that adults who lose their jobs or are forced to retire have difficulty finding similar jobs, and some decide to emigrate. In the case of the lower-middle-class Magdalena neighborhood, the data show a more complex situation, in which Peruvians stop migrating only around 65 years of age (Figure 2). This is only partly because of family reunification, with emigrants settled in the United States (or, increasingly, Europe and other Latin American countries) bringing their parents over to join them. In fact, Peruvian emigration has a substantial adult component, and many emigrants begin their journeys at the age of 50 or older. Older white-collar workers are increasingly being replaced by younger, inexperienced workers who work longer hours, have college degrees, and receive considerably lower salaries. In Spain, for example, Peruvians comprise the largest number of foreign legal residents over 64 in Guadalajara Province (Castilla–La Mancha) and in Madrid, where 1,637 cases have been registered (*Anuario de Migraciones,* 2008).

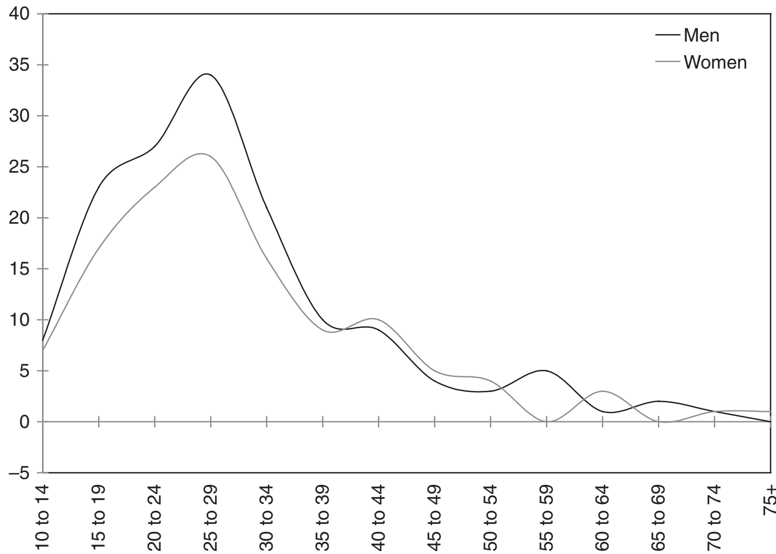

Figure 2. Migration by Age and Sex (LAMP, 2005)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The peculiar age distribution of Peruvian emigrants may explain their high levels of education. The data are consistent across the three middle-class neighborhoods, where a sizable proportion of migrants, both male and female, have pursued university studies or technical careers. The lower-class Comas and Mala show a different composition: here emigrants have only secondary-level education, and college education seems to reduce the incentive to emigrate (Table 2). LAMP's data on educational levels agree with those from other sources. Peruvian immigrants in the United States have completed an average of 12.2 years of schooling in comparison with 9.5 years for the Latino population as a whole (*PUMS,* 2000). Compared with Mexicans (8.5 years) and Central Americans (8.9 years), Peruvians have, on average, 3 additional years of formal education; this is a good indicator of the higher-class and predominantly urban character of this migration flow. Mexico and Central America produce large numbers of rural and, increasingly, indigenous migrants, while the presence of indigenous Peruvian shepherds from the central highlands who have low levels of education does not significantly alter the figures because they are so few (about 3,000) (Bedoya, 2003).

MARITAL STATUS

Consistent with their high level of education and maturity, Peruvian emigrants of both sexes are usually married. Those who are single represent less than 20 percent of the total. Among the divorced, women opt to emigrate more frequently than men. Marriage does not mean family migration. There are many cases of lone migrants of both sexes. In the case of female domestic

TABLE 2
Schooling Completed by Emigrants by Sex and Locality

	Lince		*Pueblo Libre*		*Magdalena*		*Mala*		*Comas*	
Schooling Completed	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*
Primary	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0
Secondary	8	8	7	7	13	7	3	4	7	10
Some college	10	4	5	7	9	6	1	1	5	6
College	29	22	28	18	25	21	2	3	1	0

Source: LAMP (2005).

workers, for example, women tend to leave their husbands behind as household heads and become the family's main income providers. This is particularly true of Peruvian immigrants in Chile (Stefoni, 2002).

LEGAL STATUS ABROAD

It is difficult to comment on the legal status of Peruvian immigrants abroad, since every receiving country has different regulations. However, the majority of survey respondents report having worked legally, while a large number of others say that they traveled as tourists. In the case of Pueblo Libre, a typical middle-class neighborhood, there are more cases of immigrants' gaining citizenship in the receiving country, which may indicate that the naturalization process is linked to greater socioeconomic resources.

Official U.S. data show that Peruvians tend to seek citizenship and are doing so increasingly. In 1995, 5,898 Peruvians became naturalized U.S. citizens; 12,073 did so in the following year. Subsequent years have seen a consistent pattern: 10,063 in 2006, 7,965 in 2007, and 15,016 in 2008 (Lee and Rytina, 2009). This is common in the case of Latin American nations, where the proportion of naturalized citizens vis-à-vis residents increased from 40 percent in 1995 to 58 percent in 2001 (Fix, Passel, and Sucher, 2003). Naturalization is an important step in the integration of immigrants into the receiving country, and it no longer possesses a definitive character. Most Latin American countries, including Peru, now recognize dual nationality, which allows naturalized immigrants to maintain their rights and obligations in their country of origin.

TRIP DURATION

Peruvian emigrants have a well-established pattern of medium- and long-term trips. Only 25 percent of them come and go for short periods of six months to a year; 27 percent stay abroad between one and three years, and 47 percent remain for longer than three years. This is explained by the costs involved, legal obstacles, and the difficulty of finding work at home when they return. Once Peruvian immigrants find a labor niche they tend to remain in it, and there is a strong tendency to remain abroad for many years or indefinitely. That said, it is risky to speak of definitive migration per se and easier to speak

of settled migration (Massey et al., 1987); LAMP's survey reveals many cases in which the household head returns to Peru but the children remain abroad and are not sure whether they will eventually return. Generally speaking, trip duration around the world has increased as costs and risks have mounted and the laws in many countries have become more restrictive, forcing migrants to stay in the receiving nation until they are able to legalize their status.

OCCUPATION

Of the emigrants surveyed who had been 15 years or more of age and employed before they left Peru, 14 percent had worked as specialized professionals, 10 percent in administrative areas, 7 percent in commercial activities, 5 percent as teachers, and 5 percent as laborers. An important block included students (20 percent), housewives (12 percent), and retirees (7 percent). These roles tended to shift abroad, where half of the professionals found work in unrelated activities and a substantial number of the women who used to be housewives obtained paying jobs. Those who had been retired in Peru took up jobs when they emigrated.

DESTINATION

National emigrations tend to target a limited number of countries. In Mexico, for example, 98 percent of emigrants go to the United States. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras also have highly unidirectional flows, while Dominicans favor three countries and Haitians spread over six or seven. In contrast, Peruvians are scattered (Durand, 2006b).

Of the neighborhoods studied, Magdalena shows the most variation in destination; only 30 percent of its migrants head for the United States, and it has the highest rate of migrants to Japan, Venezuela, Spain, and Argentina. Lince has the largest flow to the United States and shows a narrower range of destinations. Class-based logic does not seem to explain this, since Pueblo Libre sends only 40 percent of its emigrants to the United States. These disparities are part of the complex web that characterizes the Peruvian process, which is ill-defined and fundamentally heterogeneous.

While 43 percent of the sample have gone to the United States, there is still substantial dispersion. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 20 percent of these emigrants are in Florida, 19 percent in California, 16 percent in New Jersey, and another 16 percent in New York, while the remaining 30 percent are scattered across the country. The census records 12 Peruvians in North Dakota, 63 in Maine, and 44 in Vermont (*PUMS*, 2000). In fact, every state can be said to have a Peruvian presence. It is possible that this degree of scattering is the reason behind the large number of Peruvian associations reported by Altamirano (1992): in spite of their dispersion, Peruvians still come together in groups and associations.

The remainder of the Peruvian emigrants can be found scattered across the globe: throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico, Canada, Japan, Australia, and practically all of the European countries. In Latin America, the

usually more stable and economically healthy Venezuela and, to a lesser extent, Costa Rica and Argentina have been the focus of Peruvian immigration waves for a long time. Emigration to Chile (which amounted to some 7,000 people in 2006) is a recent phenomenon. In Europe the former migrant-sending nations of Spain and Italy have become favored destinations (Tornos and Aparicio, 1997), since Peruvians there can compete in a secondary labor market in which nationals no longer want to engage (Piore, 1979) and retain an advantage over immigrants from places like Africa because of their relative cultural and linguistic affinity.

This noteworthy diaspora has many causes. There are traditional flows like those to the United States and to neighboring countries such as Venezuela, which offered very good salaries during the 1970s. Emigrants to Argentina are mostly students and capitalize on advantageous currency rates. Peruvian emigration also targets countries in the Andean community, to which travel is relatively easy (Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela). Ecuador's main draw is that salaries are paid in dollars, while in Bolivia the flow seems to have a regional and ethnic component. In the latter case, migrants tend to come from Puno and Juliaca and speak Aymara, which allows them to blend in with the local population. Other flows involve the transgenerational movement of second- and third-generation immigrants back to Japan and, to a lesser extent, Italy and Spain. Many Peruvians descended from Japanese, Italian, and Spanish citizens can easily get visas and then become naturalized (Durand, 2006b; Takenaka, 1977).

The sample shows certain differences regarding the numbers of emigrants to the United States: the figures are 50 percent for Lince, 40 percent for Pueblo Libre, and 30 percent for Magdalena. This gradation does not necessarily correspond to the socioeconomic level of the neighborhood, but it is significant that the proportion for Magdalena, the lower-middle-class one, is 20 percentage points less than that for Lince.

International migration is a response to a generalized political, economic, and social crisis. For the past 30 years, Peruvians have had to put up with inefficient and corrupt governments, inflation and successive devaluations, and the costs of the war carried out by the Shining Path guerrillas and the subsequent repression. During this period, almost any other place offered comparatively better opportunities. Nowadays, however, migration processes are breaking with established patterns, and we find Colombian migrants going to Ecuador, Argentines going to Chile, and Hondurans to El Salvador, all of which would have been unthinkable some decades ago. This is also the case with Peruvian emigration to Bolivia or Ecuador.

We must not forget that the present survey involves middle- and lower-middle-class populations with high levels of education. Migrants of this kind can move relatively easily and are less dependent than others on social networks or language when it comes to choosing a destination. The substantial participation of experienced adult professionals in Peruvian emigration also means that most of them will be forced to take on a variety of jobs throughout their lives. The presence of informal activities such as street vending is noteworthy. Peru's informal economy is so well developed that migrants quickly find market niches in countries where markets are a common feature such as Chile and Argentina.

FLOW VOLUME AND REMITTANCES

Classical migration studies always include the volume of migrant flow and the amount of remittances. Little is known about these factors in Peru, and current calculations are based on unreliable methods and sources. Estimates of the number of emigrants in 2006 ranged from 1.8 to 3 million. In 2000, Peru's Foreign Relations Ministry used the Delfos method to estimate the number of emigrants; every consulate was asked to estimate the number of Peruvians in its country, and a total was obtained by adding up all the numbers.[3]

Another oft-quoted statistic is the migration balance, which provides a rough and problematic estimate based on national entries and exits. It has even been suggested that the number of passports issued should be used to calculate the number of emigrants. Finally, opinion polls such as one published by *El Comercio* (May 19, 2004) indicate that 77 percent of Lima inhabitants would leave the country if they could. Obviously they are not being asked whether they would do so to wash dishes or pluck chickens in the United States.

A similar thing happens with remittances. In 2001, during a conference on migration held in Lima, someone initially ventured that remittances amounted to US$900 million; this was followed by an estimate of US$1,200 million, and finally a journalist and poet suggested that the figure was US$1,600 million. That night the chancellor of the university told a group of researchers that remittances had now reached US$2,000 billion. The next day a representative of the Central Bank said that its calculations were closer to the initial US$900 million mark but that her superior was worried because the press was quoting other numbers. In short, the flows of both people and money must be analyzed carefully and, above all, employ trustworthy sources and sensible methods. The press and some official media have exaggerated both figures, as if an increased number of migrants and their dollars were beneficial for the country.

Our data cannot offer much in the way of global amounts, but they do provide information that can serve as a critical basis with which to approach this problem. LAMP's 2002 surveys indicate that about 45 percent of the Peruvian emigrant population is located in the United States, and this number agrees with estimates of Peruvians registered abroad (Altamirano, 1996) and data regarding voters residing in other countries, which show that, during the 2000 elections, 48 percent of the votes came from the United States (RENIEC, 2000). These sources have their own goals and methods, but at least they agree, and they are all we can depend on.

A somewhat rudimentary way of approaching this problem is to compare local information with sources that employ more sophisticated measurement methods. For example, the 2000 U.S. Census reported instances of three categories of Peruvian presence: 247,601 of surveyed Hispanics/Latinos indicated that they were Peruvian, 318,358 said that they had been born in Peru, and 339,027 said that they had Peruvian parents (Cresce and Ramírez, 2003). This means that not all Peruvians reported themselves as Hispanics or Latinos and there is a 70,757-person difference between the first and second figures. This gap increases to 91,426 if those with Peruvian parents are taken into account. The discrepancy is obviously a result of the criteria employed. While the first figure represents those who classified themselves as Peruvian-born Hispanics,

many Peruvians clearly did not consider themselves Latinos and must have opted for other categories (white, black, or Asian). The second figure is more reliable, since it refers to the country of birth and those who were born in Peru are technically immigrants. The third option includes all Peruvian-descended individuals even if they possess another nationality by birth and do not identify themselves as Peruvians. If we take the largest number (339,027) to include both Peruvian-born and Peruvian-descended individuals, we are still missing undocumented immigrants, who did not participate in the census. Let us assume, arbitrarily, that they amount to 170,000 (half as many as did participate).[4] In this case, the total is close to half a million. If this exaggerated estimate represents between 45 percent and 50 percent of the total, we could then infer that, during 2000, the number of Peruvian emigrants in the United States was close to 1 million.

This assumption would imply that the U.S. Census had a 50 percent margin of error, which is rather implausible. However, no one in Peru would be willing to accept even this already inflated figure. Altamirano (1996) estimates that by 1992 emigrants amounted to almost 1.4 million; subsequent speculation had increased the number to 3 million by 2005. Without citing any sort of source, Germaná (2006: 15) states that "between 2.4 and 3 million people have definitely left the country," a most unreliable dictum given that there seems to be no source or methodology and anything "definite" is hard to prove in the present case.

Insofar as remittances are concerned, our research provides information on two important facts. The monthly remittance average is around US$200 per household, and the money is sent intermittently an average of six times a year. These facts coincide with data for other countries in similar circumstances (Durand, 1988), and the dollars and euros that enter Peru certainly play a crucial role in the economy of emigrants' families and the nation's balance of payments. There is certainly a correlation between number of emigrants and remittance amounts. It could be said that more emigrants mean more remittances, since other variables do not change, salaries do not increase suddenly and spectacularly, and the traditional ways of sending remittances tend to remain the same. It is not possible for migration to double and remittances to triple during a single decade: something is not working properly in the sequence or calculations.

Loveday (2006) recently correlated total Peruvian emigration with remittances, and the result does not show much disparity, although total emigration must be approached carefully. The official number given by the Peru's Central Reserve Bank for 2005 was US$1,440 billion, but the Inter-American Development Bank's estimate for the same year, US$2,495 billion, is far higher (Rueda and Salgado, 2006). The difference is enormous, but the hard data regarding currency inflow come from the Central Reserve Bank. In the case of Mexico, for example, it has been officially acknowledged that the remittance accounting methods used by the national central bank were not the right ones, and the result has been a considerable increase in the amount of remittances that does not correspond with a concomitant increase in emigrants. While the 2002 estimate was US$9,814 billion, in 2006 the total rose to US$23,054 billion (Lozano and Olivera, 2007).

Data handling can easily go astray, and critical analysis of the sources is important. Clearly, it is not easy to produce reliable estimates from precarious and often inconsistent sources. We need a team of demographic, economic, and migration experts to deal with the issue in detail. This problem is a constant throughout Latin America, where the amounts provided by sending countries are often quite exaggerated. The same thing was happening a decade ago with regard to Mexico–United States migration, but the amounts currently provided by Mexico (http://www.conapo.gob.mx/) and the United States are quite close. In truth, any report on massive emigration should ring alarm bells for politicians and shed a negative light on their performance, but it seems that, nowadays, emigrant numbers are flaunted in some bizarre show of national pride, as if driving citizens to emigrate were worthy of appreciation. Shame, however, is not an appropriate response, either: emigration is part of a global social phenomenon made up of both national and international factors.

It is possible that the prevailing overestimation has a cultural explanation. In a context in which, after several decades, there have been no significant changes in job opportunities and there is no light at the end of the tunnel, international migration becomes both a panacea and the only solution. Expectations are as powerful as illusions. The presence of remittances and the return of emigrants who recount their adventures but speak little of their hardships help portray the mythical act of emigrating not as the only exit but as the best exit of all.

Remittances have undoubtedly had an impact on Peruvian society. Twenty years ago no one was talking about emigration, and the press did not dwell on it. Now remittances play a crucial role in the balance of payments and are seen as a substantial source of income for receiving families. Part of the currency generated by emigration in the international labor market (Durand, 1994) usually ends up in the coffers of the sectors involved, and a substantial part is spent on consumption. In Mexico remittances surpass US$20 billion and have played a fundamental role in the easing of poverty. Families who have or had international migrant members enjoy a slightly higher quality of life than those who do not (Massey, Durand, and Malone, 2002). LAMP's data seem to confirm that this is also the case in Peru. If we take consumer durables as indicators, we can see that families with current or past experience of emigration possess more goods than those without it (Table 3). These indicators also evidence the precariousness that characterizes the Peruvian middle class. In Mexico these features tend to matter little in urban areas, since most people have access to domestic infrastructure. In Peru, however, many families lack a refrigerator, telephone, or stereo, and almost 60 percent of middle- and lower-middle-class households lack cars. Television sets are quite common and a rather distinctive and indispensable feature in urban contexts.

PLACE OF ORIGIN

The only way to obtain trustworthy information about the distribution of emigrants with regard to local origin on a national level would be to add a

TABLE 3
Household Goods and Property (Percentage of Households) by Experience of Migration

	Nonmigrant	*Migrant*	*Difference*
Telephone	68.6	87.6	+19.0
Stereo system	56.2	66.6	+10.4
Television	96.8	97.1	+0.3
Refrigerator	84.0	97.1	+13.1
Car	24.1	38.1	+14.0
Van	2.7	6.7	+4.0
Taxi cab	0.8	1.9	+1.1
House	69.7	73.3	+3.6

Source: LAMP (2005).

number of questions to the national census. That said, we can approach the subject via the data provided by the Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil (National Registry of Identification and Marital Status—RENIEC) (RENIEC, 2000), which, among other things, maintains the national voting registry. According to this source, some 300,000 voters cast their ballots abroad, and the distribution by department establishes a clear difference between Lima (53 percent) and the rest of the nation. Emigration is, however, quite significant in the northern departments of La Libertad (10 percent), Ancash (6 percent), and Lambayeque (3 percent), which add up to a fifth (19 percent) of the total flow. In the south we have Arequipa (4 percent) and Cuzco (2 percent), along with Junín (3 percent) in the central highlands.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of international migration is relatively new to Peru. There are about a dozen books on Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Jewish, Polish, and other immigrants, but there is very little work on the subject of emigration, which is why studying the Peruvian case is so important. It is, first of all, a recent phenomenon that has become massive over the past two decades: what was once the movement of tens of thousands now involves over 1.5 million. This is also a rapidly growing phenomenon; the Peruvian populations of the United States, Japan, and Spain have tripled in less than a decade.

Secondly, while the current causes are economic, political, and social, it was the terrible conditions created by political instability, terrorism, and repression, along with a long-term economic crisis, that led to internal and international migration. The old internal migration process, which may have begun in the 1950s, increased during the 1980s to the point that cities could no longer incorporate the newly arrived population. The already depressed and unstable urban labor market was pressured past the breaking point by hundreds of thousands of displaced individuals fleeing the crisis and terrorism. International migration served as an escape valve. This would account for the highly urban composition of Peruvian emigration, although national studies and representative samples have yet to corroborate this. This factor, along

with their higher levels of education, has allowed Peruvian emigrants to find niches in very different contexts.

Another particularity of Peruvian emigration is its multiclass character. The economic, political, and social crisis brought about by a change in the economic model, two decades of terrorism, and a succession of failed democratic administrations affected society as a whole. Emigration became a viable choice for the upper classes whose possessions or interests were directly affected by terrorist threats; the middle classes saw their income and quality of life plummet; the lower sectors, already underemployed, desperately sought a place where they could sell their services. Even some indigenous sectors of the population became part of the globalization process as they engaged in the international labor market.

Finally, we cannot forget that these root causes and the devastating and generalized impact of the crisis led to what can be described as an emigration explosion. In contrast to many other diasporas, Peruvian emigration targets a wide gamut of destinations, a factor derived from its multiclass nature: different social sectors find different niches depending on the available options and their social and human capital.

NOTES

1. LAMP's methodology involves the distribution of questionnaires based on representative samples of specific towns or neighborhoods in migrant-sending countries. Households interviewed are sampled randomly. For details see http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu.

2. A complete bibliography of published research can be found at http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu.

3. The Delfos method was also employed by U.S. immigration authorities in the 1980s to estimate illegal Mexican immigration. A group of specialists got together, and each gave his or her own personal opinion.

4. The 2000 census was accompanied by an awareness campaign asking everyone to register independently of legal status. This campaign was supported by many associations and nongovernmental organizations, since their resources depend on the size of the population they represent.

REFERENCES

Altamirano, Teófilo

1992 *Éxodo: Peruanos en el exterior.* Lima: Universidad Católica del Perú.

1996 *Migración: El fenómeno del siglo.* Lima: Universidad Católica del Perú.

Anuario de migraciones

2008 "Extranjeros con tarjeta o autorización de residencia en vigor según comunidad autónoma y provincial: Principales nacionalidades por grupos de edad, 31-12-2006."

Bedoya, Alvaro

2003 "The price of urbanization: the plight of Peruvian shepherds in the Western United States." *ReVista* 2 (2): 62–63.

Chuquimantari, Carlos

2006 "Los desplazamientos internos en el Perú." *Perú Económico* 29 (12): 13–14.

Constant, Amelia and Douglas S. Massey

2002 "Return migration by German guestworkers: neoclassical versus new economic theories." *International Migration Review* 40 (4): 6–37.

Cresce, Arthur R. and Roberto R. Ramírez
2003 *Analysis of General Hispanic Responses in Census 2000.* Census Bureau Working Paper 72.
Degregori, Carlos Iván
1986 *Sendero Luminoso.* Lima: IEP.
Durand, Jorge
1988 "Los migradólares: cien años de inversión en el medio rural." *Argumentos* 5: 7–21.
1994 *Más allá de la línea.* Mexico City: CONACULTA.
2006a "La migración de retorno." *Revista Interdisciplinar da Movilidades Humanas* 14 (26-27): 167–187.
2006b "Latinos en Estados Unidos: la nueva y primera minoría," pp. 27–47 in Elena Zúñiga Herrera et al., *Migración México–Estados Unidos: Implicaciones y retos para ambos países.* Mexico City: CONAPO/Universidad de Guadalajara/CIESAS/Casa Juan Pablo/El Colegio de México.
Fix, Michael, Jeffrey Passel, and Kenneth Sucher
2003 *Trends in Naturalization.* Urban Institute Brief 3.
Germaná, César
2006 "La fuga de cerebros." *Perú Económico* 29 (12): 5.
Gibson, Campbell and Kay Jung
2006 *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population to the United States, 1850–2000.* Census Bureau, Population Division, Working Paper 81.
ISTAT (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas)
2008 http//demo.istat.it.
LAMP (Latin American Migration Project)
2005 http://lamp.opr.princeton.edu/.
Lee, James and Nancy Rytina
2009 "Naturalizations in the United States, 2008," in *Annual Flow Report.* Washington, DC: Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.
Loveday, James
2006 "Remesas internacionales." *Perú Económico* 29 (12): 22–23.
Lozano, Fernando and Fidel Olivera
2007 "Impacto económico de las remesas en México," pp. 119–150 in Alejandro Portes and Marina Airza (eds.), *El país trasnacional: Migración mexicana y cambio social a través de la frontera.* Mexico City: UNAM/IES.
Massey, Douglas, Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González
1987 *Return to Aztlan.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Massey, Douglas, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor
1998 *World in Motion.* Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press.
Massey, Douglas, Jorge Durand, and Nolan Malone
2002 *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Matos Mar, José
1968 *Urbanización y barriadas en América del Sur.* Lima: IEP.
Morillo, Zósimo
2006 "Los peruanos de la diáspora." *Perú Económico* 29 (12): 15–16.
Olesen, Henrik
2002 "Migration, return, and development: an institutional perspective." *International Migration Review* 40 (2): 125–149.
Ortíz de Zárate, Roberto
2007 *Biografías de líderes políticos: Alan García Perez.* Lima: Centro de Investigaciones de Relaciones Internacionales y Desarrollo.
Piore, Michael
1979 *Bird of Passage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Portes, Alejandro and Robert Bachs
1985 *Latin Journey.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut
2006 *Immigrant America: A Portrait.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

PUMS (Public Use Microdata Samples)
2000 Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census.
RENIEC (Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil)
2000 *Base de datos de las elecciónes del año 2000 en el extranjero.* Lima.
Rueda, Carlos and Edgar Salgado
2006 "El Perú más allá de sus fronteras: oportunidades de negocio." *Perú Económico* 29 (12): 24–25.
Stefoni, Carolina
2002 "Mujeres inmigrantes peruanas en Chile." *Papeles de Población,* no. 83.
Takenaka, Ayumi
1977 "Toward 'Nikkeism'?: Japanese (Nikkei)-Peruvian migrants, a new ethnic minority," in Diane Baxer and Ruth Krulfeld (eds.), *Beyond Boundaries (Selected Papers on Refugee and Migration Issues, vol. 5).* Arlington, VA: Committee on Refugees and Immigrants, American Anthropological Association.
Todaro, Michael P. and L. Maruszko
1987 "Illegal migration and U.S. immigration reform: a conceptual framework." *Population and Development Review* 13: 101–114.
Tornos, Andrés and Rosa Aparicio (eds.)
1997 *Los peruanos que vienen.* Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas.