Chapter 10
International Migration and Employment in Latin America: Uncertain Times and Changing Conditions

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10.1 Introduction

The relationship between migration and employment in Latin America is a complex phenomenon with a variety of dimensions that change over time. At a first glance, a general and logical argument to explain any migration flow might be that those employed do not usually migrate to another country, although this is not always the case. However, neither it is the opposite case, those unemployed do not always emigrate, and less so in current times, when substantial financial resources are required to cross a national border.

Although employment is a key factor in the study of migration, what frequently defines individuals' migration itineraries is the main feature of employment: wages. Wage differentials in a regional and international context are one of the key components of emigration, which is consistent with neoclassical theories (Stark 1991) and the so called "rational choice" approaches (for a critique see Hechter and Kanazawa 1997). Nonetheless, wage differentials are not a sufficient condition. In addition, there must a substantial demand for labor that motivates workers to migrate.

Moreover, even if wage differential could prompt workers to migrate, it does not determine the place of destination. Migrants do not only go to those places where they can earn the highest wages. Certainly, they are looking for better wages, but there are myriad of factors at the personal, family and social levels that determine the migration to a specific location rather than another (Massey et al.1987; Flores-Yeffal 2013).

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Even a flip of a coin can define whether to stay of leave. For many migrants, and certainly for young migrants, it is considered a rite of passage (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). But, the place of destination is not left to luck to decide. Here, there is no room for adventure or improvisation. In general, migrants go where they have relations, friendships, contacts and cultural and linguistic affinities (Massey and Aysa-Lastra 2011).

There are not fixed rules and uniform employment and migration patterns in Latin America. Each country's paths and pace towards development as well as the effects of economic junctures are different. Today (in 2014), Brazil and Chile are solid, stable and growing economies, while Argentina might be at the verge of a new economic crisis. In the last decade the economies of Panama, Peru and Colombia have consistently registered high growth rates, while the Mexican economy has only grown moderately. Bolivia and Guatemala, with a high presence of indigenous populations, have not found the strategies that take large proportions of the population out of poverty and marginalization. Still trapped in the past, Honduras and Paraguay follow the outdated landowner model and have been unable to develop and implement an agrarian reform.

The recipes implemented in each country to face economic downturns in the 1990s were different. Even today, the aftermaths of those policies are still felt in many social sectors. For example, Ecuador and El Salvador adopted the dollar as their official currency; in Argentina, parity with the dollar was imposed to later on change it again for the Argentinian peso. In Peru, soles and dollars are simultaneously exchanged in daily transactions and Mexico, as well as in other countries, implemented a free market exchange rate, or a floating exchange rate, that usually goes upwards.

Development levels in Latin America are, as expected, diverse (Table 10.1). There are regions in which extreme poverty and marginalization are still very high. Latin America, as a whole, has not been able to solve the vicious inherited discrimination practices from colonial times, particularly towards black and indigenous populations, whom continue to be the most disadvantaged group on the continent. According to the rankings of the Human Development Index listed in Table 10.1 (Malik 2013), only two countries, Chile and Argentina are ranked within the group of countries with very high development (as is the case of the US and Spain, the main destination countries for Latin American migrants); in the next level, high development countries, we found 12 in the region. The leading countries in this group are Uruguay, Panama, Cuba, Mexico and Costa Rica. Among the countries with medium development, we identify 10 countries. Among the lowest ranked countries in this level we found Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, countries that have been devastated by long periods of political unrest and instability and natural disasters. There is only one country with low level of development, Haiti, with scores similar to Yemen and Uganda.

Despite the disparities and heterogeneity among Latin American countries, it is possible to establish tendencies and define indicators that allow for an analysis of

Table 10.1 Human development index by level and rank for selected countries, 2013

Country	HID level	HID rank	% of population aged 60 and over	Population aging rank
Destination countries				
United States	Very high	3	19.5	23
Spain	Very high	23	22.9	25
Origin countries				
Central and South America				
Chile	Very high	40	14.0	65
Argentina	Very high	45	14.9	62
Uruguay	High	51	18.4	47
Panama	High	59	10.2	85
Mexico	High	61	9.3	94
Costa Rica	High	62	10.3	84
Venezuela	High	71	9.3	96
Peru	High	77	9.2	97
Brazil	High	85	11.0	79
Ecuador	High	89	9.3	95
Colombia	High	91	9.3	93
Belize	Medium	96	5.7	142
Suriname	Medium	105	9.5	91
El Salvador	Medium	107	9.5	90
Bolivia	Medium	108	7.2	117
Paraguay	Medium	111	8.0	106
Guyana	Medium	118	5.3	147
Honduras	Medium	120	6.4	130
Nicaragua	Medium	129	6.7	124
Guatemala	Medium	133	6.5	127
Caribbean				
Cuba	High	59	18.3	48
Dominican Republic	Medium	96	9.0	98
Haiti	Low	161	6.7	125

Source: United Nations Development Programme (2013), United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013).

migration and employment within the region. In order to understand migration from Latin American countries, it is not enough to look at the flows to US, Canada and Europe, but there is also a need to incorporate human mobility within the region. This chapter is divided in three sections. The first section centers on the demographic factor, which is the key component for migration and employment. Second, we focus on employment, wages, substandard employment, professional employment, and gender disparities in the labor market. Once we have established the main elements in our analysis, demographic structure and employment, then we study migration trends and its contemporary equivalent, return migration to the region.

10.2 The Demographic Factor

Migration and employment patterns are inextricably linked to the population structure. However, the interpretation of the demographic elements must include other indicators. For example, a key feature of low developed countries is that generally they have large contingents of workers but little and scarce capital. The inability of a country to generate employment, among other things, is related to an excess of labor supply from younger (and larger) cohorts that move into the working age groups year after year. Therefore, the excess of labor supply and its pressures on the resources available generate the conditions for emigration of young workers. Nonetheless, these processes are neither mechanical, nor automatic; each case presents its own features and should be analyzed independently.

In this sense, the Brazilian case is unique. Brazil is a country with 197 million inhabitants, a controlled fertility rate of 1.8 children per women (lower than the rate for Chile), a high level of internal migration, very low international migration and a net migration rate of zero (PRB 2014). It is also a country with a vast territory, and although rich in natural resources, we also observe high levels of poverty, which have declined since 2003. Still in 2010, 6 % of the population lived with less than $1.25 dollars a day, and 35 % lived with less than $5.00 dollars a day (World Bank 2014). The consolidation of Brazilian social institutions and the development of its industrial capacity have resulted in economic growth, higher levels of employment and increasing real wages.

On the other hand, in 2010, Mexico had 112 million inhabitants and about 10 % of its population has emigrated to other countries, with 89.4 % of this migrant population living in the United States (INEGI 2014). Mexico and Brazil have similar conditions, vast territories, controlled and low fertility (2.2 children per women in Mexico), and high poverty levels (in 2012, 0.7 % of the Mexican population lived with under $1.25 dollars, and as Brazil, 35 % percent of the population lived with less than $5.00 dollars a day). However, Mexico and the United States not only shared one of the largest international borders (2,000 miles), but one with the highest traffic of goods and persons, and a history of territorial and migratory agreements (and disagreements) that play a determinant role in the dynamics of the northbound Mexican migration (Delano 2011).

From our comparison between Brazil and Mexico, we can argue that although the demographic factor is key to maintain migration dynamics; it does not stimulate it. In Mexico, the very high population growth during the 1950s contributed to maintain the contemporary migration flow, which was initiated during WWII.

The population explosion in most Latin American countries created a deficit in the generation of employment. There were more workers coming into the labor force each year than new jobs available for these incoming members of the labor force. For example, in Mexico in the 1970s, the cohorts ages 10–19 accounted for 11.4 million children, which were equivalent to 23.6 % of the population. Twenty years later, in the 1990s the demographic growth of the population was increasing, the cohorts ages 10–19 accounted for 20 million, equivalent to 24.6 % of the population (INEGI 2014). These figures indicate that on average, the Mexican economy needed to generate a million new jobs each year. According to Escobar (2001) there are three marked periods with different patterns of job growth in Mexico in the recent decades. First, a period of market instability and no job generation between 1982 and 1987. Second, a period of slow job growth from 1988 to 1994 which was followed by a major crisis in 1995. And then, a third period of rapid growth from 1996 to 2000. Therefore, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Mexican economy did not increase the demand for labor that would have employed its youth population. Consequently, the emigration of near one million Mexicans in working ages allowed certain equilibrium.

The structural conditions behind the emigration of millions of Mexicans to the US are changing. The total fertility rate for Mexico declined between 1960 and 2013 from 7.3 to 2.2 children per women (Passel et al. 2012; CONAPO 2014). According to Hanson and McIntosh (2009) the Mexican-US migration flow will decline from its peak in 1990, and by 2030 it will only be a third of the level in 2000. Moreover, exogenous shocks are also promoting this decline. In 2007, when the signs of the foreseen crisis started to emerge, the Mexican labor migration to the US declined, and it is estimated than in 2012 only about 150,000 workers traveled north (MMP 2014).

In the United States, Mexicans and Latino immigrants are increasingly discriminated against, racialized, and subjected to restrictive and punitive legislation and deportations, and although conservative positions dominate the immigration discourse in Europe in some institutions, there is a debate about the benefits of immigration. The European Commissioner for Internal Affairs Cecilia Malnström argues that immigration is not a threat but rather, it is an opportunity. Her argument is based on the fact that in the next decades, those in the working age groups will have diminished as a proportion of the total European population. One case in point is Spain. According to the population projections of the Spanish Bureau of Statistics (INE 2012), in 2051 34 % of the population will be older than age 65 and the dependency ratio, which currently is 50 %, will double to 100 %. Latin American populations are currently younger, while in 2013 it is observed that the old age support ratio for Europe is 4, for Latin America this figure is 9, indicating that the number of people of working age to the population over age 60 is double in Latin America. But this panorama will change as in 2050, when the old age support ratio for Europe is expected to be 2 and drastically reduced to 3 for Latin America (UN 2014). During the last 30 years, Latin America experienced a fast paced demographic transition and it is time for its population structure to gray.

Table 10.1 shows the proportion of population 60 years and over for all countries in the region. The rank goes from Japan (1) with 32 % of its population over 60 to the United Arab Emirates (201) with less than 1 % of elderly in its population. If we divide the rank of all countries in 4 tiers: very high, high, medium and low, we observe that most countries in Latin America already are among the group of countries with high or medium proportions of elderly population (UN 2014).

10.3 Employment and Minimum Wage in Latin America

During the so called lost decade of the 1980s, the adjustments of the public debt in the region triggered the implementation of the Washington Consensus policies which created a decline in the level of job growth and the quality of jobs available in the 1990s. Moreover, the region did not escape the effects of multiple financial crises originating in Mexico (the tequila effect in 1995), the Asian crisis in 1997, and just afterwards, the financial crises in Russia and Japan. The Asian crisis had large impacts in Brazil's economy. Furthermore, El Niño, and hurricanes George and Mitch had devastating effects in multiple Central American countries. In 1998, the region registered slow growth (2.4 %) and high unemployment (above 9 %). It can be said the 1990s is a decade without significant job growth in Latin America and a period of the deterioration of labor conditions with the implementation of labor reforms that in the name of "competitiveness" which led to the growth of temporary contracts, the informalization of labor, and a decline in social security coverage (ILO 2013). Labor statistics for this transitional period also indicate growth of discouraged workers in the region.

It is not a coincidence that while large cohorts of young workers were entering the labor force in a regional economy that was recovering from the debt negotiations of the 1980s, was going through the implementation of neoliberal policies, and was hit by various exogenous financial crisis and natural disasters, the United States registered the largest growth of labor immigrants from the region and the emigration to a blossoming Southern Europe started to emerge.

The first decade of the twentieth first century is marked by the 9/11 attacks in New York, Washington, Madrid and London, which created an scenario of uncertainty and insecurity that has led to the increasing border enforcement and policing of immigrants. The labor markets in Latin America were responsive to the economic effects triggered by the terrorist attacks in the centers of the developed world. Still in 2003, Latin America registered slow economic growth and no progress in employment.

The year 2004 marks a turning point for labor markets in the region. Figure 10.1 shows labor force participation rates, unemployment rates and the employment to population ratio for the population ages 15 and older. The trends in the figure indicate that starting in 2004 unemployment rates began a steady decline which, although partially interrupted during the Great Recession (2008–2010), has continued its upward trend afterwards. The period between 2004 and 2008 is the first sustained period of declining unemployment in the region after two decades of structural adjustments and financial crises.

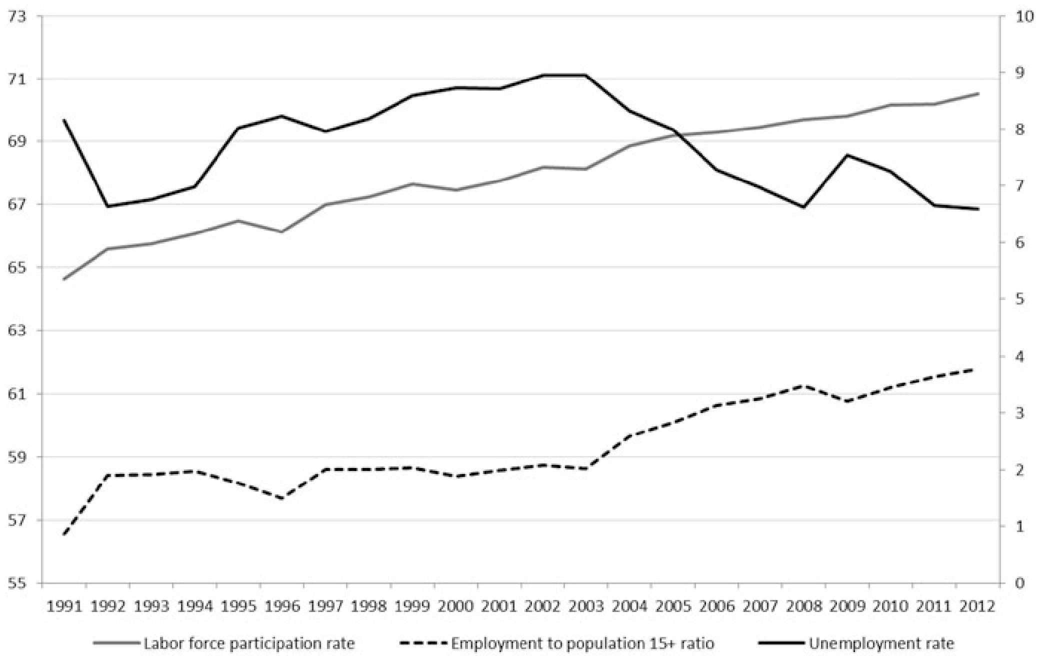

Fig. 10.1 Latin American and Caribbean employment indicators 1991–2012 (Source: World Development Indicators downloaded through the World Bank Data. Indicators used are modeled ILO estimates)

10.3.1 Minimum Wage

Although employment trends are relevant, in our initial argument, we stated that wage differential is the key to explain the migration trends within and from the region. Therefore, in the next paragraphs we examine the minimum wage to establish comparison at the regional and international levels (see Table 10.2). Minimum wage is the minimum sum payable to a worker for work performed or services rendered within a given period. It is guarantee by law according to the country's economic and social conditions and it may not be reduced either by individual or collective agreement. Minimum wages are not indicators of median wages at the country level, and unfortunately there are not available statistics to know the number of persons earning minimum wage. Nonetheless, it is a homogenous indicator that allows us to compare across countries in the region.

In 2012, the minimum legal wage in Chile was 333 US dollars a month, equivalent to 5,701 real dollars a year (OECD 2014). There are workers in small manufacturing jobs that might earn this wage, but those are few. The majority of blue collar workers earn higher salaries, therefore, we can consider the Chilean working class as well remunerated.

In Mexico, the current minimum wage is 65.58 pesos a day equivalent to 5 dollars (Secretaria del Trabajo y Prevision Social 2014). In Mexico, as well as in other countries, the minimum wage is used as a measure to estimate fees, fines and scholarships, among others. Minimum wage is adjusted for inflation, so it increases

Table 10.2 Monthly minimum wage for selected countries, 2010

Country	Minimum wage (US $)	Minimum wage (international $)[a]	Ratio of US to country wage	Ratio of Spain to country wage
Destination countries				
United States	$1,242.58	1,242.58	1.00	0.84
Spain	$1,043.96	1,043.96	1.19	1.00
Origin countries				
Argentina	$456.85	$695.50	1.79	1.50
Bolivia	$110.23	$275.50	4.51	3.79
Brazil	$299.65	$332.89	3.73	3.14
Colombia	$260.76	$678.69	1.83	1.54
Costa Rica	$387.66	$434.67	2.86	2.40
Chile	$332.56[b]	$475.08[b]	2.62	2.20
Ecuador	$253.55	$507.20	2.45	2.06
El Salvador	$80.79	$161.60	7.69	6.46
Guatemala	$185.54	$371.00	3.35	2.81
Haiti	$125.65	$251.20	4.95	4.16
Honduras	$279.26	$558.60	2.22	1.87
Mexico	$121.56	$202.67	6.13	5.15
Nicaragua	$132.83	$332.00	3.74	3.14
Panama	$370.56	$741.20	1.68	1.41
Paraguay	$191.87	$333.83	3.72	3.13
Peru	$200.30	$383.80	3.24	2.72
Uruguay	$294.13	$367.63	3.38	2.84
Venezuela	$303.49	$505.83	2.46	2.06

Source: Jobs database from the World DataBank (http://www.worldbank.org/), World Bank
[a]Adjusted by the ratio of purchasing power parity conversion factor to US dollar market exchange rate (World DataBank Development Indicators 2014)
[b]OECD (2014) statistics

about 4 % or 5 % each year. Table 10.2 lists legal minimum wage by country. Although there are variations across the region, minimum wage in Latin America is about 3,180 dollars a year or 265 dollars a month (World Bank 2014).

However, although there are differences at the regional level the reference point for the purposes of this chapter is the minimum wage in the United States or Spain, the two main destination countries for Latin American migrants. Minimum wage in the US for 2012 was 7.25 dollars per hour as established under the Fair Labor Standard Act 1938–2009 (US Department of Labor 2014), or 1,160 dollars a month. The minimum wage in Spain (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2013) in 2012 was of 641.4 euros a month or about 855 dollars. The minimum wage in Spain has increased from 570.6 monthly euros in 2007 to 633.3 euros in 2010 and after this period its increases have been marginal. The second and third columns in Table 10.2 show the ratio of wages in US and Spain to wages in the region. On average, US wages are 4.5 times the wages in Latin America. Mexico and El

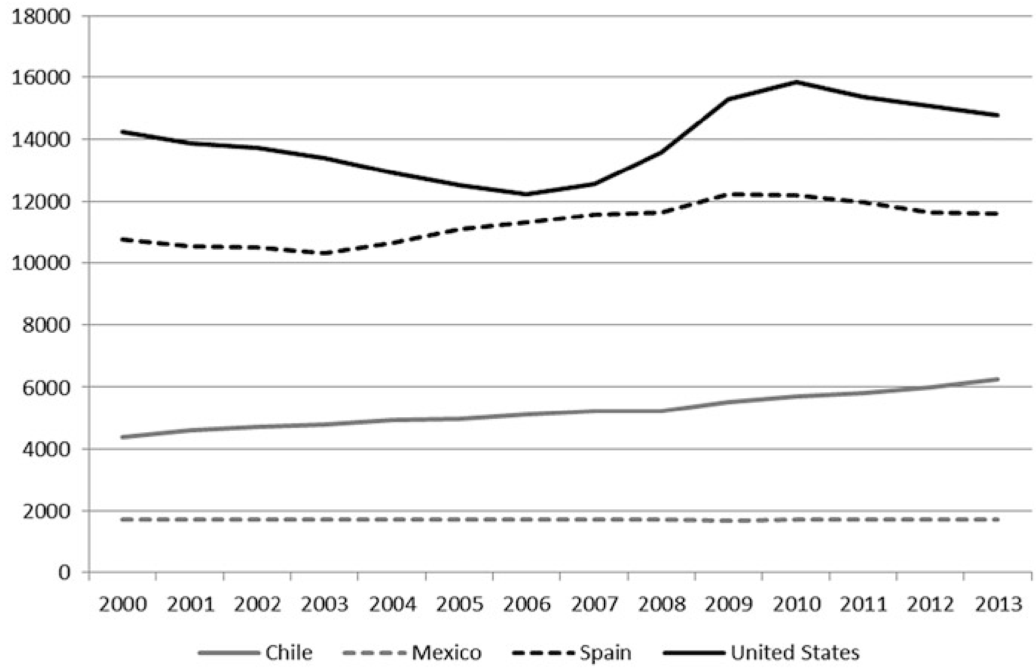

Fig. 10.2 Real annual minimum wages by country, 2000–2013 (Source: Figure elaborated from OECD (2014) data on real annual minimum wages)

Salvador are the countries with the largest wage differentials. The Spanish minimum wage is 4 times those in Latin America including Colombia and Ecuador, but it is 9.5 times the minimum wage in Bolivia.

Although wage differentials are substantial, they change over time. Figure 10.2 shows time trends for real annual minimum wages in the US, Spain, Chile and Mexico. In the case of Chile, minimum wages have increased resulting in a reduced wage gap over time. In 2013, the gap was smaller than before the Great Recession. In Mexico, minimum wages have stagnated, and the wide gap with the US minimum wage reached its highest level in 2010. To assess the magnitude of the gap, we compare the annual real minimum wage in Mexico in 2012, which was 1,713 dollars with that of the Spain (11,633 dollars) and in the US (15,080 dollars) (OECD 2014).

The association between wage gaps and migration is even more relevant in recent times given the increasing costs of migration, particularly high for unauthorized immigrants. Unauthorized immigrants who cross the border with a "coyote" pay differential rates according their country of origin. The minimum cost of crossing the border with a coyote for Mexicans is 5,000 dollars, for Central Americans is 8,000 dollars, for Ecuadorians or Peruvians is 12,000 dollars (LAMP 2014). Therefore, the cost of crossing the border is equivalent to about 2 years of earnings for workers at the lower end of the labor structure, which is where most of the immigrants are concentrated.

In the case of the migration to Europe, and particularly to Southern Europe, everything depends on having a visa. If a visa is available, then the cost of the trip is about $1,500 euros. The difference in cost and risk of migration to the US versus Europe might explain why large numbers of migrants from Andean countries (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia) diversified their destinations towards Europe in the late 1990s, where the demand for low skilled workers was raising and visas were not required.

One of the objectives of this chapter is to give context to the Latin-American migration, not only as a South-north migration (including transit migration or the migration of persons in transit to other countries), but as an intra-regional migration. Migrations within the region were primarily developed during the 1970s and 1980s, mainly due to population growth, recurring economic crisis and political instability. These initial intra-regional migrations partially (with the exception of the Mexican case) established routes and social networks that facilitated the large South-north flow of the 1990s.

As shown in Tables 10.1 and 10.2, there are differentials in levels of development and wages within the region that partially explain migratory flows from Guatemala to Mexico, Nicaragua to Costa Rica, and Bolivia and Paraguay to Argentina, and most recently from neighboring countries to Chile and Brazil.

Guatemalans have migrated to Mexico for more than a century to participate in agricultural activities in Chiapas and as domestic workers, where they have ethnic and linguistic affinity with the indigenous Mayan populations in the border region. There is an on-going regularization program for the annual flow of about a million workers, who are joined by their families (Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores 2011).

In South America, the 1970s and 1980s the Venezuelan oil boom and the political instability in Colombia triggered a large migration between these two countries, with concentration in the agricultural activities in the regions of Zulia and Andes. During these decades and still today, there is agricultural migration from Bolivia and Paraguay to Argentina, with increasing concentrations of migrations in the neighborhoods of Buenos Aires.

10.3.2 Vulnerable Employment

The Latin American labor market, as any other labor market in an industrialized society, is stratified. We find the "good jobs" or the professional jobs, where wages are not directly contingent on output, have defined paths for promotion, job stability and fringe benefits. And there are the "bad jobs," those with low wages, temporary jobs and without access to fringe benefits or promotions (Kalleberg 2011). The International Labor Organization (ILO) (2014) has defined vulnerable employment as "the sum of work by unpaid family workers and the self-employed or workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold jobs for which remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits derived from the goods and services produced, and have not engaged on a continuous basis any employees to work for them" (UN 2014). In 2012, 48 % of workers held vulnerable

Table 10.3 Employed population by status in employment by area of residence for selected Latin American Countries (2012)

Country	Wage worker	Employer	Own account worker	Auxiliary family worker	Domestic service worker	Vulnerable employment
Bolivia	37.5	4.8	33.4	21.6	2.6	54.9
Urban	51.0	5.3	31.1	8.7	3.8	39.8
Rural	15.8	4.1	37.1	42.2	0.6	79.3
Brazil	61.8	3.8	24.6	3.0	6.8	27.7
Urban	66.6	4.1	20.6	1.4	7.2	22.1
Rural	35.6	1.8	46.3	11.7	4.5	58.0
Colombia	42.7	4.8	43.1	5.6	3.7	48.6
Urban	46.3	4.9	40.9	3.9	4.1	44.7
Rural	30.7	4.7	50.7	11.4	2.4	62.1
Costa Rica	69.1	3.7	18.8	1.4	6.9	20.2
Urban	71.1	3.9	17.1	0.9	7.1	17.9
Rural	65.4	3.3	22.2	2.4	6.7	24.6
Ecuador	51.2	3.7	32.8	9.9	2.4	42.7
Urban	56.3	4.2	31.0	5.6	2.8	36.6
Rural	41.0	2.9	36.3	18.2	1.6	54.5
Guatemala	49.3	2.8	30.8	13.7	3.5	44.5
Urban	54.7	3.5	27.7	10.2	4.0	37.9
Rural	43.6	2.1	34.0	17.3	2.9	51.3
Mexico	61.7	4.7	22.7	6.4	4.5	29.2
Urban	69.3	4.8	17.9	3.5	4.5	21.4
Rural	53.9	4.6	27.6	9.5	4.4	37.1
Nicaragua	40.2	6.9	30.0	17.7	5.2	47.7
Urban	47.1	5.5	30.1	11.5	5.8	41.6
Rural	30.4	8.9	30.0	26.4	4.3	56.4
Paraguay	45.0	5.5	34.8	8.4	6.3	43.2
Urban	57.5	7.0	24.0	3.8	7.8	27.7
Rural	26.5	3.3	50.9	15.2	4.0	66.1
Peru	45.6	5.4	34.8	11.6	2.6	46.3
Urban	53.3	5.7	31.7	6.2	3.2	37.9
Rural	23.5	4.6	43.7	27.2	1.0	70.9

Source: Table elaborated from indicators published by ILO (2013)

employment. While this figure was 10.1 % for developed economies and the European Union, it was 31.7 % for Latin America (Malik 2013).

Table 10.3 shows the different distribution of vulnerable employment for rural and urban areas. In 2012, vulnerable employment among all workers in Costa Rica, Brazil and Mexico, which are recipient countries for Latin American migration, is below 30 %. However, the differences between the rural and the urban areas are large, particularly for Brazil, which has 22 % of urban vulnerable employment but 58 % of rural vulnerable unemployment. Fifteen percent of the Brazilian population is employed in agriculture, and in rural areas the percentage of agricultural workers among all workers is 66.6 % indicating that a substantial number of agricultural workers have vulnerable employment. For all other sending countries including Colombia, the percentage of vulnerable employment is above 40 %; the extreme case is Bolivia, where vulnerable employment is 54.9 %.

The percentage of agricultural and mining workers in many sending countries of intra-regional migrants is above the average for the region. For example, 33 % of the employed population in Bolivia is employed in agriculture and mining, 28.3 % in Ecuador, 32.3 % in Guatemala and Nicaragua, 27.2 % in Paraguay and 26 % in Peru (ILO 2014). Therefore, there is a concentration of vulnerable employment in the traditional employment sectors in rural areas.

In this scenario, it is easy to understand that intra-regional migration has served as a way to improve living conditions. Even if migration flows are dynamic and responsive to economic cycles and the policies of the countries of destination, one certain and constant feature in the lives of many generations of Latin American intra-regional and international migrants is that the quality of life and the working conditions in the rural areas of many countries in the region are still below acceptable international standards.

Agricultural day laborers or *jornaleros*, are workers who work for a wage paid daily and according to their productivity during the planting and harvesting seasons. In Latin America, this type of work was a seasonal option for many peasants. However, over time it became the main activity for landless peasants. *Jornaleros* are itinerant, follow the picking seasons and usually live in camps where living and working conditions are precarious. Wages for day laborers are similar to the minimum wages previously described. *Jornaleros* and day laborers are considered vulnerable workers.

The production of agricultural commodities at the global level depends to a large extent on agricultural day laborers. New techniques and the production in greenhouses are labor intensive. Therefore, there is a growing demand for agricultural workers, particularly at the peak of the harvesting season or in specific dates (e.g. Strawberry harvesting season in Huelva, Spain; Valentine's Day for flower growers in Colombia). The agricultural work in these new environments is physically demanding and requires manual dexterity and skills. Therefore, there is a demand for young and experienced agricultural workers. The qualities required in workers for jobs in the production of agricultural commodities in large scale operations are increasingly difficult to find in the developed countries. Therefore, it is needed to "import" labor from other regions or countries. In Latin America, as mentioned before, there are multiple examples of the migration of agricultural day workers.

Although domestic work is not considered vulnerable employment according to the ILO standards, it is certainly within the "bad jobs" category because it shares all the characteristics of jobs in the last tier of the labor market. In 2012, 5.1 % of workers in the region were employed as domestic workers (ILO 2014). In Table 10.3, we find the distribution by country and it ranges from 7.8 % in Paraguay to 2.5 % in Ecuador (only considering urban areas). The supply of domestic workers is the product of a large young population in working ages, low educational levels, geographical concentration of black and indigenous populations in certain areas, rural/urban and international wage differentials, and the demand for elderly care and housekeeping services.

In the last decade, the population of Latin America experienced a population momentum, or the period of time in which the population in the working age groups will be the largest in relation to the population younger than 15 and older than 65, which marks the beginning of the effects of the structural process of population aging in the region (Palloni 2002). In the coming decades, the region will generate a demand for domestic workers, given the aging population and the unequal distribution of household chores and elderly care among men and women. In the area of elderly care, domestic workers are better remunerated and training in nursing is valued. One important difference in the future for the global demand for elderly care is the available institutional infrastructure in each country. At the moment in Latin American countries elderly care is already becoming a burden for families, given the slow development of social security systems and infrastructure to provide the services needed.

These workers are attracted by differentials in wages at the regional and international levels; exchange rates; and differentials in the cost of living across regions. Rich countries demand domestic services and elderly care, and the upper and middle classes have the resources to finance it. Domestic work is a gender and ethnic specific labor niche which can result in discrimination and overexploitation of an already vulnerable population.

In Europe, Latin American immigrant women found a fast growing and durable labor niche. There are three factors that generated the global demand for domestic work and elderly care. First, the massive incorporation of women to the labor market. Second, the sustained economic growth that allowed the expansion and raised incomes of the middle class in developed countries; and third, increases in life expectancy. These changes ensure a sustained demand for female workers in which has been called the global care chains.

During the Great Recession women employed in this sector fared better than their male counterparts employed in construction (see Chap. 4).

International day laborers and domestic workers supply the increasing demand of low paid jobs in key occupations given the globalization of agricultural commodities and the increasing and unequally distributed proportions of elderly populations worldwide. Although the demand for domestic employment has increased the proportion of non-agricultural informal employment in Latin America has declined for males and females and more rapidly for young workers (see Fig. 10.3), which suggests as we describe in the next section changes in the patterns of incorporation of new generations of Latin Americans in the labor market.

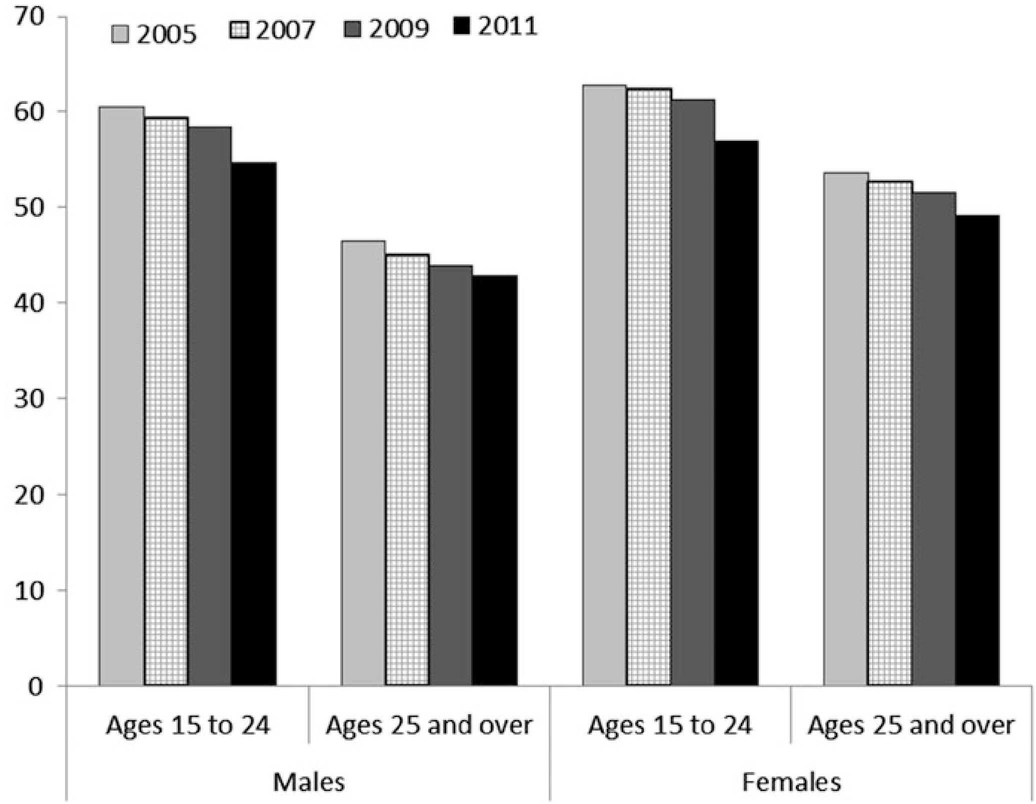

Fig. 10.3 Average percentage of non-agricultural informal employment by sex and age, in selected Latin American countries, 2005–2011 (Source: Graph elaborated from data published by ILO (2013))

10.3.3 Professional Employment and the Gender Gap

In the last decades, the supply of higher education in Latin America has increased and diversified. This is a radical change in the region and opens options to increase the human capital of the countries and therefore the productivity of their labor force. In Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, offer multiple options to pursue graduate education (masters and doctoral degrees). In Chile, higher education was privatized during the Pinochet years and it has become unaffordable for a population that demands and claims access to higher education subsidized by the state, or at least with a payment system linked to family income, as it was before Pinochet.

In Brazil, the problem is the differential access to higher education by race. The White population has higher access to the public and private systems. For this reason, Brazil has implemented a system similar to the American affirmative action, to reduce the effects of racial discrimination in access to higher education. The program "University for All" (*Universidad para Todos)*, created by the Ministry of Education, provides total or partial (50 % and 25 %) scholarships to study in private institutions of higher education (whether for profit or non-profit). Scholarships are offered to Brazilian nationals with a family income lower than 3 minimum salaries. Other requirements are: having completed high school in a public school or as scholarship recipients in a private school, experiencing a learning disability, or committing to be a teacher in the public education system. A percentage of the scholarships are reserved for those who self-identify as indigenous, black or *mulatos* (mixed races).

Mexico offers a wide array of scholarships for tuition and board, to study masters or doctoral degrees, for Mexicans nationals and foreigners. The only condition is that students must apply and be accepted in an institution listed in the catalogue of Universities belonging to the list that CONACYT (National Council for Science and Technology) has compiled. In Mexico, foreigners must pay modest fee for a college degree and they also have access to scholarships for graduate education. In addition, there are a variety of new centers of higher education located in medium and small urban areas. These centers offer technical education and provide the opportunity to obtain a degree to many potential migrants, who after finishing their studies might not see migrating to the US as a valuable alternative.

In Argentina, public universities are for the most part tuition free, for nationals and foreigners. Their circulation of college students and college graduates in the region also allows for the integration of the young educated population in different labor markers. Access to residence permits and formal immigration processes for this population are nowadays more rapid and easy to process than in the past.

In South America, the circulation of persons is considered a fundamental feature for the development of the region. This notion has notably eased intraregional human mobility. In addition, there is an agreement to facilitate the immigration of nationals from members of MERCOSUR and the Andean Community, Including the possibility of working in any country in the region.

There is also a radical change in access to higher education by gender. For example, in Mexico, between 1980 and 2001, the number of enrolled college students increased more than double, but the number of women in higher education tripled. This increase is partially explained by the demographic structure, but it is mainly a product of the incorporation of women in productive activities outside of the family realm and into the labor market. There are even some areas in which women have higher grades and graduation rates than males (Bustos 2003). However, this trend in women's increasing access to higher education has not translated in equal pay, as in the US and Spain. In Latin America, males earn 17 % more than women controlling for age and educational level (Ñopo and Winder 2009).

To summarize the trends in this section, Fig. 10.4 shows declining trends in youth labor force participation rates by educational level and sex between 2005 and 2011. The data indicates a decrease in labor force participation rates for those between 15 and 24 years without primary education and secondary education and no changes for those in higher education. This trend points to the fact that Latin American youth are spending more years in the school system, increasing their human capital to access the labor market with a higher productivity.

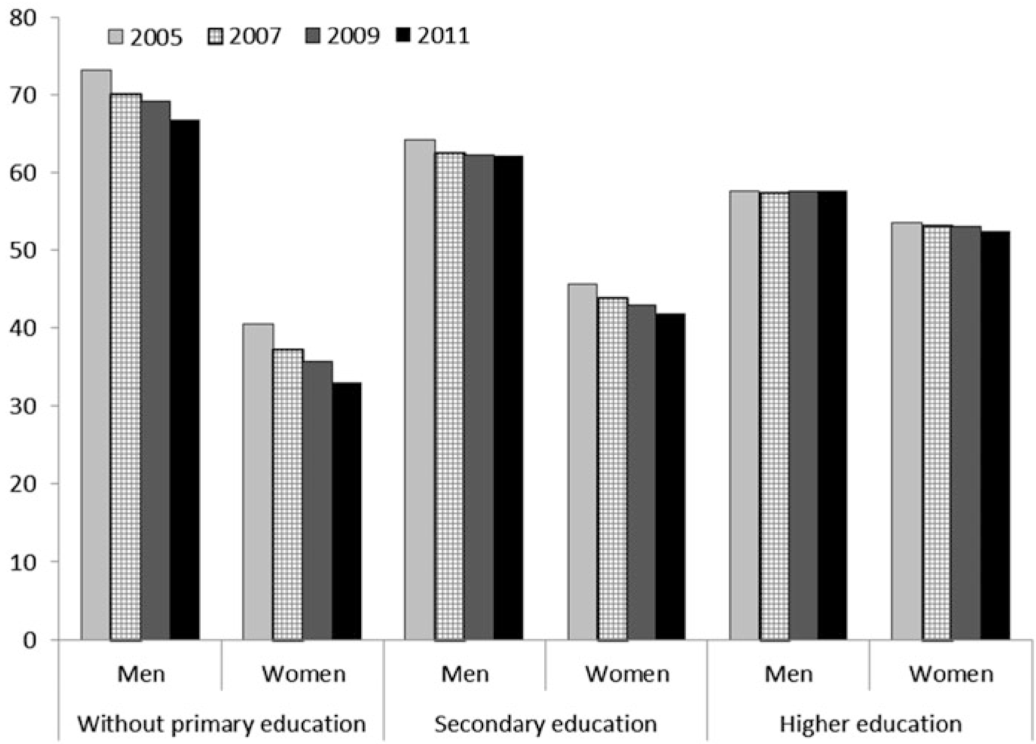

Fig. 10.4 Youth labor force participation rates by educational level and sex in Latin America (2005–2011) (Source: Malik 2013)

10.4 Origins and Development of International Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

10.4.1 International Migration from Latin America

The element that triggers Latin American migration in the twentieth century is the recruitment of the labor force needed by the US during and after of WWII. In 1942 the Bracero Program was implemented to recruit temporary agricultural workers. This program lasted for long 22 years sowing the seeds for the large presence of Mexicans immigrants and their descendants in the US. After WWII, there is labor recruitment from Puerto Rico for the harvest of sugar cane in Florida, and afterwards labor was also recruited from Jamaica and Haiti. The results were that the US east coast agricultural labor was supplied for several decades by immigrants from the Caribbean and the West Coast by Mexican immigrants.

In the 1960s, political conflicts in the region, the effects of the Cold War and the Castro revolution, generated at least three waves of Cuban immigrants, which thanks to their welcoming in the 1970s in South Florida have developed enough political clout to pass in 1996 The Cuban Adjustment Act, a law that provides permanent residence and other integration benefits to Cuban immigrants who arrive to US soil, but not to those who are captured by the US Coast Guard at sea.

Thereafter, in 1965, United States invaded the Dominican Republic, as a preventive measure to block the Cuban influence, particularly among young students who had suffered and fought against the Trujillo dictatorship and that at the time were affiliated with the leftist parties. In addition to the provision of guns and soldiers, the United States implemented on the island a generous visa program for Dominicans who wanted to go to America, and in this way it successfully disarticulates the revolutionary movement, and begins the migration flow from the island.

In the 1970s the main suppliers of a cheap labor force to the US were Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic; immigrants from these four countries still account for the majority of the Hispanic-Latino population in the US. Among the Hispanic population in 2010, Mexicans accounted for 63 %, Puerto Ricans 9.2 %, Cubans 3.5 % and Dominicans 2.8 %. In total these four groups account for 78.5 % of the Hispanic population in the US (Ennis et al. 2011).

The South American migration, specifically those from the Andean region (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) started to travel to the US in the 1960s, when the US did not require a visa for countries of the Western Hemisphere and migrants could easily apply for residency. In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed and the implementation of the quota system reinforced this process. In the last two decades, when the number of applications exceeded the visas available for South Americans, immigrants started to look for alternative routes (through Mexico) to cross the US border or the Atlantic Ocean. In 2010, the South American origin population accounted for 5.5 % of Hispanics in the US (Ennis et al. 2011).

In the 1980s and 1990s, the remnants of the Cold War reached Central America. Once again the Cold War was a catalyst for the migration process in the region. In Nicaragua, people from the upper and middle classes who were linked to the Somoza dictatorship migrated to South Florida. The war in the region continued with the "contras" operating from Honduras and generated a political, economic and social crisis that triggered the migration of the middle and lower sectors of society. People from the middle classes went to the US, while the poor migrated to Costa Rica. In Costa Rica, Nicaraguans account for 85 % of the foreign born in the country. According to the 2000 census (Barquero 2005), 29 % of Nicaraguan men were employed in agriculture while 49 % of women were domestic workers.

Central America at the time was an unstable area, particularly El Salvador, where the civil war incited the massive migration of middle and lower sectors to the US and Canada. Many political figures escaped to Mexico and afterwards to the US. The group that follows is Guatemalans, who were also affected by a low intensity war which had long lasting effects among indigenous communities who were persecuted and disproportionately affected during the conflict. Guatemalans went first to Mexico as refugees, and later they continued their way to the US. Lastly in 1999, Hondurans are incorporated in larger numbers to the Central American migration flow, when the US authorized temporal protection status to the victims of Hurricane Mitch and a number of visas were granted to "environmental" migrants. In 2010, Central Americans accounted for 7.9 % of the Hispanic origin population living in the US (Ennis et al. 2011).

During the decades of political, economic and social turmoil in Latin America, people considered migration as a strategy to maintain if not to improve their living standards as limited options were offered to a growing population. During the 1980s, well known as the lost decade, military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil expelled intellectuals and migrants from the middle classes who found refuge in Mexico, Canada, France, England and Sweden among other countries.

However, periods of significant migration growth have coincided with the end of dictatorships in many countries. The long road to reinstitute democratic systems and develop democratic institutions, as well as external indebtedness and a change in the economic model resulted in the largest emigration flow. Perceptions about the future were elusive and discouraging and solutions to the problems neither were clear nor foreseeable. Urban economies and particularly the urban economies of large cities were no longer providing jobs to large contingents of newly arrived workers. The US, which was the traditional destination for Latin American migrants, had closed its doors after passing the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and migrants already in the US started to compete in a saturated and stratified labor market in which the new Central American migrants were arriving in large numbers. In Peru and Brazil, children of earlier Japanese immigrants embraced the open door policy from the Japanese government and many traveled to Asia.

Spain, a traditionally migrant sending country, became a preferred destination for Latin American immigrants during the 2000s. Spanish refugees arrived to Latin America during the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship. Also, after WWII, two million Spanish workers migrated temporarily to central and northern European countries. The 1970s crisis marks a period of settlement of migration in Europe. As in the case of the US, restrictive policies and barriers to circulation resulted in the permanent settlement of migrants in their destination countries. At the end of the 1980s, with their incorporation into the European Union, southern European countries became immigrant countries. First, they served as waiting rooms for migrants in their itineraries to traditional destinations. However, at the same time Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, were undergoing a rapid period of economic growth. Their labor markers demanded migrants, whom arrived in large numbers in the next two decades. Cachon (2002) divides the contemporary migration to Spain in three stages: before 1985, from 1985 to 2000 and after 2000. At this writing (2014) we might anticipate that there is already a fourth stage that started in 2009 as a result of the Great Recession, a the subsequent jobless recovery (see Chaps. 2 and 3). This stage is characterized by substantial return migration to Latin America or migration to third countries (see Chap. 11).

The first migrants to arrive to Spain at the end of the 1980s were Dominicans, followed by Colombians escaping from a period of political armed conflict, urban terrorism and a deep economic decline. In 1990, with the banking crisis, Ecuadorians rapidly integrated to the South American migration flow. In the 2000s, there is the arrival of Bolivians although not in large numbers. Nationals from Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia did not require a visa to travel to Spain.

However, Peruvians did require a visa to migrate, which imposed barriers for them. Many Peruvians went instead to Argentina and Chile. Argentinians also had opportunities to enter in Europe and many of them legalized their residence through their Italian or Spanish ancestry. Immigrants from Paraguay, Venezuela and Cuba also arrived to Spain. Latin American migration to Spain expanded at a rapid pace in 1999 and peaked in 2007, then in 2008 with the Great Recession (see Chap. 1) it slowed down, and by 2014 the data shows net negative migration flows (Cachon 2014).

10.4.2 Intra-regional Migration

After describing the contemporary patterns of Latin American migration to the US and Spain, we focus on intra-regional migration. Several Latin American countries collected recent census data that allows for the estimation of return migration trends within the 5 year window before the date of the census. In Mexico, a long form questionnaire was collected in one of every ten households. According to INEGI (2014), there were about 1,100,000 Mexican residents who decided to return from the United States between 2005 and 2010 and about 25 % of them were children and youth, which indicate the return of entire family units.

According to the last Argentinian census 1.8 million persons (out of 40 million inhabitants) were foreign born, which represent 4.5 % of the population, a lower percentage than at the beginning of the twentieth century, when one of every three inhabitants was a European immigrant. Results from the census shows that 77 % of immigrants were from neighboring countries, particularly Paraguay, followed by Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Brazil (INDEC 2014).

In Chile, there is a notable increase of intraregional migration, which is sustained by its continuous economic growth. In 1980, official statistics reported that there were about 85,000 foreigners and in 2011 this population reached 352,000 of whom 37.1 % were Peruvians, 17.2 % Argentinians and 6.7 % Bolivians (Organization of American States 2012).

Nevertheless, to describe intraregional migration patterns it is necessary to look at uniform data collected for all countries by the World Bank (2014) in 2011. Based on the international migration statistics we estimated an index of immigration intensity, which is the ratio between the resident population and emigrants, or those who left the country. We recognize that the data on population is a reliable statistic, while the accuracy on the estimation of emigrants might vary.

El Salvador is the Latin American country with the highest migratory intensity index, in a tier that we characterized as explosive. One in every five Salvadorans lives abroad. El Salvador is a small but densely populated country, with an ethnically homogeneous population of mestizos and scarce indigenous populations. El Salvador is ranked 107 and categorized at a medium human development. Salvadoran migrants started to move north in the 1980s fleeing from a bloody and cruel civil war within the context of the Cold War. Nonetheless, in 2014, it is a

Table 10.4 Index of migration intensity by country

Categories according to the index of migration intensity	Ratio of population by emigration (%)	Countries (%)
Explosive	20–40	Surinam (39), El Salvador, (20.5)
Massive	10–20	Belize (16.1), Cuba (10.9), Dominican Rep. (10.1), Mexico (10.7), Nicaragua (12.5), Uruguay (10.5)
High	5–10	Bolivia (6.8), Ecuador (8.7), Guatemala (6.1), Haiti (9.9), Honduras (7.5), Paraguay (7.9)
Medium	3–5	Chile (3.7), Panamá (4.0), Peru (3.7), Colombia (4.6)
Low	0–3	Argentina (2.4), Brazil (0.7), Costa Rica (2.7), Venezuela (1.8)

Source: Own elaboration with data from the World Bank (2014)

country with a positive and stable growth and a dollarized economy. It ranks in third place within the Central American context after Panama and Costa Rica. In general, the migration from El Salvador, as well as the migration from Central America, can be considered a unidirectional migration flow to the US.

In the next level on Table 10.4, we find Cuba and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean and Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay in continental Latin America. Although as described previously the flows of Cubans and Dominicans are particularly salient for the composition of the US migrant flow from Latin America, we believe that Mexico is the country the better represents what we categorize as massive migration. The volume of emigrants from Mexico is exceptional and it is ranked first place in the World Bank database on international migration with 11.8 million migrants, even above China and India (World Bank 2014). The Mexican migration to the United States can be characterized as centennial and unidirectional. Ninety percent of Mexican emigrants travel to the US (INEGI 2014). This migration stream is particular because both countries shared an international border, solid historical, diplomatic and trade relations and high power asymmetry in international spheres.

Among the four countries with the largest flows of emigrants to the US, only the Dominican Republic, and in a lesser extent Cuba, have interrupted the unidirectional migration pattern to the US. The pattern is different for South American countries, which have diversified their destinations. Peru is the country with the most dispersed emigration. Peruvians migrate to the US, Japan, Italy, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and Australia. Ecuadoreans migrate mostly to Southern European countries, with Spain as its main destination. Colombians, although concentrated in the US and Spain, have diversified destinations and they also have an important presence in the United Kingdom. Both the Ecuadorean and Colombian governments have played active roles in connecting, communicating and engaging with their communities abroad.

Although there are at least three structural trends that have eased the need to emigrate from the region: less demographic pressure, economic stability and growth, as well as important investments in the provision of human capital, the Great Recession and its effects on employment (see Chaps. 2 and 3) have resulted in a decline in unauthorized and authorized migration to the US and Spain as well as return migration to the region. The out migration flows from the region reached their highest level in 2007, and starting in 2008 the volume has receded as the demand for immigrant labor decreased as a result of a decline in the activity of the economy. Migration has declined and for many migrants return is seen as a viable option.

The temporal decline in immigrant employment has been powerful enough to slow immigration. If we look back to the patterns of migration to large cities in Latin America, we observe the same pattern in the 1980s. Contemporary migration is a labor market phenomenon; if there are no jobs, the immigrant labor supply declines. However, the Great Recession in the US did not generate a massive return of migrants, but in the Spanish case, where the crisis has not only been deep but very long, substantial return migration to Latin America or a subsequent migration to a third country has been observed in the data. The National Institute of Statistics in Spain (INE) (2012) projected that for the period 2012–2021 the net migration flow in −1,305,300 persons. Spain for the first time in 2013 lost population due to low fertility and emigration of some Spaniards, but more importantly due to return migration.

The long term structural changes on immigration issues, whose effects were accentuated during the Great Recession, have resulted in development and discussion of migration related legislation in many countries in Latin America. Since 2008, there are three types of voluntary return programs implemented by some countries in the region. The first one is the assisted voluntary return (*retorno voluntario de atención social*) with financial assistance for travel expenses and a cash supplement and which required a commitment from the migrant to promise not to return to the destination country for 3 years. Second, productive voluntary return (*retorno voluntario productivo*) which is inscribed within the "Migration and Development" agenda and aims to support entrepreneurs who have business projects in their countries of origin. The third type is the payment of unemployment insurance and other accumulated benefits to the migrants who want to return to their countries of origin and guarantee that will not return to the host country for at least the next 3 years. This third program is implemented within the framework of bilateral agreements (e.g. between Ecuador and Spain, and Colombia and Spain), but due to its characteristics, its adoption has not been significant among migrants.

For some migrants who have returned under these provisions, the 3 year window has already expired. However, the recovery period after the crisis in the US has been a jobless recovery and in Spain the unemployment is still at historically high levels. For the moment, there are no incentives for the returnees to migrate again. Nonetheless, when the economy recovers and the demand for immigrant employment increases, the experience of these migrants, the established networks and the institutional framework developed during the immigration boom will serve to facilitate once again the flow of needed workers.

10.5 Conclusions

Latin America faced the near collapse of their economies in the 1980s due to a lack of re-payment capacity and high levels of foreign indebtedness. Paradoxically, at this writing Latin America has fared in better conditions the aftermath of the Great Recession than the US and especially, Europe.

The conditions in the region today are certainly better than they have been in the last three decades, at the time when many of the current migrants were born. Given the growth and economic stability in the region, it is not a bad time to return. The real average minimum wage has increased in the region from a base of 100 in 1990 to 160 in 2012 (ILO 2013); the youth unemployment is declining in the region, while it is increasing in highly developed countries; and, growth in employment are concentrated in the developed and developing middle classes (16 % and 12 % for 2008–2013 respectively) (ILO 2014).

Although the economic picture is an inviting one, the levels of drug trafficking related crime and urban violence have increased significantly. For many migrants, the communities they left have changed due to persistent insecurity. That is the case of Mexico and many countries in Central America, which are involved in a spiral of violence similar to the period of violence in Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, the democratization process of the majority of the countries in the region guarantees the continuing construction of strong and stable social institutions (as it is the case in Brazil, Chile and Mexico).

The status of international migration in the region is complex. Most countries experience multiple and simultaneous processes: emigration, immigration, transit and return. However, governments have recognized the importance of these processes and there are multiple legislative initiatives on migration issues. Most countries are reforming their population laws and adopting principles based on migrants' human rights. Furthermore, UNASUR is considering intraregional migration as a fundamental factor for the development of the region. This position has already been crystallized in regularization process such as *Patria Grande* in Argentina and other similar processes in Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay and Chile.

There is also progress in trials for free movement zones for migrants in the Andean Community, MERCOSUR, CA4 in Central America and CARICOM. In many of these examples, governments have transitioned from free trade zones to free travel zones. The South American Migration Conference has advanced the idea of opening national labor markets, as in the case of the Schengen zone in Europe (but without language barriers), and even consider the possibility of creating a South American citizenship.

There is no doubt that in 2014, when the traditional destinations for Latin Americans are experiencing their own economic crises and generating hostile environments for migrants, Latin America is in a better position to receive their nationals and benefit from their experiences and skills. It is too soon to evaluate the results, but contrary to what is happening in the "north," in Latin America there is the political will to advance in the resolution of concerns related to extraregional and intraregional migration processes.

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