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**DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION DYNAMICS
BETWEEN NICARAGUA AND COSTA RICA: A LONG
TERM PERSPECTIVE**

By

Alberto Cortés Ramos

Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of

PhD in Geography of Loughborough University

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DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION DYNAMICS BETWEEN NICARAGUA AND COSTA RICA: A LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE.

Alberto Cortés Ramos

Abstract:

This PhD thesis explores the migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Rather than just describing the main characteristics of the contemporary migration relations between the two countries, however, it also evaluates the historical and regional contexts within which they have been produced. This has implied the incorporation of a historicised and multi-scale analytical perspective which has been adopted throughout the research. The research therefore explores both expelling and attracting factors in both the origin (with a particular focus upon rural communities in distinct regions of Nicaragua) and the destination. It has also been important to analyse in some detail the continuities and ruptures of the migration history between the two countries in order to understand the current migration dynamics more profoundly. The research stresses that the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican migration dynamic should not be seen as an isolated bilateral relationship but as part of a wider dynamic that involves the whole Central American region and that, in general terms, migration should be seen not as an isolated pattern but as a wider process of social transformation.

Keywords:

Nicaragua, Costa Rica, migration dynamics, development, transnational spaces, rural migration.

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Alberto Cortés Ramos

1. Introduction

This PhD thesis is about the relationship between migration dynamics and development between Nicaragua and Costa Rica during a long period of time. In fact, these two countries have had a long history of migration that has intertwined and mixed their people and societies practically since their independence at the beginning of 19th century. In some moments, this history was oriented by solidarity and fraternity and in other moments it was oriented by rejection or conflict; however, there can be no doubt about the intensity of this relationship that ultimately has been expressed in the constitution of thousands of bi-national families in the 1990s and also thousands of permanent, semi-permanent and seasonal workers coming and going from Nicaragua to Costa Rica and viceversa.

My research process was oriented to try to explain, in the best possible way, how the migration dynamics from Nicaragua to Costa Rica throughout their history have contributed to transform the development process in both countries in different modes. Although at the beginning I was most interested in understanding push factors in Nicaragua, to gain an effective understanding of the social production of migration dynamics it was also necessary to analyse the pulling conditions in Costa Rica.

The process of delimiting the scope of my research objectives obliged me to formulate and answer some key questions, such as: what would be the best theoretical approach to apprehend the migration process ongoing between Nicaragua and Costa Rica?, what are the best qualitative and quantitative instruments and techniques for analysing migration characteristics, dynamics and production and also questions related to the scope of the research?, like what kind of migration should I study? I also needed to address how far back in time I needed to go in order to understand the present migration dynamics between the two countries and what different scales of analysis I would need to employ (regional, bi-national, national and local) I had, therefore, to answer many questions before even embarking upon this research process. At the end of the exploratory process I have described here, I had something clear in my mind; I wanted not only to describe the main characteristics of the migration between the two countries, but also how they were produced. This implies the incorporation of a historicised and multi-scale analytical perspective which is what I have attempted to adopt throughout the thesis.

1.1 Nicaragua's development geographies

Nicaragua is a small peripheral country located in the middle of Central America and with a very intense history. During the last century it has suffered from imperial interventions

(1912-1933) and a dynastic dictatorship that lasted almost five decades (1936-1979) and was supported by the same imperial power. It had a popular revolution (1979-1990), headed by the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) that was a dialectical response to the long dark period of dictatorship. The revolutionary process transformed the country in a radical way, including literacy and vaccination campaigns, land reform, popular mobilisation and organisation, and strong participation of the State in the economy. During the first years of the Revolution, the popular support was massive. However, from the beginning the revolution was resisted by the traditional power elite and by the US government who supported counter-revolutionary organisations. The combination of many factors, including the US intervention, the civil war, and the FSLN's own mistakes, undermined their popular support. At the end of the 1980s, the correlation resulting from the clash of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces resulted in a new synthesis, a liberal democratic regime with an economy mainly driven by market forces. It is possible to say that after the defeat of the FSLN in the 1990 elections, a counter-revolutionary process started oriented towards the dismantling of the main symbolic and institutional achievements of the Revolution. As is logical, this process of counter-reform has been contested and resisted in many ways but what is clear is that there is no return to the revolutionary 80s. As it would be discussed here, migration is one of many responses to this massive transformation.

In my original research proposal for this thesis I was interested mainly in emigration from Nicaragua to neighbouring Costa Rica from 1990 to 2003. The main reason I was interested in this was the enormity of the flow, approximately four hundred thousand people in less than ten years. The question that I asked myself was, "*why are the Nicaraguan people leaving their country now that there is no war, but 'democracy'?*"¹ My initial answer to my own question was that emigration from Nicaragua was nothing more than the symptom of a massive process of social exclusion that was being provoked by the now dominant Neoliberal development. In theoretical terms our migration could be seen as the response to a structural change. This, in some way, became my working hypothesis, the idea that I wanted to prove with my research.

¹ It is important to clarify that my concern about the flow of Nicaraguan migrants to Costa Rica was not because I felt 'invaded by the barbarians', as some Costa Ricans have expressed it. As a matter of fact, I was born in Nicaragua but my mother is Costa Rican. I live in Costa Rica, but I still have strong ties and feelings towards my country of origin. Hence, I belong to both worlds. Instead, my personal motivation was to try and understand what is happening in Nicaragua so that so many people are being forced to leave their own country, with all that such a decision implies: to leave family, friends, and so on....

In fact, I was particularly interested in wider structural transformations in Nicaragua and its relationship with the population expelling dynamic that was ongoing in the country. My perspective suffered an adjustment however when I realised that my original approach would not have been able to say anything about the country of destiny and the kind of transformation that was happening in Costa Rica that needed to attract and absorb such amount of immigrants in their economic dynamic. After this I decided to adjust the focus of my research. I was still interested in migration as a structural response to the impacts of Neoliberal transformations in Nicaragua, but I also wanted to try to understand what was ongoing in Costa Rica and how this connected to particular processes of, in a more precise expression, get articulated.

1.2 Two sides of the coin: Nicaragua, a country of emigration, Costa Rica a country of immigration

During the last century, Nicaragua has been a social laboratory of human displacements, from both internal and external economic migration to forced political and economic emigration. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the country was feeding the need of labour force to Costa Rica, particularly for minery, the railroad construction and the banana enclave. In the 1950s, the main displacements were internal: rural-urban migration, and rural-rural (frontier colonisation) migration. The main causes of this migration were the capitalist transformation of Nicaraguan agriculture, based upon the geographical expansion of landownership, and the consequent displacement of the peasantry. A rapid process of urbanisation accompanied this trend (Ramírez, 1993: 13-14; Pasos, 1994: 27-8; Utting, 1996: 33). This was also a common pattern in the rest of Central America during this period (Kay, 2001: 741-775). In the 1970s, the main pushing factor for international migration was the Somoza dictatorship's repression and the growing political and military conflict. In the 1980s, after the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution, the main pushing factors were the war, the radical process of social transformation underway in the country, and the ideological conflicts with the revolutionary process (Vargas et al, 1995).

During the Sandinista Revolution the land reform² in the Pacific and interior of the country, as well as the counterrevolutionary war in the Northern and the Southern borders, were the main reasons for internal rural displacements. It is also important to mention the

² 2.5 million of *manzanas* (*mzn*) of land were redistributed during this period, equivalent to 32% of the farming land of the country (Envío, 1997: 3).

forced mobilisation of indigenous people and the impact of the war in the Caribbean region (Ramírez, 1993: 9-80). Clearly in the Nicaraguan experience of the last thirty years, violence and conflict have been the main causes for the migration flows of its population.

As a consequence of the reduction in violence and the regional peace process, there was an important inflow of returning Nicaraguans at the beginning of the 1990s, mainly from Miami, Honduras and Costa Rica. In fact, the Nicaraguan refugee camps rapidly disappeared from these two Central American countries. In general terms, there were positive expectations about living in Peace amongst the Nicaraguan people for the first time in many decades. It was hoped that one of the dividends of Peace was going to be to increase the living standard of the majority of the population, by means of the conversion of military resources into resources for peace and democracy. Also there were expectations about the level of financial support that would arrive from international cooperation to rebuild the country. However, the application of Structural Adjustment and external debt obligations over the ensuing years prevented the allocation of resources from military purposes to social development (Fitzgerald et al, 2001). After a few years of pacification and political stability, Nicaragua began to show significant internal and international displacements of population in the mid-1990s. Internally, the main flows have been from the countryside to the capital, Managua, but also from the Pacific, North, and Central regions towards the South and the Caribbean regions of the country (PNUMA-OEA, 1997). The main international migration currents have been oriented towards the United States of America, principally Miami, with 177,648 official Nicaraguan immigrants; and Costa Rica, which has received around 400,000 Nicaraguans from rural and urban areas throughout the 1990s (La Nación, 2000). In sum, approximately 20% of the total population (4.8 million) of Nicaragua emigrated during the last decade. The achievement of liberal democracy has not therefore, changed the historical trend: throughout the 1990s Nicaragua has still been losing its population, in fact in even higher proportions than during previous decades.

The case of Costa Rica is very different to the North neighbour country. This small country has had a long history of what could be conceptualised as relative labour shortage for long periods of 19th, 20th and present century, that configured it as a country of population attraction or reception. As it has been discussed by authors such as Alvarenga (1999) and Sandoval (2003), this central feature had a long *durée* influence in the

construction of the Costa Rican national identity, but also a very important influence in the form of the accumulation regime or, to put it in other words, in the configuration and regulation of both capital-labour relationships and labour market structures and, in this line, in the development process. In fact, the level of exploitation between 'Costaricans' was less strong than in the rest of the Central American countries where the societies were crossed by Ethnic dimensions due to the existence of significant indigenous or afrocaribbean population that created a labour force surplus. Furthermore, there were two different forms of accumulation regimes: one for the 'Nationals', mainly located in the Central Valley, and other for the 'Others' (immigrants), mainly located in the Caribbean and Pacific coasts or linked to enclave economy, generating a sort of 'dual' development. As is discussed throughout this thesis, is the combination of economic expansion and relative labour force scarcity which has contributed to make Costa Rica a pulling-population society or, better, a country of immigration. In historical terms, the main population 'supplier' was Nicaragua. This phenomenon has created a very intense bond between both societies but also a very strong and uneven articulation on many levels: cultural, demographic, political and economic.

1.3 Development and the production of migration dynamics between Nicaraguan and Costa Rica as research problem

If my main proposal is to study the production of migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in different periods of their history, then is necessary to study both the pulling and the pushing social formations. In my first approach to the topic, it is evident that in spite of the significance of this massive displacement of Nicaraguan people, it has been Costa Rican researchers who have done most of the research about this particular migration process thus far. Their focus is very diverse: immigrant insertion conditions, social and economic impact of immigrants, human rights, health and reproductive patterns of the immigrants, and so on. Clearly then, the focus is oriented towards the immigrants in the receptive country, Costa Rica (Acuña and Olivares, 1999; Chen Mok et al, 2000; CODEHUCA, 1998; Morales, 1997a, 1997b, 1999a, 1999b; Morales and Castro, 1998 and 2002; Samandú and Pereira, 1996).

My hypothesis here is that, in general terms, it is NGOs, scholars, and state agencies of the recipient countries who are most interested in knowing who are the *others* within their

borders, how many of them are there, where are they, what are they doing and so on. For some of these, particularly those related to Government, are trying to control the migration process, or to revert it. Others are trying to understand the phenomenon in a spirit of solidarity in order to defend the migrants' human and labour rights and also to try to include them in the coverage of Costa Rica's social services. It is important to point out that most of this research is related to urban migration or labour insertion. The rural dynamics are less researched, probably because is seasonal and makes the study more expensive and difficult.

On the Nicaraguan side (or even beyond that, in the work of international scholars researching the country), there is worrying lack of research on what is surely one of the most important social and economic processes affecting the nation throughout its history. For example, in relation to the current migration dynamics there existed little academic or policy oriented research. Most of it is focused on political, social, and economic institutional changes and effects, but within the Nicaraguan national boundaries (Close, 1999; Walker, 1997 and 2000; Delhom and Musset, 2000). Admittedly, some international institutions, as well as some NGOs and economists, are starting to look at the economic side of migration, particularly the growing importance of remittances for the Nicaraguan economy. The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), for example, calculates that remittances now represent 14.4% of the GNP (El País, 2001). However, as is common in most of the literature about migration, there is a gap concerning the 'push' factors in the expelling country.

Along these lines, I pointed out in a paper (Cortés Ramos, 2003) that until the beginning of 2000 there was an impressive silence about the out-migration process that was ongoing in the country and that was affecting at least one in every five Nicaraguan households. I called such phenomenon a politics and culture of silence around emigration and I mentioned some possible factors that might explain such a silence, but concluded that the most important was that at the end of the day out-migration was actually very functional for those ruling the country. This is because out-migration both contributes to reducing the pressure upon Nicaraguan labour markets and social services but also, by means of remittances, contributes towards poverty alleviation and reducing national balance of payments deficits. To open a public debate about the migration process in the expelling society could imply talking about why migration is produced and that is something that

maybe some powerful sectors prefer to keep quiet. What is clear, however, is that there is a need to explore in a deeper way the causes of emigration in Nicaragua. I hope this thesis could contribute with such purpose.

In relation to the articulation of development processes and migration dynamics research on this subject was done by Morales and Castro (2002) and Morales (2007). This works were focus upon the transnational dynamics in the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border regions and in Central America, but there still a lack of analysis about two points, first, the historical production of this articulation (what I named structural contingency) and, second, the main characteristics of the migratory dynamics and its linkage with the development process between Nicaragua to Costa Rica.

That is why I decided to go beyond than in my original proposal, in which I was interested in analysing the conditions and factors that were expelling population from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. In the research process I realised that to understand the social production of this migration, it was important to analyse with some detail continuities and ruptures in the migration history between both countries. Secondly, that in general terms, the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican migration dynamic should not be seen as an isolated bilateral relationship but as part of a wider process of transnationalisation. A last element that became clear to me throughout the research process was that, in general terms, migration should be seen not as an isolated pattern but as part of a wider process of social transformation in both the recipient and the expelling societies.

1.4 Research questions

Taking into account the previous elements, I formulated the following main research questions of the thesis:

- From a long-term perspective, what have been the main migration dynamics and relationship between Nicaragua and Costa Rica? What are the main characteristics of these dynamics in every period?
- How these migration dynamics were produced? What is the relation between migration and development in every period? What kind of development they contributed to produce and reproduce?
- What were the main characteristics of the social space to which they were articulated to between Nicaragua and Costa Rica?

- Where this spaces transnational? In what sense and how migration was connected to this condition?

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

To answer these questions, I structured the thesis into ten chapters. Chapter 2 describes the main analytical and conceptual components that allow for the treatment of migration as a complex social process. It also includes an analysis of how different schools of thought explain migration and its relationship with development, including the Demographic, the Neoclassical, the Structuralist and the Transnational schools. At the end of this chapter there is an explanation of the main concepts that would be orienting my research.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to explaining the main scope of the research, including the geographical and historical foci, as well as describing the main techniques that were used to obtain the necessary information to answer the research questions. It provides a detailed account of all the research activities that were carried out and explains my positionality in the research process.

Chapter 4 analyses the first period, 1900-1930, which is a critical historical one in the configuration of Central America as the US' backyard, a process of regional development based upon geopolitical and economic factors. In terms of migration dynamics, it draws attention to the fact that there was a very intense migration dynamic from Nicaragua to Costa Rica related to the railway construction, and the development of minery and banana enclave economy in the Caribbean and Pacific areas of the latter. This points towards one of the most significant conclusions of the thesis, which is that, in historical terms, the migration dynamic between Nicaragua and Costa Rica has been marked by the existence of a relative lack of labour power in Costa Rica and a relative surplus of labour power in Nicaragua.

Chapter 5 is then dedicated to explaining the second period, 1950-1975, which was one of the most intense periods for the region in terms of geopolitics, development and regional migration. On the one hand, this period marked the beginning of the Cold War era, a geopolitical order that Central America experienced with intensity. On the other hand, this was also a period of intense transformation in the development orientation, including economic, demographic and social terms. In relation to the migration dynamics, most of

the trends were internal during this period, with the exception of the sizeable migration from El Salvador to Honduras that eventually culminated in an international war. However, at the end of the 1970s, with the onset of increasing social conflicts a new wave of international migration began which was marked by its political dimension. In that period, Costa Rica became a major recipient of Nicaraguan and other Central American political immigration and refugees.

The third period, 1980-1990, explored in Chapter 6 represents and intensification of the geopolitical crisis, but also a change in the style of development, in part as a response to a very severe economic crisis at the end of the 70s and beginning of the 80s. In terms of the causes of migration, it deepened the main trends of the previous period. This decade was, however, marked by the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979 and the arrival of Ronald Reagan to the US Presidency in 1980. In geopolitical terms, this coincidence contributed to increasing levels of political and military conflict in the region. In the economic realm, the previous style of development which combined import substitution with traditional and non traditional agriculture exports suffered from a terminal crisis and regional development suffered a radical reorientation towards a Neoliberal path, including among other, Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment Programs promoted by the International Financial Institutions that started in a context of political and military crisis. The combination of these factors created a massive flow of Central American migrants across the region and also towards the United States. Nicaraguan migration, in particular, towards Costa Rica increased significantly until 1990 when there was a regime change in Nicaragua and thousands of Nicaraguans returned to their country.

Chapter 7 analysed the current period, 1990-2003, marked by the consolidation of the Neoliberal style of development and the production of a new wave of migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the 1990s'. This chapter gives an account of the main economic and social transformations characterised by a growing process of transnationalisation, which is reflected in the growing importance of non-traditional exports, trade liberalisation, and the privatisation of public enterprises and services in favour of transnational corporations. In the particular case of the migration dynamics from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, they created a sort of asymmetrical structural complementarity that was very functional for the power elites of both countries. The new flow of Nicaraguan immigrants was more complex than the migration dynamics of previous

periods, including quantitative elements such as the greater amount of people that is migrating, but also qualitative factors such as gender, demographic features, and the complexity of the origin, insertion and periodicity.

In essence, out-migration was very functional to Nicaragua in order to reduce the social pressure on labour markets and the provision of public services, whilst Costa Rica, which was experiencing an aggressive process of economic expansion, was experiencing a situation of relative labour force scarcity that could not be overcome by its national population alone. This unintended historical coincidence stimulated a massive and complex flow of Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica during the period studied in this chapter (1990-2003), strengthening the transnational linkages between the economies and societies of the two countries.

Chapter 8 is about the 'Main rural socioeconomic structure and transformations in the rural world in Nicaragua during the 1990s' is a link between the previous chapter and chapters 9 and 10 that contain an in-depth analysis of the rural migration dynamics. In this case, the chapter seeks to give a more precise idea of the structural conditions and situation of the rural world in Nicaragua during the 1990s, highlighting the existing gap between the rural and urban world. After doing so, it goes beyond, giving more information about the three selected departments where the rural households of the case study are located. This is particularly important because there are significant socio-economic and structural differences amongst these departments that could contribute to explain the different seasonal rural dynamics to Costa Rica.

Chapter 9 'Migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. Main characteristics of the households with migration of rural communities from León, Chinandega and Estelí' and Chapter 10 'Main Characteristics of the Seasonal Rural Migration Dynamics from Nicaragua to Costa Rica' are inter-twined chapters, dedicated to analysing the case study utilised in the thesis, namely the transnational migration from the rural communities of León, Estelí and Chinandega (in Northern Nicaragua) to Costa Rica. Chapter 9, on the one hand, presents a detailed characterisation of the demographic, economic, and social features of the migrants and their households, whilst, on the other hand, Chapter 10 explains their main migration patterns and dynamics, including issues such as frequency, activities, destinies, time length, travelling conditions, documentation, decision making, social networks and remittances.

The main findings of these chapters confirm the intensity of the linkage or articulation between Nicaragua and Costa Rica development process, not only in terms of the migration dynamics, but also in terms of the connectivity between their labour markets and economies in which the migrants play a fundamental role.

There is a final chapter of Conclusions, which includes a summary of the main findings obtained in the process of answering the main research questions.

CHAPTER 2: A theoretical exploration of the linkages between migration dynamics, transnational social spaces and development.

The main purpose of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, to give an idea of the state of the art in the theoretical realms, through reviewing the main currents of thought that have been developed to understand and explain migration. On the other hand, to explain the main theoretical concepts and elements that will be used throughout this thesis. Before starting, it is necessary to highlight that the definition of the theoretical framework has been one of the most challenging, but interesting, parts of my PhD research journey. There is a paradox here because, as Boyle and others point out (Boyle et al, 1998: 1), 'migration' seems to be a simple concept, where '(p)eople move between places'. However, when the concept is thoroughly analysed, what looks simple from a distance becomes an extremely complex and multi-faceted social phenomenon reflecting, not only technical or linguistic debates about how to define migration but also the fact that questions such as, how to define who is a migrant need to be answered in the light of new realities created by global processes as well as macro-regional integration. One example of these complexities is the European Union and its massive intra-regional population flows. Are the people coming from other European countries 'immigrants' in the traditional sense? Are they foreigners? What is the difference between being a foreigner and being an immigrant? What about the negative connotations of some words related to some particular migration dynamics, such as 'asylum-seeker' in the English and Nordic contexts? And, what about the difference that means someone is known as an 'illegal' instead of a 'non-documented' immigrant? It would be possible to continue along these lines, but it is not necessary for the purposes of this research to go further into this debate about definitions, connotations, discourses and power.³

2.1 Analytical elements and categories in migration's dynamics

From an analytical point of view, migration is not a single process, but a process that embraces many processes, or better, it is a process of processes. In the conventional definition (Blanco, 2000: 20; Portes and Böröcz, 1993: 607-618) migration involves at least three main elements: an expelling society/place or origin; a recipient society/place or context of reception and an agent (migrant). Any of these elements could be studied by

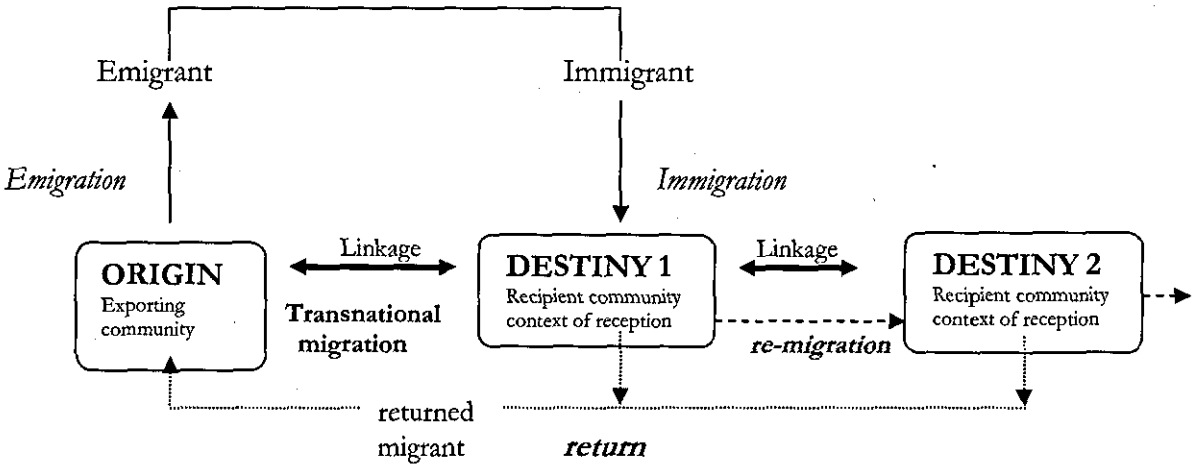
³ In the specific case that I have studied, a very important work along these lines is Sandoval's '*Otros Amenazantes*' (2003), about how Costa Rican society has culturally constructed the Nicaraguan immigrants as the "threatening others" and the "scapegoats" of old and new problems that Costa Rican society is confronting.

themselves. In the 1990s many scholars researching migration have added one more unit of analysis: the linkages between the immigrants in the host society and the original communities.

In relation to the first of these elements it is possible to ask questions such as why and how migration is produced; what is the impact of migration for the 'human-exporting' community, region or country and what is migration's impact (cost/benefit trade-off) upon the expelling society? In relation to the recipient society there are also many questions to answer. What is the impact of immigration? How many immigrants are there and who are they? Where are they living? What are they doing? What is the relation between the newcomers and the existing residents? How should immigration be managed and what are the various consequences of immigration policies?

Concerning the migrants as social agents or actors, the main questions are related to his/her decisions to emigrate, namely why he/she decided to migrate and how he/she made the decision and, in relation to the subjective side, what were his/her expectations? It is also possible to raise questions about the relationships and linkages between the immigrant and his/her original family, community, or country, as well as about the immigrant's experience of returning to his/her original community after the migration experience. Finally, in relation to the linkage between the immigrant in the host society and the original community and country, we could ask whether we are witnessing the development of a new sort of migration, a transnational migration that has a double sense of national belongingness that challenges national boundaries and identities or whether this is only a new fashion for renaming international migration. Figure 2.1 shows the main analytical components of migration dynamics.

Figure 2.1: Main components of international migration dynamic from an analytical viewpoint



Source: based on Blanco, 2000, 16; modified by the author.

Along the same lines, it is possible to analyse different dimensions of the impacts of migration on both expelling and recipient societies, as well as migrants. Blanco (2000: 20) mentions at least four of these dimensions, namely demographic, economic, social, and cultural. But we should also add political, legal and institutional, gender and environmental dimensions to this list. Figure 2.2 illustrates some of the possible consequences of migration.

Figure 2.2: Debates, issues and dimensions of migration

DIMENSIONS	EXPELLING SOCIETY	RECIPIENT SOCIETY	MIGRANTS
Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could lighten demographic pressure. - It could contribute to population ageing. - It could stimulate rural depopulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could mitigate population decrease. - It could make the population younger. - It could be conducive to urban overpopulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could change the reproductive patterns of immigrants.⁴
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could reduce poverty by increasing the consumption capacity of migrant's families. - Its remittances could contribute to equilibrating the balance of payment at a national level - It stimulates "brain-drain" and decreases human capital. - It could increase innovation economic capacity (returns). - It could decrease available labour force. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could increase available labour force. - It could bring qualified human resources (selective migration) - It could stimulate the creation of dual labour markets (the heavy work, risky and badly paid jobs tend to be for documented and non-documented immigrants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants could improve the capacity of consumption of their family., particularly if they migrate in a regular condition.⁵ - Immigrants could suffer from lack of job stability and unemployment. - Immigrants frequently obtain the riskier and lower-paid jobs.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Migration can create social change through social mobility. - It can separate families and could generate associated problems. - It could create new hierarchies and differences between families with and without migration in terms of consumption and levels of poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could increase competition for public resource access. - It could create NGOs, Grassroots movements and networks of solidarity to support immigrants. - It could increase the room to manoeuvre for businesses to lower labour standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could lead to vulnerability and lack of protection. - It could lead to adaptation to a different culture and to a different way of living. - It could lead to isolation, marginality and discrimination. - Migration could postpone personal projects of the immigrant. - Migration in itself could be a very important personal project for the immigrant.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could break-off cultural tradition transmissions between generations. - It could increase the risk of cultural 'colonisation', and the lost of traditions. - It could enrich the cultural life of communities widening diversity. - It could create cultural tensions between those who stay and those who return. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could create or stimulate ethnic conflicts. - It could stimulate racism and xenophobia from the native population towards immigrants. - It could stimulate cultural enrichment, tolerance, acceptance and universalism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could lead to immigrant loss of identity and alienation. - A migrant could live in a more open environment in cultural and social terms (this is particularly important in women and young immigrants).
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could imply a loss of potential political leaders. - It could change electoral maps and political agendas. - It could change political culture and values. - It could stimulate new forms of political organisations (vote for emigrants). - It could modify the approach and importance of migration policy and legal frameworks at the governmental level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could strengthen immigrants' organisation as well as widening citizenship. - It could create binational citizenship and new forms of political participation. - It could put immigration on the national political agenda, with pro and anti positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants could learn new forms of political practices and organisations. - Immigrants could create new forms of political participation.
Legal and Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants or/and their families could promote changes in public/private institutions at both national and local scales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could stimulate the modification of the legal framework that defines who is a real citizen. - It could stimulate the creations of programs and policies to manage immigration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants could learn how to interact in different institutional frames. - Immigrants could participate in an active way promoting institutional changes.
Gender and age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could have strong implications for the family, including temporal or permanent separation of their members. - It could change the decision-making of the household in relation to who should emigrate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could have different patterns of insertion as a consequence of gender or age. - It produces different types of linkages with families in the country of origin depending on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Migration could change life or personal projects. - It could have an impact in their familial and social relationships.

⁴ For example, Nicaraguan women in Costa Rica, on average, have a higher fertility rate than the average for Costa Rican women but lower than Nicaraguan women in Nicaragua.

⁵ After my fieldwork I would take this point with a pinch of salt. Without doubt, for immigrants as individuals, it makes a big difference if they migrate with documents and work permits.

		both, gender and age.	
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental factors could have strong impacts in the decision to migrate (natural disasters, long term environmental degradation). - Migration could change the pattern of production and the use of land by means of the use of remittances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigration could stimulate new use of land, that requires more intensive use of labour force (expansion of enclave production). 	

Source: Based on a figure from Blanco, 2000: 20, significantly reworked by the author.

The different implications mentioned in Figure 2.2 highlight the multidimensional causality of migration. In this sense, migration embraces a wide range of human movements, including international flows of refugees stimulated by war, famine or political unrest; young adults' movements between regions or countries in search of employment; highly-qualified workers moving for professional-development expectations from South to North and vice versa; middle age professionals moving from cities to rural areas to escape from hectic rhythms imposed by modern life; people moving for housing requirements; and temporary movements of poor people from both rural and urban areas to save and send money for their family's survival in the original region or country. In synthesis, negative causes of migration are associated with economic or environmental deprivation, famine, war, political or social violence;⁶ whilst positive causes are personal or family projects which seek to improve living conditions, or encompass desires to explore new realities, cultures and places. However, if it is analysed from a *long durée* perspective, migrations have generally tended to be an expression or result of 'lack-of' situations or conditions. As put by Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (1995: 9):

'However, beneath the kaleidoscope of examples and the curtness of the treatment of each, you should appreciate the deeper, more fundamental points: that the concept of a mobile global population is not new; that migration has always been part of structured inequality; and that hybridity in the creation of cultures, places and regions is likewise a long-established process nurtured by migration.'

Beyond these elements and dimensions, migrations occur in both time and space. In the temporal dimension there are at least seven possible categories. These are defined and discussed in Figure 2.3.

⁶ Some studies and a documentary show that some women from Nicaragua migrate to Costa Rica escaping from domestic violence.

Figure 2.3: Different migration patterns

Type of migration	Characteristic of move	Commitment to host society (HS)	Commitment to original society (OS)
Seasonal or shuttle migrant	Search for work to augment meagre agricultural incomes.	Very little financial or social investment in the HS. Sleeps in open, group-rented room or employer provided barracks. Social interaction almost entirely with other migrants from OS. Employment in traditional or day-labouring sectors.	Family of procreation remains in the village. Retain all political and social roles in OS. Remit bulk of income (after living expenses) to village, town or city. Retain OS citizenship. Almost total orientation to the OS. Usually retain work source in the OS.
Short term sojourner Target Migrant and Life cycle stage migrant	Come to HS for limited period (though longer than a season) to accomplish a specific purpose (e.g. reach a particular education level). Migrants who move to the HS at one or more specific stages of their life cycle.	Moderate. May bring family. Seek more permanent accommodation, e.g. individually rented room. Have more interaction with HS members but retain close contact with fellow members of OS in the HS. Usually employed in low qualified labour markets.	Strong links maintained with family in OS through visits and letters, although some roles may be temporarily given up. Remittances remain regular and high. Usually retain OS citizenship. Usually retain a source of income in the OS.
Working life migrant	Migrants who spend their entire working lives in the HS but, intend, and eventually do, retire to their OS.	High. Family always accompanies. Purchases or builds individual housing, occupies employer (e.g. government) supplied housing or rents housing on long-term basis. Often in formal sector occupations. High level of interaction with HS members but retains contact with fellow migrants through associations, etc. Generally transfers citizenship to the HS. Assists new arrivals to HS from OS.	Sufficient links maintained with village to ensure acceptance on eventual return. Investments in housing and land although unable to maintain most social and political roles. Periodic remittances to family. Return visits made at end of fasting months and for important life cycle ceremonies.
Permanent migrant (immigrants) ⁷	Migrants committed totally to exchanging identities and way of life.	Total.	Not strong.
Undecided migrant	Migrants who have no clear intention to either stay in the HS or return to the OS.	Relative.	Relative.

Source: Hugo, 1981, quoted in Mansell and Chapman, 1985: 12-13 but modified by the author.

Transnational migration could be considered in terms of these categories, this would depend on the quality of the linkages and networks between the immigrant in the host society and the original society. Most of the categories involve some level of transnationalism with the exception of permanent immigrants who cut their linkages with their original society in a definitive manner.

In relation to distance and places, there are three main categories of migration: internal (national), international and transnational. According to Figure 2.4, *permanent migration* is a consequence of permanent change of residence that could be to a close place (local migration), to another region of the same country (inter-regional migration), or to a different country (international migration). *Temporal migration* is a consequence of residence and work-place spatial separation.

⁷ These categories do not include the political refugees.

Figure 2.4: Temporal and Spatial Dimensions of Human Mobility

Temporal Dimension	Permanent Migration	<i>Local Migration</i> - Residence change within the same community or municipality.	<i>National Inter-regional Migration</i> - Residence change within the same political units, e.g. United Kingdom – shires, Nicaraguan Departments, Costa Rican Provinces.	<i>International migration</i> - Residence change from one country to another.
	Temporal Migration	<i>Commuting</i> - Working in another community within the same municipality.	<i>Circulation</i> - Working in a different administrative unit of the same country.	<i>Long-Distance Commuting</i> - Working in a different country.
		Short-Distance Mobility	Mid-Distance Mobility	Long-Distance Mobility
Spatial Dimensions				

Source: Malmberg, 1997: 25, but modified by the author.

At the national scale, there are several forms of displacements, including rural to urban, urban to urban, urban to rural, and rural to rural community migration. The international scale has traditionally been analysed as a displacement from one country to another, although the existence of new forms of macro-regional state organisations, such as the European Union, the North American Free Trade Area, the Central American Integration process, has challenged this traditional definition. In fact, these political and economic processes have generated new categories of migration by differentiating the intra-regional from the extra-regional.

2.2 An evolving theoretical debate: from push-pull models to transnational migration

New trends in migration have also been reflected in the theoretical debates about migration which are getting both more comprehensive and more diverse. In fact, through the passage of time, theoretical currents have absorbed many of the critiques they have received, thereby improving their explanatory capacity. However, as migration is constantly changing and creating new phenomena, traditional theories are confronted by the necessity of creating concepts, terms, narratives and discourses which can give account of the

newness. This is often not a simple matter of updating information, but rather of grasping totally original and distinctive events and dynamics. This fact opens up spaces for the development of new theoretical approaches.

Along these lines, Thomas Faist (2000: 11-13) points out the existence of three waves in the study of international migration in a 'development' context. The first was mainly focused upon the interaction between push and pull factors as the main determinants of migration. The second analysed migration flows as a result of structural factors and dynamics between centre and peripheral regions. The third is still in the making and is placing the concept of transnational migration spaces at the forefront of analysis; this recognises the practices of migrants and stayers and connects both worlds and the activities of institutions such as nation-states that try to control these spaces. This approach complements, but does not substitute for the earlier ones (Faist, 2000: 12).

In the following sections, the metaphor of the three waves is used to explain the main theoretical approaches and their main critiques as part of an evolving debate. But before doing so, it is important to mention that every generation has not been homogeneous, but diverse. Among generations there have been ruptures, but also continuities. It is not possible to think of a homogeneous community of scholars, but rather of many diverse communities attempting to grasp a particular object from varied theoretical, political and ideological standpoints at every stage of the debates. These debates have also been crossed by geographical particularities.

Any intention to analyse the historical evolution of the theoretical debate on migration would be partial, and this is not an exception. The selection of the currents is based on two assumptions, first, those presented are considered to be the 'mainstream' ones in terms of their 'momentum'; second, they reflect the ideological diversity that has characterised the theoretical debate on migration.

2.2.1 The first wave and the long-standing influence of Ravenstein

The first wave includes three theoretical frameworks: the Neoclassical, the Demographic and the Modernisation schools of thoughts. From the 1950s until the 1970s, they were very influential, not only in the academic realms, but also in the policy formulation of international development institutions such as the World Bank, and the US Agency for

International Development (US-AID). In the 1970s and 1980s they were challenged and for the reason they have lost some of their influence, nonetheless the Neoclassical school remains influential at the policy level. The sway of Ravenstein's seminal formulation upon these currents is very clear throughout their explanations.

2.2.1.1 The Neoclassical adaptation of Ravenstein's 'Push-Pull' model

It is not a coincidence that this section begins with the Neoclassical approach to migration. There are some reasons that explain this decision:

- Its theoretical models have prevailed, not only within conventional economic theory but also within development theory.
- This theoretical approach not only prevails in the academic field, its premises and conclusions underlie the economic policies formulated by most of the governments of peripheral countries in the last two decades, under the strict supervision of the International Financial Institutions (Mohan *et al*, 2000). Hence, like no other framework, the Neoclassical approach has not only theoretical importance, but also political, economical and social implications for entire societies of the periphery (Woodward, 1992).

As is well known, Ravenstein⁸ (1885, 1889, quoted in Lewis, 1982) developed the 'push-pull' model of migration. The 'push' is related to the causes for migration and the 'pull' to the selection of migrants and the development of migration patterns (Hornby and Jones, 2001: 103; Lewis, 1982: 3). In its original formulation, one key premise was to consider human beings as 'rational' entities seeking to maximise advantage and minimise discomfort. The push factors were generally seen as economic, as indicated in such factors as: lack of access to land, lack of employment, low wages, wasted land, drought and famine, and population increase. The pull factors offered attractive alternatives to these but in addition contrasted the advantages of urban over rural reality (Jackson, 1986: 13-14). In its contemporary reformulation, the Neoclassical model has related the push-pull model to the theory of labour markets in two main levels:

- a) at the macro-level (structural), the main variable that is said to explain the decision to migrate is wage or income differentials between regions: south-north in international migration, and rural-urban in internal migration (Massey *et al*, 1993:

⁸ I include a summary of his "laws of migration" in the Appendix N°1.

433). Migration is conceptualised as one of the 'natural' mechanisms that equilibrates the supply and demand of manpower in labour markets between regions, as well as the price of labour power, that is wage price. In theory, this mechanism will work more effectively if it is not disturbed by state intervention. For example, Todaro suggests that in order to reduce rural-urban migration, there should not be a minimum wage policy in urban areas because it works as a pulling factor⁹ (Todaro, 1997: 285-286).

b) At the micro level (agency), the model largely relies upon 'individual choice' theory. Individual migrants are seen as 'rational' actors who decide to migrate because their cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement (Massey et al, 1993: 434). In its application to peripheral countries' internal migration,¹⁰ Todaro introduced some adjustments to the model as a consequence of evidence from 'reality' that the model could not explain. One of the counter-facts that obligated the modification of the model was that rural migration to urban areas was still occurring even with high rates of unemployment in the cities. Todaro included the idea of 'expected income'¹¹ to explain this paradoxical situation (Todaro, 1996).

To sum up, in the Neoclassical formulation a migration model should contain four basic characteristics:

1. Migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological.
2. The decision to migrate depends on expected rather than actual urban-rural real wage differentials where the expected differential is determined by the interaction of two variables, the actual urban-rural wage differential and the probability of successfully obtaining employment in the urban sector.
3. The probability of obtaining an urban job is directly related to the urban employment rate and thus inversely related to the urban unemployment rate.
4. Migration rates in excess of urban job opportunity growth rates are not only possible but also rational and even likely in the face of wide urban-rural expected-income

⁹ Of course, this is advice exclusively made for developing countries.

¹⁰ In the case of the developed countries, the rural-urban model is different because the host region is supposed to have full employment. Hence, the Todaro's model main explanatory – expected income- is not very useful.

¹¹ This is not the actual earnings, but the immigrant's projection.

differentials. High rates of urban unemployment are therefore inevitable outcomes of the serious imbalance of economic opportunities between urban and rural areas in most underdeveloped countries (Todaro, 1997: 284).

In more general terms (not only for rural-urban migration), this paradigm could be summarised in the following five points:

1. Migrants primarily respond to economic conditions in the places of origin and destination.
2. Migrants have adequate information about living conditions in the place of destination.
3. The migration decision is based on a rational economic calculation.
4. Migration is therefore the response to the actual economic conditions in the places of origin and destination.
5. In the last instance migration is an individual free decision (Jackson, 1986: 18; Malmberg, 1997: 29).

In relation to the limitations of the model, a first general observation is that it is based upon a non-historical analysis and, for this reason, is not able to explain how the *wage differential* between regions or countries is produced, nor how a particular region is transformed into a population 'exporter' as part of global transnational dynamics. Basic questions like 'why do only some individuals migrate while others stay?' or 'why do they decide to go to a particular destination instead of others with similar conditions?' are some of the relevant questions that this model cannot explain, but instead assumes as premises. This could create some paradoxical situations whereby economic policies oriented by the Neoclassical current of thought may lead to such outcomes as the widening of both the rural-urban gap in peripheral societies and the economic distance between periphery and core countries, thereby increasing the stress for rural-urban and south- north migrants as a consequence (Woodward, 1992: 4). This point highlights two key elements that neoclassical approaches towards migration do not take into account. First, very often migration is a result of cumulative causations, and not all of these are economic in nature (Massey, 1991: 27). Second, contrary to what is sustained by the Neoclassical theory, expelling and recipient contexts are more than 'unlinked' labour markets where individuals, as rational entities, are looking to maximise their benefits. As is discussed later, migration in general, and particularly labour migration and its networks, are directly or indirectly

related to global transnational dynamics at different scales: global, regional, national, local, and individual (Sassen, 1988: 17-23).

The definition of agency is fundamental for the study of migration or for the 'modelling' of human behaviour. The Neoclassical model assumes that, faced by the same reality (structural dimensions), e.g. 'wage differentials' or 'economic deprivation', the agency of very different human beings would be the same. The implication of this logic, if it is extended to its limit, is that the fact of belonging to very different categories (such as social class, gender, 'age or ethnic group) would make no difference to the behaviour of individual migrants. Hence, a peasant, a rural worker, an urban middle-class professional, a 'distinguished' member of the bourgeoisie or a land-owner oligarch or an urban young girl, would all react in the same way faced with the same event. A man and a woman would react in the same way. A married person and a single person would take the same decision. A young man and an adult would have the same expectations before migrating. A black 'Garifona' from Honduras, a Miskito from Nicaragua and a *mestizo* from Estelí would have the same perspective of migration as a *mestizo* from Masaya.¹² Would the question of whether or not an individual was a part of a migratory social network makes any difference to an individual's decision-making? The answer is obviously no in the case of the Neoclassical model and this is one of the limits of the explanatory capacity of these sort of models to explain human behaviour and social reality. Although many of these observations have been made by other theoretical currents, the Neoclassical model has not been substantially modified in response. In synthesis, the proclivity of both push-pull and neoclassical models to *post hoc* recitation of 'obvious' causes render them incapable of accounting for the two principal differences in the origin of migration: 1) differences among collectivities – primarily nation-states – in the size and direction of the migrant flows; and 2) differences among individuals within the same country or region in their propensities to migrate (Portes, 1991: 76; Carling, 2001: 18-25; Malmberg, 1997: 29; Faist, 1997: 196).

2.2.1.2 The Demographic approach to migration

This second school of thought, also known as Neo-Malthusian, was very influential in political terms in the 1960s and 1970s and is very close to the Neoclassical school in

¹² There are strong cultural differences between regions within Nicaragua. Mestizos and peasants from the North of the country are perceived as 'shy' or introvert, and mestizos from Masaya are very outspoken, with a long historical merchant tradition.

ideological terms. Most of its theoretical production connects population growth (overpopulation), environmental scarcity and poverty (Rochwerger, 1979). They project these factors as a lethal combination that generates national processes of rural-to-urban migration and international movements between the peripheral regions of the global economy and the core regions. In its models the key variables are birth and mortality rates, as well as life expectancy. The potential enormity of this migration was often portrayed as a threat,

'... In many parts of the world where there exists rapid population growth, and particularly when massive migration to the cities exist, they experience great threats to public security as well as for social stability, because of the augment in young criminality, thieving, organised banditry and social rebellion ... and there are few doubts that these situations will worsen in the future ...'¹³

The logical solution to this threatening situation was to reduce birth rates in the places where those rates were highest, that is peripheral countries. Along these lines, the United States, through its Agency of International Development (US-AID), promoted birth control and planning programs in many countries of the periphery, such as Brazil and India in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴ These sort of explanations reached a peak in popularity with the publication of the famous report 'The Limits to Growth' by the Club of Rome and MIT (Meadows, 1972), although throughout the 1970s its explanations and, particularly its predictions, were undermined by their own failures (Pavón, 1979: 44-46; Rochwerger, 1979).

Within this current, whilst some scholars have pointed out the importance of social relations in explaining the dynamics between environment, society and migration, in general terms they tend to overstress population growth as the main explanatory variable. Hence, for them, it is high rates of population growth which cause environmental degradation and material scarcities, which, as part of the same process, push the population out forcing them to migrate (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997; Hornby and Jones, 2001: 114). Although there are migration dynamics in particular space-temporalities that could be explained in this way, it is not sufficient to make a general

¹³ This was part of an interview to P. Claxton Philander, member of the US State Department (1972) quoted by Pavón (1979, 43). This is a translation by the author.

¹⁴ In fact, this particular connection between population and poverty is frequently used to portray the poor as responsible for their poverty, because of their sexual and reproductive practices. One of the political consequences of this was the development of sterilisation campaigns in India and Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s, in which thousands of young women were sterilised without consent or consciousness.

explanation on this basis. In fact, migration is not necessarily produced by an excess of 'population pressure' and is not always a dependent function of high population growth. For example, in Central America, Nicaragua is, after El Salvador, the country that has been expelling most population during the last two decades. However, Nicaragua is the country with the lowest population density (38 people per Km²) in the region, while Costa Rica doubles Nicaragua's population density (76 people per Km²) and is a migration recipient country (Pérez Brignolli, 1989: 47; Morales, 1997a).

The demographic approach is unable to explain this kind of counter-example because it does not sufficiently take into account the social relations (namely mode of production and development, access and property structure of natural resources) that underlie situations of 'environmental scarcity'. In critical frameworks, scarcity is not a linear function between population and natural environments, but a relational concept mediated by social relations. Frequently in peripheral regions, such as Central America, environmental scarcity and consequent migration patterns, are not provoked only by scarcity or population 'surplus', but are very often produced by an over-concentration of natural resources into very few hands who use them in unsustainable ways (Bryant, 1997; Hornborg, 1998; Redclift, 1994; Utting, 1996; Walker, 1997).

In synthesis, instead of the economic structures of Neoclassical thought, the Demographic approach is mainly based on the analysis of population demographic structures (such as mortality and birth rates, demographic elements, and family composition) and seeks to explain migration as dependent on these factors. At the micro level, the Demographic approach does not include any sort of agency conceptualisation beyond the individual's reproductive patterns.

2.2.1.3 Migration in the light of Modernisation theory

This theoretical current established a relationship between mobility and social change within a broad temporal dimension. Zelinsky and other scholars of this current of thought claimed the existence of patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history, and these regularities they argued comprise an essential component of the modernisation process (Zelinsky 1971, quoted by Lewis, 1982). Following Rostow's proposal of stages of economic growth, Zelinsky's five-stage model

links the mobility and vital transitions 'as a kind of outward diffusion of successively more advanced forms of human activity'. Figure 2.5 summarizes his model:

Figure 2.5: Modernisation and migration stage model

Phase	Type of migration	Vital transition
Pre-modern traditional society	Limited migration and circulation.	
Early transitional society	Emergence of widespread migration, rural-urban, colonisation of frontier lands, beginning of emigration, increase in circulation.	Rapid rise in fertility and population growth.
Late transitional society	Slackening in the growth of the three types of migration; increase in the volume and complexity of the various forms of circulation	Reduced rate of natural increase..
The advanced society	Continued changes in mobility; replacement of rural to urban and settlement migrations by those of inter-urban and intra-urban variety. Circulation continues to increase in its intensity.	Natural increase is limited as a result of a reduced fertility and mortality.
The future advanced society	General decline in migration which will largely be of an inter-urban and intra-urban variety. Some forms of circulation will decline and other increase.	

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Lewis, 1982: 23-24 and Forbes, 1984: 143.

This approach perceived of migration as a 'necessary' outcome of modernisation processes for two main reasons. In the economic realm, migration was presented as a consequence of the transformation of the 'traditional world' (the transformation of non-capitalist modes of production into the capitalist mode of production) whilst, in the cultural realm, it was conceptualised as a consequence of the 'pulling' attraction that modern life exerts over traditional ways of life and the city over the rural countryside (Rionda, 1992: 45-46). Thus, Zelinsky declared that the growth of circulation was 'symptomatic of the problems of underdevelopment' and consequently 'promised to endure, with further variations and complexities, as long as underdevelopment persists' (1971, quoted by Mansell and Chapman, 1985: 16).

This school was trying to build a general theory of migration, aim that was widely criticised, not only because of its 'pro-modern' bias which emphasised the superiority of 'modern' life over traditional forms of life, but also because of its linear conceptualisations of history in which the core countries were characterised as 'mature' (and hence those whose pattern of development should be 'copied'), whilst peripheral countries were the 'young' and hence the ones that had to copy the historical experiences of the 'already.

developed.'. As explained by structuralist and *dependentista* critics, this Eurocentric conceptualisation of history and development does not give any account of the international division of labour, the asymmetrical articulation between core and periphery, and their functional relationship (Jackson, 1986: 12-13; Kay, 1993; Sassen, 1988, 1996). According to these critics, migration dynamics in peripheral countries are not only different from those experienced in the core countries, but more than that, they actually represent different parts of the same processes of production and reproduction of uneven geographical developments at global or regional scales. Another limitation relates to the conceptualisation of migrant agency. The thesis of the 'city lights' as one of the main pulling factors is based on a false premise: the superiority of the 'modern' over the traditional. In fact, many studies have demonstrated that in many cases of rural to urban migration, the decision to migrate is not based on this kind of rationale, but is a result of necessity and part of the survival strategies of urban or rural households (Forbes, 1984: 162-3; Stark, 1991).

2.2.2 The second wave and the structuralist 'momentum'

The second generation of migration research was developed in a time of very rapid economic growth in the world economy. In the core countries of the West, there were two intertwined factors that generated a very significant immigration flow. The first was related to sustained patterns of economic growth that were an outcome of industrial and Keynesian anti-cyclical policies, as well as the expansion of the public sector under the aegis of the welfare state. The other factor was related to demographic factors, particularly a significant decrease in both population mortality rates and birth rates accompanied by an extension of life expectancy in core countries. These changes created a lack of labour power that was overcome by the import of labour from the less-developed European semi-periphery (Mediterranean countries, Ireland and Finland) and from peripheral countries. In the case of countries like Britain, France and The Netherlands, they took advantage of their former colonies to bring labour into their markets. Other European countries, such as Germany and Belgium, set up labour recruitment programs for temporary foreign workers. During the 1960s this became a central feature of most Western European labour markets. With the passing of time, the temporal workers became permanent and they brought their families from their original countries creating new ethnic dynamics in those countries. A similar process also occurred in the United States, particularly with Mexican, Puerto Rican and rest of Caribbean immigration (Castles, 2000

5-7). At first these immigration flows were conceived as labour migration, a fact that was reflected in the orientation of social research which had an economic bias.

In the case of the Peripheral countries, particularly for the Meso-American¹⁵ region, the period 1950-1970 was also a moment of deep transformation that generated significant population displacements. There were two key factors that contributed increasing human mobility. On the one hand, demographic patterns changed including significant rises in birth rates and in life expectancy. On the other hand, the economic 'modernisation' of the agricultural sector was creating a double dynamic that prompted increasing rural-urban migration processes: the increase in the use of technological inputs in the production process (thereby reducing requirements for manpower) and, at the same time, a massive concentration of land tenure. This was not a smooth process, but one often accompanied by violence, repression, social upheavals and dictatorial regimes. A consequence of this involuntary rural-to-urban migration was a rapid and massive population increase in the cities, particularly the capitals, and the creation of several shanty towns across the region. Most of these migration dynamics were internal or intra-regional (within Central America). The research on migration in the region at that time was focused on the relations between development, social change and rural migration. Marxist economism was the most popular theoretical approach. That is why a variety of Marxist currents, some of which were developed in parts of the periphery, are included in this generation of migration research. In Latin America, they were most thoroughly developed through the reformist Structuralist approach adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) and the Marxist and revolutionary approach generated by the *Dependentista* school of thought (Kay, 1993).

2.2.2.1 Marxist theories and migration in core and peripheral countries

During the 1960s and 1970s the Marxist theoretical approach embraced a diverse variety of Marxist currents from North and South, but in relation to migration they had some key concepts in common. First, they conceived of migration not as a free-choice decision taken by "rational" individuals, but as a reflection of structural processes and, therefore, invariably manipulated or even predetermined. Thus, migration was conceptualised as a systematic process and migrant "rationality" was a derivative and dependent behaviour of

¹⁵ Mesoamerica includes Mexico and the Central American countries.

the social and spatial division of labour and capital (Shrestha, 1986, 1987: 330; Rionda, 1992: 50).

From this perspective, migration within peripheral regions has to be analysed in relation to the development of capitalist labour-market relations, the proletarianisation of the rural population and the peasantry and the creation of a permanent relative surplus population (industrial reserve army) through such means as creative destruction, enclosures and increasing productivity by means of the use of new technologies. In Latin America, these historic-structuralist oriented scholars conceived of social change (migration was seen as a part of these broader processes), as mainly determined by factors external to individuals. Capitalist dependent industrialisation, better known as Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI), was considered not only as simple technological modernisation, but also as a radical social transformation that involved a change in the social division of labour. These changes provoked a geographical re-distribution of population. On the 'pulling' side, the main factor attracting rural population was the city and its industrial areas (an apparent coincidence with the modernisation school). However, on the expelling side, as was mentioned above, the main expelling factor was the process of 'creative destruction' through which the capitalist mode of production and its agents transformed the rural countryside, divesting the peasantry of their means of subsistence. In this way, the peasantry was transformed into the necessary labour for industrialisation (Rionda, 1992). This was seen as the main structural dynamic that explained rural-to-urban migration within peripheral countries and, by extension, peripheral-to-core migration at the international level.

A good number of Marxist scholars also focused their attention on to core countries as recipients of immigration. Authors like Castles and Kosack (1973) explained the functionality of labour migration for Western European capitalism, because, among other factors, the immigrants constituted a new industrial reserve army. However, these authors also analysed other aspects of immigration such as its socio-political functionality (through the division between immigrant and indigenous workers on national and racial bases), and observed that by offering better conditions and status to indigenous workers, the capitalist class was able to create a divide between large sections of the working class (Castles, 2000: 28-29).

In general terms these Marxist currents suffered from the same illness (although in a different form) that had characterised the Neoclassical approach: economic reductionism and an over-simplification of human agency, because, in the last instance, the migrant's agency was a functional reflection of structural changes. Another important limitation was that they did not take into account the important role of the family in the decision-making process. As was pointed out by Rionda for the Mexican experience, rural migration was part of a survival strategy and generated complementary income for the household economy, and was therefore not an individual solution (Rionda, 1992: 63). In recognition of these limitations, Castles points out that migrants were seen in these approaches merely as workers whose labour was needed, while their social needs and potential impact on receiving societies were largely ignored. There was little understanding that migration was a social process that could develop its own dynamics, which might confound the expectations of even the most efficient states (Castles, 2000: 8). In the same vein, Shrestha argues that migration and non-migration decisions are an outcome of the interaction between individual decisions and socio-economic constraints and opportunities within the existing relations of production and development milieu (Castles and Miller, 1998).

2.2.3 The third wave and research on migration in a transnational context

Between the second and third generations of research on migration, deep changes occurred at a global scale development. The 1970s were a transition period to a sort of 'new age', an epochal shift on a planetary scale (Robinson, 1997 (a or b): 132, Harvey, 1990). As is pointed out by David Harvey, there were

'... Signs and tokens of radical changes in labour processes, in consumer habits, in geographical and geopolitical changes, in state powers and practices, and the like abound. Yet we still live... in a society where production for profit remains the basic organising principle of economic life...' (1990: 121)

This development transformation represented the end of both a particular regime of accumulation and of a mode of social and political regulation in the contemporary World-System, namely the end of the 'Fordist' mode of development with its Welfare State, Keynesian economic policies and expansion of citizenship rights in Core countries. In the Periphery this shift meant the end of the Import-Substitution Industrialisation strategy (ISI) and the demise of the Developmentalist or Welfare state. One of the main structural causes of the crisis was the accumulation of 'rigidities' in different realms, including commerce, finance, and labour (Harvey, 1990: 141-2). The conflicts and contradictions

that arose could not be addressed within the existing regime of accumulation and its correspondent regulatory regimes and hence, the crisis became inevitable.

The configuration of a new global regime of flexible accumulation started in the aftermath of the international economic crisis ('Oil crisis') of 1973. Another important factor in the global development reorientation of the World-System came from the political realm, with the electoral triumphs of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in the United States in 1980. Their political and economic platforms were based around two interconnected ideas: on the geopolitical side a very aggressive anti-communist and anti-soviet philosophy and, on the economic side, an almost religious belief in the Neoliberal development that promoted free-market, privatisation and free-trade as solutions for all economics and social problems (and a correlated essentialist and negative view of the state). In this period, the United States (USA) in particular exerted its power and influences to project these ideas into practice, developing a global process against the previous dominance of developmentalist and Keynesian approaches (Tickell and Peck, 2003: 4-5; Hinkelammert, 1997; Villarreal, 1986). In fact, these new ideas quickly came to dominate the international financial institutions (IFIs) who rapidly embraced orthodox Monetarism and Neoliberalism in theory and in practice. This was particularly the case for both the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, better known as the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Found (IMF), which jointly formulated and applied Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) across practically the whole periphery from the beginning of the 80s (Zack-Williams et al, 2000: 16-17).

The reorientation of the dominant development philosophy from ISI to Neoliberalism in Latin America was imposed through the requirement for Latin American governments to meet payments on their massive external debts at the beginning of the 1980s. After a political conflict between the creditors, private banks and core countries and the indebted countries, the peripheral countries were obliged to accept the imposition of Neoliberal policies through the SAPs demanded as conditions for access to international finance. Although the formal objective of these programs was to overcome the economic crisis facing the Latin American countries and to guarantee the payment of external debt and interest, many scholars, politicians and grassroots organisations have pointed out that behind the apparently technical form of SAPs, there was a very ambitious political and economic program to transform in a radical way not only the state and the public sector,

but the whole society of debtor nations. As a consequence of this transformation, by the end of the 1980s most of Latin American countries were transferring net capital to the core countries (Gorostiaga, 1991: 13; Villarreal, 1986: 469).

This process of Neoliberal global transformation was deepened and accelerated at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s because of three intertwined processes:

- The first was the demise of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Bloc in Europe. This was claimed by the dominant political and economic sectors of the West to represent the 'end of history' and the permanent triumph of Capitalism and 'Liberal Democracy' as an ideology and mode of social organisation (Fukuyama, 1989). This event also gave birth to a rapid transition from the bipolar geopolitical order of the 'Cold War' to the present Western Unipolar Order under the clear coercive leadership of the USA.

- The second process was the technological revolution that started at the end of the 1970s and embraced four interlinked sectors, namely, communication, information, computer and transport systems (Dicken, 1999: 145-177, Overbeek, 2002: 75). These changes produced an impressive compression of time and space (Harvey, 1990; Overbeek, 2002) contributing to the transformation of patterns of production and consumption at a global scale (in which networks and flows of products, services and humans are fundamental), giving rise to what Castells named the network society (Castells, 1996).

- A third process is the rise of a market-oriented neoliberal politico-economic order, characterised by a very aggressive expansion of the market in two simultaneous ways, on the one hand, a geographic widening by mean of the incorporation of more regions to a global division of labour, and, on the other hand, by mean of the incorporation of more economic activities to the market-oriented economy, driven by a process of commodification oriented by the seekening of private profits. Among others, this expansion included the labour markets and migration dynamics as a key component (Overbeek, 2002).

Since the 1990s the combination of these processes has been named by some authors as globalisation and, as has been pointed out by Overbeek (2002) and Harvey (2000), this term embraces a twofold meaning: On the one hand, it is a political project of very

powerful agents (transnational enterprises, power elites and political leaders in both Core and Periphery, technocrats of IFIs) who are trying to impose particular forms of global and transnational economic organisation and also particular forms of global governance (both of which have been contested in Core and Periphery). On the other hand, globalisation is also a process by which ever more people, countries and regions are incorporated into the global market economy, and more spheres of human existence are subordinated to capitalist social relations. This is not however a totally new process but a continuation of the long history of capitalism. In fact, globalisation involves transformation in other realms, apart from the geopolitical and the geo-economic, namely culture, gender, and daily life realms. In the words of Papastergiadis,

‘... the globalising processes do not spread evenly and in all directions simultaneously. Between the fears of an all-engulfing Americanized homogeneous culture and the hopes for postmodern heterogeneity, there are complex and often contradictory forces at play which are challenging the autonomy of nation-states. A brief list of the globalizing institutions, tendencies, and forces would include: the formation of transnational bureaucracies and political institutions like the G7, World Bank, GATT and IMF; the porousness of boundaries caused by the mediatized dissemination of symbols, ideas, images, technologies and information; the pressure exerted by transnational corporations to elude local needs and rules; the restructuring of labour relations and the competition for cheaper wages; the centralisation of capital investment practices in global cities; the contest between consumer culture and diasporic communities; and the formation of new political associations with multiple and overlapping networks of power that supplemented the functions traditionally held by civic and national authorities...’ (2000: 77)

As in the past, these global processes have not been evenly spread around the world but, on the contrary, are contributing to the reproduction of an incessant and uneven geographic development between core, semiperipheral, and peripheral regions. These global process prompted a massive human mobility and at the same time the ongoing transformations required migration dynamics to be produced and reproduced. That means that these migration dynamics became an outcome of the global Neoliberal development but at the same time, were a structural characteristic of it. In this context, Castles and Miller (1998: 7-9) summarise five new trends in a global migration landscape,

1. The *globalisation of migration*: more and more countries are crucially affected by migratory movements at the same time. The diversity of the areas of origin is also increasing, so that most countries of immigration have entrants from a broad spectrum of economic, social and cultural backgrounds.

2. The *acceleration of migration*: international movements of people are growing in volume in all major regions at the present time.
3. The *differentiation of migration*: most countries do not simply have one type of immigration (or emigration), such as labour migration, refugees or permanent settlement, but a whole range of types at once.
4. The *feminisation of migration*: women play a significant role in all regions and in most (though not all) types of migration.
5. The *growing politicisation of migration*: domestic politics, bilateral and regional relationships and national security policies of states around the world are increasingly affected by international migration.

This is the context in which new forms and patterns of migration have risen, along with new theoretical frameworks with which to study them.

2.2.3.1 Transnational Migration studies

Although the term transnational is not new¹⁶, at first the main focus of transnational research was upon transnational enterprises and companies as the main agents in the production of such processes. However, in the last fifteen years scholars from different disciplines have challenged 'nationalistic' or 'state-centred' approaches. In this vein, within geography, Agnew and Corbridge have called for the overcoming of the 'territorial trap' and 'nationalistic' methodologies that permeate contemporary social sciences (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995). Along the same lines, Taylor has pointed out how globalisation should serve to undermine the embedded statism central to most social science thinking (2000: 159). The growing importance of transnationalism as a study object has witnessed a significant expansion in the range of topics that fall within 'trans-frames'. Vertovec summarises the different topics within the transnational 'umbrella' in six distinct, but potentially intertwined categories (1999, 449-56), which are described and expanded in Figure 2.6:

¹⁶ Keohane and Nye pointed out the growing importance of transnational dynamics in the world economy and its main political implications at the end of the 60s (Keohane and Nye, 1970).

Figure 2.6: Transnational research categories, contents and authors

Category	Content and topics	Authors
1. Social morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social formation spanning borders. - Ethnic diasporas and their 'triadic relationship': <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups, b. the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and c. the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears came. - Transnational social formations are structures or systems of relationships best described as networks. - Transnational processes, changing social hierarchies and transnational states. - Configuration of global cities and networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Castells (1996) - Sassen (1988, 1996, 1998, 2001) - Wallerstein - Robinson (2001) - Taylor (2003) - Tölölyan (1991) - Vertovec (1999) - Portes (1999) - Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) - Levitt and Dehesa (2003) - Yeo <i>et al</i> (2003) - Voigt-Graf (2004)
2. Diasporic consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'here and there' consciousness, particularly in the case of global diasporas. - The creation of new subjectivities in the global arena. - The rise of a 'transnational imaginary'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appadurai and Breckenridge (1989) - Wilson and Dissanayake (1996)
3. Modes of cultural reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transnationalism associated with a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices. These are often described in terms of syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity. - The discourses of cultural specificity and difference, packaged for transnational consumption. - Different forms of globalised media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hall (1991) - Appadurai and Breckenridge (1989) - Spivak (1989) - Chow (1993) - King, Connell and White (1995) - Gillespie (1995) - Morley and Robins (1995) - Shohat and Stam (1996)
4. Avenue of capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNCs as the major institutional form of transnational practices and the key to understanding globalisation. - TNCs represent globe-spanning structures or networks that are presumed to have largely jettisoned their national origins. Their systems of supply, production, marketing, investment, information transfer and management often create the paths along which much of the world's transnational activities flow. In this category also fall suggestions that a new transnational capitalist class has arisen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sklair (1995) - Dicken (1992) - Castells (1996) - Robinson (2001)
5. Sites of political engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of a global public space or forum through communication technologies. - Global and transnational social movements, global civil society and INGOs. - Global resistance and alternatives to Neoliberalism. - Ethnic diasporas transnational activities. - Politics of Transnational Communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alger (1997) - Castells (1997) - Watermann (1998) - Kriesberg (1997) - Cohen (1995) - Fisher and Ponniah (2003) - Levitt (2001) - Guarnizo and Smith (1998)
6. Reconstruction of 'place' or locality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of translocal understandings. - Changes in people's relations to space through the creation of 'social fields' connecting people and actors in more than one country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appadurai (1995) - Kearney (1995) - Hanners (1996) - Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc (1992) - Castells (1996) - Goldring (1998) - Smith (1998)

Source: Vertovec, 1999: 48-56.

In the case of migration research, although there were some studies of transnational dynamics and communities in the previous research waves, they tended to be rare in comparison to the studies dedicated to the massive flows of international migration that were occurring from the end of the 19th century until the 1970s (Portes et al., 1999: 225). From the end of the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, the growing practical and theoretical significance of what Portes and others called grassroots transnationalism became increasingly clear,

‘...Theoretically, because it represents a distinct form of immigrant adaptation adaptation to those described in the past literature. Practically, because it offers an option to ordinary people not present in the past, either in their own countries or in those to which they migrate...’ (1999: 227)

The main question here is to define if there is ongoing a new mode of migration that could no be capture by the traditional concept of international migration. The answer to this question is affirmative in the sense that, in part, as a consequence of the new transport and communication technologies the migration from the periphery to core countries have developed new dynamics and characteristics, including strong social networks that allow to the immigrants to keep connected to their families and communities in the country of origin. At the same time, the immigrants are developing a complex idendity and practice, that is not only binational but, beyond that, mixed.

This new phenomena is studied by different approaches. In fact, throughout the 1990s, the number of scholars using the transnational ‘frame’ in migration studies grew significantly covering a wide diversity of subjects and topics including: the rise and reproduction of transnational communities; localities, regions and spaces; transnational agencies, families and households; transnational identities and culture; transnational politics, immigration policies and citizenship. These topics have been developed in several regional, national and local case-studies as part of what has been suggestively named processes of ‘globalisation from below’ (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992; Portes, 1997; Portes et al, 1999; Levitt, 2001; Levitt and de la Dehesa, 2003; Canales and Zolniski, 2000; Faist, 1997a, 1997b, 2000; Morales and Castro, 2002; Popkin, 2003).

In his assessment of different currents studying transnational migration, Kivisto (2001) pointed out the existence of three main currents, first, the cultural anthropology perspective mainly developed by Glick Schiller and others (1992, 1995) that considered transnational migration and transmigrants were a totally new historical phenomena that deserved a new theory. In their words, transnationalism refers to ‘the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement’, and transmigrants are the ‘immigrants who build such social fields’ by maintaining a wide range of affective and instrumental social relationships spanning borders (Schiller *et al.* 1992, p. 1; Basch *et al.* 1994, p. 27). In their own words,

We define "transnationalism" as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.... An essential element is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies. We are still groping for a language to describe these social locations (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994: 6).

These authors pointed out the idea that categories such as seasonal or permanent migration or migrants are unnecessary, and also they sustained that the assimilationist and the cultural diversity theories are overcome by this new reality and that they are not able to capture the new features and dynamics created by the transmigration, particularly the idea of a nationally unbounded fields and identities configured by transmigration (Schiller *et al.*, 1992; Basch *et al.*, 1994).

In relation to the main limitations of this approach, scholars such as Portes and Kivisto rejected the very idea that this kind of migration is totally new, giving examples of previous experiences that could be considered transnational migration or transmigration. Another important critic is that not all contemporary migration dynamics are transnational, in fact, the most important part of them could not be considered transnational migration, but seasonal or semi-permanent migration. However, these critics conceded the fact that the phenomena is growing gaining massiveness and that there are new elements to analyse that require new categories and concepts (Kivisto, 2001; Portes, 1999, Portes *et al.*, 1999).

The second current is developed by Portes and other scholars such as Guarnizo and Landolt (Portes, 1999; Portes *et al.*, 1999). It is a more historic and sociological view of transnational migration. To start with, they point out that transnational migration is not a new phenomena and that for that reason the use of the transnational frame to study migration should not be limited to present immigrants. In fact, to sustain their position, they give examples of past cases of transnational migration (Portes, 1997 and 1999). The differences is not qualitative but quantitative, because transnational migration is more massive today than in the past decades. One of the main factors in explaining this new situation is the improvement of communication channels and transportation systems that have facilitated, on the one hand, the link between the community of origin and the immigrants in the recipient society, and, on the other hand, the growth of immigration, particularly from peripheral to core countries.

Other important difference between Portes and Landolt with the previous current is that they would rather to use the term immigrants instead of transmigrants, because they point out that not all current migration is transnational and that the only use of transmigrants is insufficient to explain the complexity of migration today (Portes *et al.*, 1999). In fact, not all current migration is transnational or, beyond that, mainly only a minority of the total. As pointed out by Kivisto,

'Portes *et al.* differentiate immigrants in terms of their access to the technological prerequisites for transnationalism. Those with higher levels of social capital would be more likely to forge transnational linkages than those with less capital. At the same time, proximity continues to count: groups with homelands closer to the receiving nation will be the most likely candidates for establishing transnational ties (Portes *et al.* 1999, p. 224). Given these stipulations, it would appear that those that can actually be defined as transnational immigrants might in fact constitute a minority of today's total immigrant population.' (Kivisto, 2001: 562)

Portes *et al.* define transnational migration as one possible outcome between different options. Those options include from total assimilation to total rejection to recipient society. The factors that shape transnational migration are, among others, the expelling factors, the extent to which homeland remain significant for immigrants, and the level of hostility to newcomers in the recipient society (Portes *et al.*, 1999).

A very important component of Portes' theoretical frame is the historical production of transnational migration and communities, which points out that the emergence of transnational communities is tied to the logic of capitalism itself. The immigrants are brought into play by the interests and the needs of investors and employers in the recipient countries, as part of labour dynamics. Immigrants are not invading but they are needed by the advanced economies. A second important element is that transnational immigrants follow a pattern of assimilation different to traditional immigrant's adaptation. A third element, is that because this phenomenon is fueled by the dynamics of globalisation, it has greater growth potential and offers a broader field for autonomous popular initiatives than alternative ways to deal with the depredation of world-roaming capital (Portes, 1997). Along to these lines, he points out that common people is responding to globalisation creating transnational communities that

'... sit astride political borders and that, in a very real sense, are "neither here nor there" but in both places simultaneously. The economic activities that sustain these communities are grounded precisely on the differentials of advantage created by state boundaries. In this respect, they are no different from the large global corporations, except that these enterprises emerge at the grassroots level and its activities are often informal' (Portes, 1997: 4-5)

The final comparison between transnational corporations and migration made by Portes in the previous paragraph is signal by Kivisto as not clear enough, as well as the concept 'transnational fields' that requires a more detail characterisation (Kivisto, 2001).

Another important element of Portes' transnational migration frame is related to what he calls 'the other side of the equation', that is the effects of globalisation on the supply of potential immigrants in the country of origin. Among others, these effects are produced by political, economic and social transformations created by the drive of multinational capital to expand markets in the periphery, and, simultaneously to take advantage of its reservoirs of labour that they creates with their actions, including the economic restructuring and reorientation oriented towards external markets.

One of the most interesting findings of Portes' work it that part of the transnational migrants become petit entrepreneurs, phenomenon that this author calls 'globalisation from bellow'. As he points out,

A class of immigrant transnational entrepreneurs who shuttles regularly across countries and maintains daily contact with events and activities abroad could not exist without these new technologies and the options and lower costs that they make possible. More generally, this form of popular response to global restructuring, does not emerge in opposition to broaden economic forces, but is driven by them. Through this strategy, labor (initially immigrant labour) joins the circles of global trade imitating and adapting, often in ingenious ways, to the new economic framework.

This parallel between the strategies of dominant economic actors and immigrant transnational enterprise is only partial, however. Both make extensive use of new technologies and both depend on price and information differences across borders, but while corporations rely primarily on their financial muscle to make such ventures feasible, immigrant entrepreneurs depend entirely on their social capital (Guarnizo 1992; Zhott and Bankston 1994). What makes these enterprises transnational is not only that they are created by former immigrants, but that they depend for their existence on continuing ties to the United States (Portes, 1991: 9, 10, Portes and Guarnizo 1990: 21-22).

Furthermore, while back and forth movements by immigrants have always existed, they have not acquired until recently the critical mass and complexity necessary to speak of an emergent social field. This field is composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders (Portes, *et al.* 1999, p. 217). In his final form of definitional delimitation identifies individuals and their support networks as the appropriate units of analysis, thereby excluding communities and more overarching structural units such as governments (Portes *et al.* 1999, pp. 219–20). As is pointed out by Kivisto, these exclusions are not sufficiently explained by Portes *et al.*

‘...it is reasonable to raise a question about why communities are excluded, particularly since in preceding articles Portes has explicitly spoken about transnational communities. He argues for this exclusion, not so much in conceptual terms, but as a methodological strategy, based on his conviction that it is advisable at this stage in transnational research to concentrate on individuals and families. However, I would suggest that the study of immigrants can never be simply the study of individuals and families, but must at all points take account of the corporate life within which individuals and families are embedded. In so far as this is the case, Portes’ strategy may be deemed problematic. Thus, transnational immigrant communities ought to be seen as necessary objects of investigation for those interested in manifestations of transnationalism from below.’ (Kivisto, 2001: 560).

Portes *et al.* (1999, p. 221) distinguish three different types of transnationalism: (1) economic, (2) political and (3) sociocultural. Economic transnationalism involves entrepreneurs whose network of suppliers, capital and markets crosses nation-state borders. Political transnationalism is said to involve ‘the political activities of party officials, governmental functionaries, or community leaders whose main goals are the achievement of political power and influence in the sending or receiving countries’ (Portes *et al.* 1999, p. 221). The socio-cultural refers to activities ‘oriented towards the reinforcement of a national identity abroad or the collective enjoyment of cultural events and goods’ (Portes *et al.* 1999, p. 221). Thus, the circulatory labour migrations of the preceding era would be included. Thus, they contend that the scope of transnationalism is far more extensive today than a century ago (Portes *et al.* 1999, pp. 223–27).

From this thesis perspective, it is important to emphasises some of the elements from Portes’ transnational theoretical framework, first, that transnational migration is not new and that there is migration beyond the transnational one. Second, there are different modes of transnationalisms, economic, political, cultural, social and son on. These processes are

part of a major process which is globalisation. Migration in general, and transnational migration in particular are part of it and that is why Portes considers it as the labour side of globalisation or, to put it in his words, the globalisation from below. A very important element to highlight is that Portes and the other scholars from this current are not only trying to explain the main features of transnational migration but also intend to explain how this migration is produced and, in that direction, they link transnational migration to the process of transformation developed by global capitalism. A final element to remark here is that, as has been pointed out by Kivisto, there are some points made by Portes that should require more development, including the concept of transnational field and the emphasis in the migrant and its household as the main unit of analysis.

The third current within the 'transnational' school is developed by the scholar Thomas Faist. As pointed out by Kivisto, Faist is an author that has done a very significant effort to contour for a systematic theory of transnationalism predicated on the idea of the construction of border-crossing social spaces (Kivisto, 2001; Faist 1998; 2000b; 2000c). In fact, this author is seeking to offer a new model of migration that can answer two main questions, on the one hand, why do so few people migrate and why, more specifically, are there so few people out of so many places? On the other hand, why are so many migrants from so few places? Faist's answers are tied to what he defines as the *mesolink*, related to social networks and social capital. A good start is the Faist's space definition,

'...space not only refers to physical features, but also to larger opportunity structures, the social life and the subjective images, values and meanings that the specific and limited place represents to potential migrants' (Faist, 1997: 252).

For this theory, there are three intertwined levels of any social space, namely macro-structures or macro-components, agents (micro-components) and collective and social networks (meso-components).

The *macro-level*, meaning the structure or macro-context of both the original and recipient societies, encompasses many elements that are largely common to all members of the community and affects the meanings attributed to the projects of migration:

- economic elements such as property, income, labour markets and employment dynamics and trends that connect both recipient and expelling societies.

- politics and policies, including migration policies and political regimes (democratic, repressive);
- cultural settings, including norms, values and discourses (e.g. perceptions about migration, expectations about the future in both host and original countries);
- demographic factors (population growth and trends)
- and ecological dimensions (natural disasters, quality of soil, etc.) (Carling, 2001: 24, Faist 2000: 31).

In consequence, structures are fundamental in determining the access to and distribution of symbolic and material resources in the population, or, from another point of view, the array of opportunities and constraints that individuals of the same community, ethnic group, class or social formation have in the process of life (Rubinstein, 2001: 5). An important point to make is that structures are not static or invariable and they can be (and are) reconfigured and mediated through social networks by individual agents. Hence, the structural context is very important but it is not in itself enough to explain transnational migration; particularly if the study of migration is seeking to highlight why, under the same structural conditions, some individuals migrate and others do not. To explore this contrast and to understand how the decision to migrate is taken, it is necessary to incorporate the meso and the micro levels to the analysis.

The *micro-level* refers to the migrant's actions and practices. Here, the individual, as a social actor, is conceived as a sort of context 'reader' with the assessment capability to act and decide in his/her environment or context (Rubinstein, 2001: 184; Sen et al, 1987: 36-7). Furthermore, following Emirbayer and Goodwin's definition:

'Human agency, as we conceptualise it, entails the capacity of socially embedded actors to appropriate, reproduce and potentially, to innovate upon received cultural categories and conditions of action in accordance with their personal and collective ideals, interests and commitments. If cultural and societal (network) structures, shape actors, then it is equally true that actors shape these structures in turns. (Quoted by Rubinstein, 2001: 146-7)

The decision to become a 'migrant' is, as in almost any important decision of a person's life, the result of a complex process of decision making. Human agency is the result of the interaction of many different variables, including at least the following:

a) cultural background, which includes the systems of belief (which historically transmit patterns of meanings), a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which human individuals communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about, and attitudes toward, life (Rubinstein, 2001: 2-17). In this case, the cultural background is very important for explaining how individuals confront similar structural opportunities and constraints. E.g., the attitude to migration may not be the same between a man and a woman, or between a person that is aged 17-45 and a person above 45. The level of literacy could also be important in determining how the opportunity is read by the individual. For this variable, the meso-level (the household unit), as well as the community, are also significant (Faist, 1997 (a): 187-197).

b) Entitlements and material resources are important factors in setting the array of opportunities that an individual or the household unit possess. They increase or reduce the "room for manouvere" or the margin of freedom (Sen et al, 1987: 36). Here again, many studies have shown that in general it is not the poorest who migrate, because it is necessary to have some resources for travel, as well as for survival during the insertion of the emigrant in the new country. A property could make a difference for the migrant in terms of the length of the migration experience.

c) Personal aspirations are a factor that is influenced by cultural background and also by inner motivations (Rubinstein, 2001: 164). It is related to the desire of the individual in terms of what he/she wants to do with his/her life, how he/she projects his/her life in the future and the question as to whether migration would help to achieve what they want.

d) The ability or capability to achieve things. In this case the realisation of a desire to emigrate (Carling, 2001: 28).

3) Finally, *the meso-level* represents the collectives and social networks which constitute, what Faist has named, the 'missing' meso-link. This includes:

a) Social ties, comprising strong ties like familiar relationships or weak networks of potential movers (e.g. members of the same community migrating together to the same place) or the relations with brokers.

b) Symbolic ties, including kin, ethnic, national, political, and religious organisations.

c) The content of ties and transactions whose contents are also important in terms of obligations, reciprocity and solidarity, as well as information, control and access to the resources of others. Faist names these elements as the *social capital* of the migrant (Faist, 2000: 31).

In summary, migration dynamics in transnational social spaces involve individuals, their flows and networks of social relations, their communities, institutions like local and national governments and immigration policies, and structures such as labour markets or economic policies in both, the original and the host countries (Faist, 2000; Portes *et al*, 1999; Voigt-Graf, 2004: 28-29).

2.2.3.2 Limitations and challenges of transnational migration theories

Some limitations of the transnational theoretical frameworks explored above include the oversimplification of any suggestion of a total break between the old and the new approaches to migration, and the inadvisability of using assimilation and transnational migration as totally exclusive categories (Kivisto, 2001).

In relation to the first limitation, Portes and Faist have pointed out that, although it is true that in historical terms there was transnational migration in previous waves of international migration (among others examples, the Jewish Diaspora), these did not have the significance, diversity and massiveness of transnational dynamics in present days (Portes, 1999; Faist, 1999). These changes, particularly significant in long-distance migration, have been made possible because of the technological revolution in telecommunications and transport, leading to the acceleration of time-space compression and facilitating permanent communication and linkages between people that are geographically distant. However, it is not only as a symbolic form of communication that has been facilitated, but also the financial flows between immigrants in the host societies and their families in their country of origin, as is demonstrated by the growing importance of remittances for many peripheral countries. In relation to the second critique, as pointed out by Portes, it was the assimilationist theory that neglected the social capital and social networks of immigrants and assumed that immigrants should cut linkages with the original society and be totally integrated into the recipient society, giving up their culture and traditions. In the case of the transnational framework, Portes and Faist point out the importance of social networks as a meso-link that is a key element in explaining the existence of transnational migration dynamics and spaces.

These concerns are not enough to suggest a lack of theoretical validity for the use of the transnational framework to apprehend the migration dynamics of a new stage of capitalism that is both global and transnational. Although this thesis shares the position that the transnational theoretical frameworks are suited to understanding the particularities of some current migration dynamics, particularly those occurring in core recipient countries, the author considered that the overattention to the migration agency level could neglect important migration flows from South to North and from peripheral regions to core countries, and also to understanding migration between regions with geographically uneven development in the periphery. As is pointed out by Kivisto (2001: 49), these approaches attempt to capture the distinctive and characteristic features of the new immigrant communities that have developed in the advanced industrial nations at the core of the capitalist world system.

It is important to notice that a good part of the migration flows from Central America and Mexico to the United States, as well as from Nicaragua to Costa Rica are seasonal migration which should deserve a different treatment than semi-permanent or permanent migration, which are those dynamics mainly studied by transnational migration approaches. Another important element to point out, is that a significant part of these migration dynamics, including not only seasonal but also semi and permanent migrations, are outcome of development transformations that has been going on during the last twenty years in Latin America and other part of the World. Hence, for this thesis is very important to analyse not only migration dynamics' agency but also the context that produce migration or, to put it in other words, the structural dimension of these processes.

The author would rather to use the concept of transnational social space and not migratory transnational space, because as has been pointed out by some scholars such as Morales and Castro for the Central American context (2002), migration is a key component of a wider process of transnationalisation. In fact, as is going to be discuss throughout this thesis, the Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica has been necessary to its economic development and in the last three decades to deepen the transnationlisation of the Costarican economic structure and dynamic. In fact, a significant part of the Nicaraguan immigrants are working in economic activities for exporting (agriculture) or for transnational businesses such as tourism industry (Sandoval, 2001).

This premise is extended by Faist (2000), who makes two further propositions:

‘1. Transnational social spaces consist of combinations of ties and their contents, position in networks and organisations, and networks of organisations that can be found in at least two geographically and internationally distinct places. The reality of transnational exchanges indicates that migration and return migration are not definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions; transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy of survival and betterment...

2. Over time, transnational links can concatenate in various forms of transnational spaces-transnational reciprocity in kinship groups, transnational circuits in exchange-based networks, and transnational communities such as diasporas, characterised by high degrees of diffuse solidarity...’ (Faist, 2000: 197-98)

The occupations, actions, and networks that occur in transnational social space can include, not only different sorts of human migration dynamics, but also other sorts of practices like the actions of transnational enterprises, distribution of labour division between countries, trade exchange, and so on (Voigt-Graf, 2004: 27-29). This is particularly important for this thesis because, as mentioned before, there has been a long history of transnational linkages between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, in which migration from North to South has played an important roles, including a process of transnationalisation of labour dynamics.

This is coincident with Sassen’s work that at the end of the 1980s highlighted the growing importance of migration as part of the transnational dynamics that were gaining force in the new global context (1988). She pointed out that one of the salient features of the globalisation process was the existence of global cities that acted as ‘nodes’ that were the outcome of a twofold intertwined dynamic: on the one hand, the centralisation of the management and services sectors of the global economy into those global cities (mainly located in the core), and, on the other hand, the creation of a global labour market to supply manpower for the low-wage jobs required for the functioning of the former sectors. This has implied the transformation of the labour markets in semi and peripheral countries, dismantling both their industry and traditional agriculture, and also the public sector through the massive reductions in employment involved in privatisation of public enterprises. Among the main outcomes were growing unemployment, ‘informalisation’ and ‘precarisation’ of labour markets in the Periphery (and even in some sectors of the core) and a negative social impact in the conditions of life of the population (Sassen, 1988; Sklair, 2002: 91-96).

These changes created a relative labour force surplus in these regions and a labour force demand at the Core, particularly significant in the global Cities. In synthesis, migration has been a core feature of globalisation as a consequence of the creation of a global labour market with the corresponding global supply and demand of the labour force, and a growing circulation of service workers as part of the international trade and investment in services and the circulation of low-wage workers (Sassen, 1996, 1988). Overbeek points out the different mechanisms that are producing the integration of national and regional labour markets and the growing internationalisation of labour markets through migration dynamics (2002: 74-79).

These relations have to be analysed in order to comprehend migration dynamics in transnational social spaces and how they are produced in geo-historical terms. Migration dynamics require the geographical separation between the reproduction of the production realms within the household or family unit. This split makes it feasible for the migrant and/or their family to 'take advantage' of the uneven development between the country of origin (-) and the country of reception (+). At the same time, this separation 'facilitates' the reduction of the reproduction costs as well as wages for the capitalist producers of the society of reception. That is why it can be asserted that migration generally implies an enormous quota of sacrifice and social pain for the migrants and their relatives.

To put it in other words, frequently out-migration works as part of a survival strategy for their households in the society of origin, and, at the same time, immigration works as source of cheap labour supply for the recipient society's economic sectors where the immigrants are required. As is pointed out by Pries (2001), the *social practice* of these transnational social spaces includes the development of transnational survival strategies and household economics. In fact, this thesis shares the view that a significant part of current migration dynamics from Periphery to Core that are producing transnational social spaces among these regions must be considered within the broader context of household survival strategies that seek to reduce economic risks in their societies and facilitate capital accumulation. Among other causes, capital market failures and lack of access to credit can make temporary international migration an attractive strategy for capital accumulation for the migrant's families or households (Pries, 2001; Castles, 2002).

The second element concerns what Faist (1999: 198-99) properly names 'gates' or 'doors', in other words those factors blocking or permitting access to the external borders of nation-states. These include 'formal gates' (including political or institutional aspects such as entry visas, immigrant regulations, integration policies), and informal aspects such as social distances or barriers in terms of, amongst others, ethnic, racial, religious, language and cultural dispositions and stereotypes. These formal or informal doors work as social, cultural and economic filters. They normally reflect the cultural and economic bias of both the country of origin and the country of reception. For example, it is quite common to find a double moral standard in the immigration policy of a country of reception where migrants with different backgrounds are treated differently. Thus, if they are professionals with high qualifications or potential investors they are easily able to access visa or special permits of residence, whilst, if the migrant is an unskilled worker, it is very probable that the entry requirements are so difficult to achieve that it would be easier to enter as a non-documented immigrant.

The third component, also developed by Faist, are the 'bridges' or connections that exist between organizations, groups, and people in and between nation states. These include institutional elements such as binational labour recruitment programs, and informal elements such as the migration networks that facilitate or interfere with migration and its sustainability (Faist, 1999: 198-99).

2.2.3.5. The role of migration dynamics in the production of transnational social spaces

An important epistemological question to answer in this chapter is how a social process is produced? In Lefebvres' sense, as was pointed out above, the answer to this question requires a movement from an abstract to a geo-historical level and from a product or outcome -oriented analysis to one focused upon the conditions of production of the study object, namely the production of a transnational social space and, within it the role of migration dynamics. As it is pointed by Sassen,

'... Migrations do not simply happen. They are produced. And migrations do not involve just any possible combinations of countries. They are patterned.' (1999: 155)

Hence, to explain how a particular migration network of flows has been produced we can have two main premises:

1) Transnational social spaces and migration dynamics, processes and networks are the result of cumulative and multiple factors.

2) migration dynamics are, in general, part of a wider process of transnationalisation.

In relation to the first point, Portes and Massey are among the scholars that have brought a historical perspective to migration explanations, pointing out that migrant transnational spaces are built upon a set of cumulative causations that are by no means unidimensional (Massey, 1991: 27-29, Portes, 1991: 77). Amongst other factors that can be mentioned here are demographic and ecological pressures, a history of labour recruitment, a culture of emigration, and influences imported from abroad that also give rise to emigration pressures...' (Díaz-Briquets *et al*, 1991: 5) Portes and Sassen also highlight the importance of the geopolitical, cultural and historical relations between the recipient and sending societies (Portes, 1991; Sassen, 2001).

The mechanisms binding immigration countries to emigration countries can assume many forms, but Sassen points out three as principal:

1) Geopolitical actions (colonial and neo-colonial bonds).

2) Economic links (SAPs, free trade agreements, outsourcing maquila).

3) Labour recruitment programs (such as the *Bracero* program between Mexico and the United States).

In the case of Central America, the production of both a transnational social space and migration dynamics have to take into account the geopolitical and economic influence of the United States upon the region.

In relation to the meso-level, the production of migration flows and networks throughout time, are also a result of the cumulative building up of social networks that are oriented not only by economic interests. As pointed by Portes:

'Networks developed by the movement of people back and forth are at the core of the micro-structures which sustain migration over time... Contact across space, "family chains", and the new information and interest which they promote become at least as important as the original calculations of gain in sustaining the cyclical movement' (1991: 83-84)

Family networks are the micro-structures that sustain migration over time. They provide contact across space through "family chains", they share information (where to go, jobs, social environment, where to stay, how to travel, what route, contacts), and provide solidarity and financial mutual support. This viewpoint is also shared by Massey who notes that '... migration is cumulative caused by the progressive formation of social networks that steadily lower the costs of emigration from sending communities...' (Massey, 1991: 29).

A last point to make here is that, in general terms, in the production of a migrant transnational social space, the host society has a favourable asymmetrical economic and geopolitical relationship that stimulates manpower migration from the origin's social space. In relation to the use of this concept in the Central American context is necessary to highlight two historical facts that are important to this research, on the one hand, the fact that with different rhythms and salient features, the region has generally followed the same style of development, in part, because of the overwhelming influence of the United States since the end of the 19th century by mean of the exercise of two intertwined logics: the territorial or geopolitical and the economic (Harvey, 2003; Taylor, 2000a, 2000b). On the other hand, the existence of a very strong historical connection between Nicaragua and Costa Rica that make necessary to analyse the style of development of both countries to understand the production of their migratory transnational spaces and dynamics.

In synthesis, the theoretical framework has two sets of components. The first set of components is related to the migratory transnational space that includes:

- 1) The structural conditions or macro-level, including gates and bridges in both the society of origin and the society of reception.
- 2) The meso-level or the social network of the migrant.
- 3) The micro-level or the individual agent actions and practices.

The second set of components is related to the style of development in two different scales, the regional for Central America and the national for Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

With these theoretical elements this thesis is going to explore and analyse how have been intertwined development and migration between Nicaragua and Costa Rica from a long term perspective and without losing the perspective that migrations dynamics are always part of wider processes.

CHAPTER 3: A methodological strategy to study the interaction between transnational migration and style of development.

The main objective of this chapter is to explain the main methods and techniques that I used in the research and also the strategy that I followed to obtain the necessary primary and secondary information to answer the research questions (see page 9). This strategy passed throughout several different stages including its original formulation and design and then, changes during its implementation during the fieldwork. The definition of the research strategy and its implementation was affected by the impacts of practical elements that either facilitated or created difficulties in achieving the aims of the research. However, subjective elements related to my position and agency in this research process, particularly my condition of bi-national citizen (Costa Rican of Nicaraguan origin), were also important considerations. My personal experience in this doctorate confirmed that, at the end of the day, research outcomes are result of the combination of intentionality, feasibility, contingency and subjectivity.

3.1 Epistemological and personal positionality in the research process

My philosophical view of research belongs to neither the tradition that assumes the researcher can and must be *neutral* nor to the empirical school of thought that assumes that the facts 'speak for themselves' (Murray and Overton, 2003: 21; Luengo, 2002). I share the point of view of the historical-hermeneutic school that rejects the empirical view of the world and argues that facts do not exist independently of social experience. In the same perspective, I share from the critical approach the need to uncover non-evident or non-explicit processes and relations (the historical production of social events) (Murray and Overton, 2003: 21-22). Thus, whilst I assume the researcher should be *objective* in the treatment of collected information and data and should avoid configuring reality in an arbitrary way by manipulating the information to make them "say" what the researcher wants to "hear", at the same time, I believe that the researcher should make explicit from the beginning his or her ethical and ideological¹⁷ concerns, premises and convictions.

This would help to make clear to the reader and to the people involved in the research process as an 'object' of the research, the origin of the research questions as well as the delimitation of the study object beyond its technical dimensions and considerations (research objectives are not a *naïve* coincidence or a genial occurrence but a result of particular ethical, ideological or political preoccupations).

17

In the Marxist sense of a general view of the world.

Another important issue to be explored in relation to the idea of research neutrality relates to the social consequences of the research outcomes. To put it in a simple way, for the *neutral* approach to research, the consequences of research are not relevant or are not intended. So-called neutral research only describes technical results based upon 'facts.' In the case of the conceptual and methodological approaches that inspire this research, there is a conscious concern about the social and ethical implications of the results. From this perspective, there is a normative dimension to this research project reflected in the idea that the outcomes should have a positive impact in the studied communities, sectors, institutions, policies or groups. Although my methodology is not consciously research-action oriented, my fieldwork did contribute to the opening of a space of encounter between the local political and social leadership to reflect about the implications of migration for their grassroots organisations, NGOs and their wider community (Condega). In the same direction, although this is not a policy-oriented study, I used part of the collected information to contribute to the national debate over these issues, particularly as a member of the Forum of Immigrant Population (a civil society network), and participated in the political debate over the modification of a very restrictive immigration law that was proposed by the Costa Rican government at the time of my field research (2005-06). The information gleaned from my participation in these processes helped shed light upon the particular dynamics of Nicaraguan rural immigrants in Costa Rica. The experience also helped me to validate my data and enriched my own interpretation of the phenomena that I was studying.

In the case of my position about the importance of quantitative data in the research process, this research distances itself from the view that over-emphasises the importance of quantitative data and its description. As I pointed out in the theoretical chapter, the statistical data can be useful in characterising or describing a particular social phenomenon, but to understand how is produced in historical terms it is necessary to go beyond its appearance, analysing what is behind and beyond the surface (Murray and Overton, 2003: 23) and that is what I have tried to do throughout this thesis.

There is a final element of my positionality that I have to make explicit here, this is the fact that I was born in Nicaragua, I have been living in Costa Rica since I was thirteen years old and that I belong to a -literally- binational family because my father was Nicaraguan and

my mother is Costa Rican. This part of my background contributes to explaining my interest in the migration issue. In fact, I am an immigrant myself. Of course, I should make clear that my situation is totally different from the contemporary Nicaragua to Costa Rica migration that I have studied in this thesis. I came at the end of the 1970s with my mother, brother (1) and sisters (4) (my father stayed in Nicaragua until the beginning of the 1980s). When I arrived in Costa Rica, there was at that time a massive solidarity and sympathy towards the Nicaraguan people and their struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. In fact, I never felt or suffered any kind of discrimination. This was probably reinforced because of the fact that my family was a typical middle class household in a society which is proud of its significant middle class. Hence, I could pass as a typical middle class *tico* (diminutive of Costa Rican).

In the 1990s the attitude towards the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica changed dramatically, in part because of the massively increasing numbers, but also because they were poorer than the Costa Rican population in a moment in which the country was suffering the social consequence of Neoliberal policies that were threatening the Costa Rican welfare state, reducing the middle class and expanding the poor population. This process is explained in a brilliant way by Carlos Sandoval in the book *Otros Amenazantes* (Sandoval, 2002).

The combination of these factors made the Nicaraguan immigrants the perfect scapegoats for justifying the deterioration of the Costa Rican level of life in a context of Structural Adjustment. This was combined with the underpinning of xenophobic attitudes in growing sectors of the national population who started to associate Nicaraguan immigration with violence, delinquency, health problems, job problems and the deterioration of public services such as Social Security, housing and education (this will probably sound familiar in an European context). This process was accompanied by a *racialisation* of Nicaraguan immigrants, stereotyping them as darker than the Costa Rican, and also as *dirty* people. Although I never suffered these attacks, the situation induced me to take a position. I started to explore questions about my Nicaraguan origin at an emotional level (my roots, my family linkages and childhood memories), to move to a more political position by getting involved in the grassroots networks supporting migrants and finally at a more reflective level, to try to understand why and how this process was being produced. In a paper that I wrote during the research process (Cortés Ramos, 2003) I expressed all these

elements saying that my position in relation to my study object cannot be neutral because of my condition as immigrant, because of the fact that I have Nicaraguan roots, relatives and friends, and also because I want to contribute to improve the life of the immigrants in Costa Rica with my research.

After defining my positionality, it is now important to define the scales and the main techniques used in the research process and also the strategy that was followed in order to collect the information required. These are the objectives of the following sections.

3.2 Geographical scales to study of transnational migration

The first element of my methodological strategy that I defined was the different scales or, to put it in other words, the concept of scale that I was going to use throughout the thesis. A useful distinction is made by Johnston *et al* (2001) who sustains that there are, at least, three main conceptualisations of scale within human geography:

- i) The cartographic, which refers to the level of abstraction at which a map is constructed.
- ii) The methodological, which refers to the choice of scale made by a researcher in the attempt to gather information aimed at answering a research problem.
- iii) The geographical, which refers to the dimension of specific landscapes, such as the regional scale, the global scale or the scale of the body. The conceptualization of this scale responds to specific processes in the physical and human landscape rather than a conceptual abstraction laid over it. Two key assumptions of this sense of scale are, first,

‘... that geographical scale is a central organizing principle according to which geographical differentiation takes place. It is a metric of spatial differentiation; it arbitrates and organizes the kinds of spatial differentiation that frame the landscape. As such it is the production of geographical scale rather than scale *per se* that is appropriate research focus. It is not the scale which defines the processes to study, but vice versa, the processes are the ones that define the scale...’,

and, second,

‘... that it is possible to recognize a hierarchy of geographical scales, from that of the body, the home and the community, through the local, the regional, national and global...’ (Johnston *et al*, 2001: 724-27).

The scales in this thesis result from a compromise between the methodological scale, which recognizes practical elements and limitations such as time and resources, and the

geographical scale, that brings the imagination necessary to think of 'scale' beyond traditional boundaries, a basic requirement for grasping the complexity of transnational processes that are multilocal and in continuous motion (Tamagno, 2003: 26-27; Massey et al, 1995).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, transnational migration is intertwined with other transnational process that involve geopolitical, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions in different scales. To capture this complexity I defined three main scales:

- i) The *macro-regional scale* included the relationship between the United States and Central America. This scale included, depending upon the period, the influence of different factors (geopolitical, political, economic, cultural and social processes) within the relationship between the US (as a core country) and the Central American countries. This scale also included the main trends of the regional style of development that is conditioned, but not determined, by the influence of the US.
- ii) The *binational scale* embraced the transnational social space between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, as neighbouring countries with a long history of intense exchanges. In terms of the levels of analysis this scale includes the main political, economic and social processes between the two countries, as well as the dialectics between style of development and migration dynamics between the two countries. This scale included a national comparison of the main processes and factors that produced the migration dynamics.
- iii) The *local scale*, was geographically constrained to the rural communities of the three selected Nicaraguan departments, namely León, Chinandega and Estelí. The main levels of analysis are related to the chief features and dynamics of the rural households of the studied communities of these departments.

The definition of these three scales was an important step towards the subsequent selection of the main techniques employed in the research and also the definition of the orientation and organisation of the fieldwork, as is explained in the following sections.

3.3 The hermeneutical technique in the use of secondary sources

A very significant part of my research was to re-read and re-interpret secondary sources using the main concepts that I formulated in the theoretical chapter. Particularly important

were the concepts of 'style of development' with its conditioning and determinant factors and 'migratory transnational spaces' with their dynamics, networks, gates and bridges, in the different scales.

This review and re-reading included a wide range of databases and literature in different knowledge fields such as history, geopolitics and politics, political economy, institutional development, social, demographic (as well as migration trends) in the region and between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The main methodological challenge in this exercise was not only to explore the different scales, but also to look at their articulations and interconnections. Some databases were particular useful for addressing the economic and demographic dimensions to the historical analysis of the thesis. In economic and social terms, the databases of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) were extremely useful, particularly from 1950 onwards. The databases from the Central Banks in both countries, Nicaragua and Costa Rica for the period 1990-2003 were also important sources. There is a relative lack of data information for the 1980s, mainly because of the political and military crisis the region was suffering in general and within Nicaragua in particular.

In relation to the demographic dimension and migration dynamics, the census and household surveys of both countries were a very important source of information, providing a general idea of the main migration trends between the two countries, particularly for Costa Rica as the recipient country. In fact, this information contributed to the periodisation proposed in the thesis. However, it is important to point out that these valuable sources have important limitations, including the fact that they have been carried out on an irregular temporal basis and for that reason there are long periods without official census information about population totals. Along the same lines, the years of realisation of the census in both countries are not coincident making a diachronic comparison for most years impossible (see Figure 3.1),

Figure 3.1: Nicaragua and Costa Rica. National Census Years.

Nicaragua	Costa Rica
1906	1927
1920	1950
1940	1973
1950	1984
1963	2000
1971	
1995	

Source: CCP, 2003 (www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr)

Another limitation of these sources is the fact that they only registered persons that had lived for six months or more in the country. This implies, by definition, that a significant part of rural migration is not covered by the Census or household surveys because the migrants normally stay in the recipient country for a shorter period. A last point to mention relates to the fact that irregular or non-documented migration is not adequately captured by these instruments because this population distrusts (and tends to avoid) any contact with national officials (Cortés Ramos, 2003: 4; Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 1999).

3.3.1 The geographical scope of the research, the primary sources and the techniques utilised

Moving from the regional and bi-national scales to the local scale at which the case study was going to be developed required some definitional elaboration, particularly in relation to the location of the fieldwork and the selection of techniques.

In my original research design, fieldwork was going to be developed between September of 2002 and August of 2003 and was going to be qualitative, comprising the realisation of semi-structured interviews with experts and Nicaraguan immigrants located in Costa Rica, with a particular focus upon those with rural origins that were working in agriculture. I started the work with the interviews of the experts; most of these were in Costa Rica. In September, I went on a short visit of three weeks to Nicaragua to collect secondary information and also to carry out some interviews and make a presentation about my research and my perspective on Nicaraguan-Costa Rican migration dynamics in the Universidad Centroamericana in Managua. During this visit, I met Reyna Adriana Zamora, a student of the masters program in Rural Development at the *Instituto de Capacitación e Investigación en Desarrollo Rural Integral* (ICIDRI) at the Universidad Politécnica (UPOLI). Exchanging information about our own thesis projects, she explained to me about the work that they were doing in León and Chinandega, exploring in impressive detail the main socioeconomic characteristics of the rural households of many communities in these departments. She also indicated to me that in some of the communities, the interviewees mentioned remittances as a source of complementary income, although their questionnaire did not include questions about migration. Reina put me in contact me with Professor Jaap van deer Zee, director of the Masters Program, an expert in rural development and someone who later became a significant support for my fieldwork in Nicaragua. I mentioned to Reina that I was interested in carrying out some qualitative interviews with

immigrants from Estelí in Costa Rica. By coincidence again, she used to live there and she gave me two other contacts. Socorro Centeno, an independent sociologist and researcher and Ligia Monge, director of OCTUPAN, an NGO from Condega, Estelí, that promotes sustainable rural communities. I was able to interview them and their knowledge and the detailed information that they gave me convinced me that I had to include Estelí as one of the departments included in my study.

After I returned from Estelí, I interviewed Jaap Van der Zee who gave me very insightful information about the situation of the peasantry in Nicaragua. I shared with him the information I got from my interviews in Estelí and he proposed the following arrangement, to me. He would allow me to use their rural socioeconomic database from León and Chinandega in the case that I decided to do a survey in rural Nicaraguan communities to evaluate their level of emigration. In exchange, he asked me to apply their questionnaire to the rural communities of Estelí, if I decided to do a survey in that department. This offer opened a new perspective about my methodological strategy for various reasons. First, to work with rural Nicaraguan households in their communities of origin gave me the opportunity to assess the level of migration in the chosen communities in a more representative mode. Second, it would be easier to obtain information about rural migration dynamics by interviewing the migrants and their relatives in their own environment and not in a hostile one, such as Costa Rica. Third, it would allow me to explore, not only the experience of the migrants, but also the perception of other members of the household unit about this dynamic. Fourth, the combination of access to ICIDRI's socioeconomic database with a new database with a focus on migration characteristics could generate information, not only about the main characteristics of rural migration dynamics, but also about the economic characteristics and insertions of the migrants and their households in both Nicaragua and Costa Rica. This was a potentially powerful combination. The main problem was practical, a survey like that would require financial resources that I did not have at that moment.

At that time, the Nicaraguan Presidency was formulating its new Program of National Development. The person in charge of that formulation was Dr. Mario de Franco. As a part of their formulation process, they were organising discussion meetings about different subjects that were part of the Program. I received an invitation to discuss in very general terms the main migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica and also to suggest

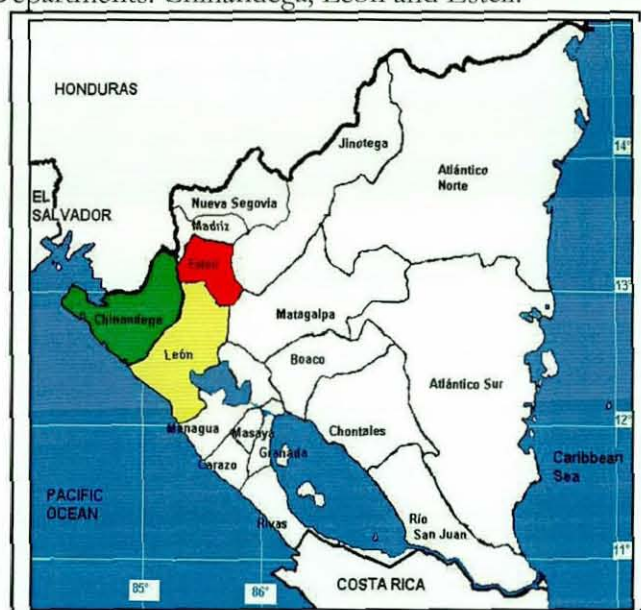
some elements that could be contained in a migration policy for this country. That gave me the chance to discuss with Mario the need to generate more information about the different migration dynamics and also to mention the possibility of doing the survey. Eventually, Mario agreed to give me the financial aid. Without this support the realisation of the survey would have not been possible.

The realisation of the survey implied a significant reorientation of my fieldwork design. Not only because it involved the selection of the rural communities where I was going to carry out the survey in the three selected departments, but also because I had to design a questionnaire that could collect the information necessary to answer the main research questions. However, I also had to decide if my fieldwork was still going to incorporate more qualitative techniques for addressing the research questions alongside the new survey approach. The carrying out of some interviews when I was testing the questionnaire and a long conversation with Marcos Fournier, an expert in quantitative and qualitative research, convinced me that I had to use both quantitative techniques (the survey) and also qualitative techniques (s and semi-structured interviews) to obtain a more complex and complete *portrait* of the migration dynamics that I was studying.

3.3.2 Geographical scope delimitation

The first department I selected for administering the survey was Estelí, located in the Centre North of the country and a very rural department with an important level of emigration to the urban centres of Costa Rica (12 percent). Within this department, I decided to work in the rural communities of Condega, one of the six districts of Estelí. I took this decision based upon the existence of a local Census from 2001 carried out by the local government of Condega and Octupán. In addition, this organisation was eager to provide logistical support for my fieldwork in Condega. In addition to Condega, following the advice of Professor Van der Zee, I also selected districts from Chinandega and León, departments of the North and Pacific part of the country. A last element related to the scope of the research is that I decided to focus upon Condega as my main case study for qualitative research, this was in large part due to the contrasting migration rates to Costa Rica that I had identified in neighbouring Condegan communities with very similar social and geographical conditions.

Figure 3.2: Nicaragua. Location of Selected Departments. Chinandega, León and Estelí.



Source: INIFOM, www.inifom.gob.ni, (1:50,000).

The final sample of the survey covered a total of 574 interviews in 37 communities of five municipalities in three departments as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

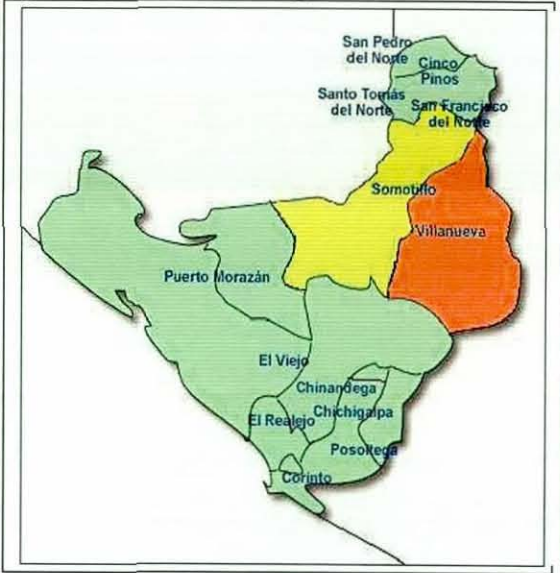
Figure 3.3: Nicaragua. Selected departments information (Size and Population distribution), 1995.

Department and Municipality	Size (Km²)	Population (1995)					
		Total	Urban		Rural		
			Abs.	Relat.	Abs.	Relat.	
Estelí	2,230	174,894	93,471	53.4	81,423	46.6	
Condega	398	29,247	8,914	30.5	20,333	69.5	
León	5,457	336,894	185,520	55.1	151,374	44.9	
Nagarote	581	28,617	16,406	57.3	12,211	42.7	
La Paz Centro	606	36,410	20,390	56.0	16,020	44.0	
Chinandega	4,822	350,212	203,555	58.1	146,657	41.9	
Villanueva	779.9	27,522	6,522	23.7	21,000	76.3	
Somotillo	1,089	28,204	11,531	40.9	16,673	59.1	

Source: INEC, Nicaragua National Census, 1995 and INIFOM, <http://www.inifom.gob.ni>

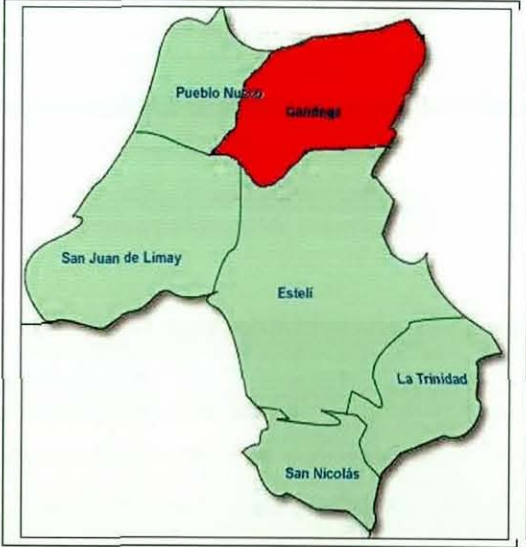
Figures 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 show the geographical location of the selected districts in each department,

Figure 3.4: Somotillo and Villanueva, Department of Chinandega.



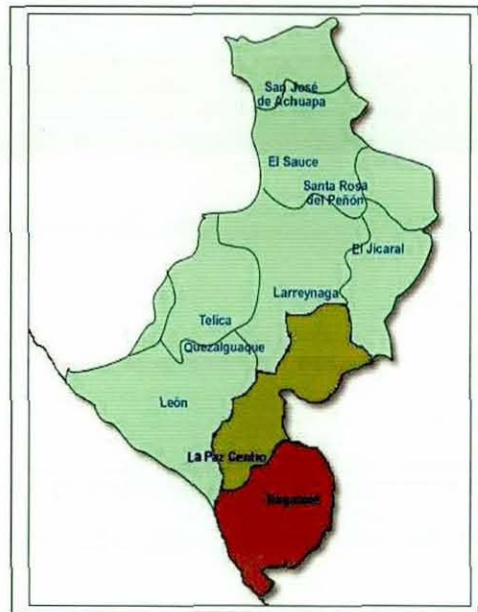
Source: INIFOM, www.inifom.gob.ni.
Adapted by the author. (1:50,000)

Figure 3.5: Condega, Department of Estelí.



Source: INIFOM, www.inifom.gob.ni. Adapted by
the author. (1:50,000)

Figure 3.6: La Paz Centro and Nagarote, Department of León.



Source: INIFOM, www.inifom.gob.ni.
Adapted by the author. (1:50,000)

3.3.3 Explaining the fieldwork

After I selected the three departments, five municipalities and the 37 rural communities where the survey would be conducted, the next step I took was to make a final decision on the main techniques that I would use to collect the information in these locations. In the three departments, the survey's sample covered 574 households¹⁸. In the case of Condega, the set of qualitative techniques I decided upon included semi-structured interviews with returning migrants (ten in total), s with members of the migrants' families, divided by gender and age, as well as a with returned migrants (there were five of these s in total); and, finally, with the support of Octupán, we organised a community workshop in Condega with members of the migrant families, some former and current migrants, members of both grassroots organisations and the local government. In the next section I describe these sources and techniques in more detail.

¹⁸ The thesis is using an operative definition of household, which is the one define by INEC in Costa Rica (www.inec.go.cr). Household is the single person or group of persons that live in the same house an that at the moment of the interview has at least six months living within it. Their members live there permanently. However, there are considered members of the households those who for particular reasons are temporary absent by no more than six months. In this thesis, there is one addition, if the person is absent for more than six months but the members of the family still in contact with that person in such a way that they considered the migrant as part of the household, it is counted like member.

3.3.3.1 The Rural Household Survey

The survey's primary target was twofold, on the one hand, to generate information that could assess the level of migration in the rural families and, on the other hand, to explore the causes and dynamics of their seasonal rural migration towards Costa Rica, with particular attention paid to the expulsion factors. The questionnaire consisted of 102 questions grouped in the following macro items:

- a) General characteristic of households units (socio-demographic variables).
- b) Migratory experiences of family members.
- c) Conditions of emigration.
- d) Type of insertion in Costa Rica.
- e) Benefits and damages of migration.
- f) Remittances.
- g) The migration decision making and support to migration.
- h) Social networks in Costa Rica.

In relation to the sample definition, in the case of Condega it was based on its producers census of 2001 (3964 units), and in the case of both Chinandega and León it was based in the ICIDRI rural socioeconomic survey (975 units in the first and 635 in the second). Hence, the survey sample included a total of 574 households of the studied municipalities as it is showed in the Figure 3.7. The sample was determined at random, with a 3% error margin and 95% confidence rate. The data collection took four months (March-June 2003). In total, there were 19 households that did not answer the questionnaire and were replaced by new households until the size was completed. When the member of the household accepted to answer the questionnaire in all cases the questionnaire was completed with no problem. It was very helpful to work with assistants that new the communities from before.

Figure 3.7: Rural Household Survey, samples by Community, Municipality and Department.

DEPARTMENT, MUNICIPALITY AND COMMUNITIES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENT
Total	574	100.0
CHINANDEGA DEPARTMENT	180	31.4
<i>Somotillo Municipality</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>22.2</i>
1. Santa Teresa	6	1.0
2. Rodeo Grande	14	2.4
3. La Fragua	10	1.7
4. Los Limones	17	3.0
5. La Pavana	9	1.6
6. El Caimito	15	2.6
7. Los Balcones	18	3.1
8. La Flor	17	3.0
9. Las Mesitas	22	3.8
<i>Villanueva Municipality</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>9.2</i>
10. El Obraje	1	0.2
11. El Pajuil	1	0.2
12. Jiñocuabo	5	0.9
13. Cañafistula	13	2.3
14. Villa Esperanza	16	2.8
15. Villa España	1	0.2
16. Villa Alemania	6	1.0
17. San Marcos 1	9	1.6
LEÓN DEPARTMENT	212	36.9
<i>La Paz Centro Municipality</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>18.1</i>
18. El Socorro	26	4.5
19. La Sabaneta	25	4.4
20. Amatlán	17	3.0
21. Las Chácaras	1	0.2
22. La Concha	21	3.7
23. La Unión	14	2.4
<i>Nagarote Municipality</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>18.8</i>
24. Copaltepe, Nagarote, León	32	5.6
25. El Guayabal, Nagarote, León	29	5.1
26. Mesa Grande, Nagarote, León	2	0.3
27. Las Pilas, Nagarote, León	20	3.5
28. La Sabaneta, Nagarote, León	3	0.5
29. La Unión, Nagarote, León	1	0.2
30. San Pablo, Nagarote, León	21	3.7
ESTELÍ DEPARTMENT	182	31.7
<i>Condega Municipality</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>31.7</i>
31. Bramadero, Condega, Estelí	22	3.8
32. Jocote de Arriba, Condega, Estelí	11	1.9
33. Labranza 2, Condega, Estelí	59	10.3
34. Rodeo de Pire, Condega, Estelí	27	4.7
35. San José de Pire, Condega, Estelí	40	7.0
36. Santa Teresa, Condega, Estelí	12	2.1
37. Venecia, Condega, Estelí	11	1.9

At the time of the year when the interviews were done many members were in Costa Rica. For that reason, the interviews were conducted with the adult person in charge of the household. As I mentioned before, this database was complemented by the information from ICIDRI's socio-economic database for the same communities and households

covered by my own survey (except for the case of Esteli, where I did both). The variables that I used from this survey were the following:

- a) Main economic activity of the households.
- b) Land use in the farm.
- c) Type and origin of land tenure.
- d) Family income.
- e) Family expenditures.

In terms of data analysis, I used SPSS for basic descriptive statistics as well as some correlations and regression with the purpose of finding out the main variables conditioning migration decision making. In the survey fieldwork, I worked with the collaboration of Freddy Calero and Jairo Acuña as assistants. They did approximately half of the interviews supervised by me. In this part of the research I received insightful suggestions, comments and advice from Jaap Van Deer Zee from Politechnic University of Nicaragua and Marco Fournier from the University of Costa Rica.

3.3.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Migrants and Experts, and the Community Workshop

The fieldwork also included 25 semi-structured interviews with experts (Figure 3.8), 8 semi-structured interviews with migrants, and one community workshop (20 persons). Although the interviews with the experts and migrants were flexible, the questions asked related to the eight macro-issues addressed in the survey questionnaires.

Figure 3.8: Interviews with experts

Activity	Date	Place
Interviews with experts		
Lara Putnam, expert in Cultural history, UCR	07/11/02	San José, Costa Rica
Juan Carlos Vargas, Anthropologist and demographer, migration expert CCP-UCR	08/11/02	San José, Costa Rica
Carlos Sandoval, expert in cultural studies	10/11/03	San José, Costa Rica
Amparo Van Deer Zee, Land Reform expert	07/01/03	Masatepe, Nicaragua
Henry Ruiz, commandant of the revolution	13/01/03	Managua, Nicaragua
Milagros Barahona, expert in migration and gender	14/01/03	Managua, Nicaragua
Socorro Centeno, Sociologist, researcher on development process	23/01/03	Estelí, Nicaragua
Erick Van Eck, Rural development specialist	30/01/03	Estelí, Nicaragua
Jaap Van deer Zee, Rural development specialist	04/02/03	Masatepe, Nicaragua
Martha Olivia Gutiérrez, sociologist, UCA.	05/02/03	Managua, Nicaragua
Expert on migration and rural development		
Rosa Zavala, Vice-alcaldesa, Condega	05/03/03	Condega, Estelí, Nicaragua

Ligia Monge, Octupán, Condega	23/03/03	Condega, Estelí, Nicaragua
Martha Cranshaw, Migration expert, Foro Nacional de Migraciones de Nicaragua)	10/05/03	Managua, Nicaragua
Freddy Calero, Survey assistant, agronomist	12/05/03	Masatepe, Nicaragua
Erick Arturo Melgar O. (20, Immigrant, 1 st . Grade, Secondary)	06/06/03	Venecia, Condega, Nicaragua
Miguel Ángel Matey (40, Immigrant, 2 nd . Grade, Primary)	06/06/03	Venecia, Condega, Nicaragua
José Virgilio Montalván (38, Immigrant, No formal education)	07/06/03	Labranza No. 2, Condega, Nicaragua
Gerardo Gómez (33, 6 th . Grade, Primary)	07/06/03	Labranza No. 2, Condega, Nicaragua
Ebert Montalván (20, 6 th . Grade, Primary)	07/06/03	Labranza No. 2, Condega, Nicaragua
Jairo Acuña, Survey assistant	03/06/03	Masatepe, Nicaragua
Augusto Montalván (22, Immigrant, 3 rd . Grade, Secondary)	10/07/03	Condega, Nicaragua
Eduardo Baumeister, Sociologist, expert on Land Reform and Nicaraguan population displacements.	19/07/03	Matagalpa
Víctor Manuel Talavera, Immigrant (44, 2 nd . Grade, Primary)	19/07/03	San José de Pire, Condega
Julio César Hernández (46, 4 th . Grade, Primary)	19/07/03	San José de Pire, Condega
Adilia Eva Solís, psychologist, expert in migration	06/08/03	San José, Costa Rica
Abelardo Morales, Migration expert, FLACSO	08/08/03	San José, Costa Rica

The community workshop was different because the main objectives of the activity were a. to open an space for reflection about the main causes, characteristics and balance of the rural migration from Condega to Costa Rica, and b. to think about possible policies and alternatives to migration. This activity was organised with the support of Octupán and the idea was to involve representatives of the local government, social grassroots and members of households with migration to Costa Rica. It is important to remark that, although this was a community with a high rate of migration, until that moment there were no organisation or policy related to the phenomenon.

In terms of the workshop methodology, first, we started presenting the video 'Desde el barro al Sur', a documentary made by two Nicaraguan film producers that relates the experience of four women that have migrated from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. This was a very interesting documentary because it had a sort of transnational perspective, narrating the situation in the recipient country, the country of origin and the situation of the migrant. The video created a emotional atmosphere because many of the people that were participating in the workshop were migrants in some moment or had relatives that have migrated or were in Costa Rica in that moment. They felt a strong identification with the situation of the migrants (their vulnerability, their sadness, their nostalgic feelings about their families in Nicaragua and so on). At the end of this moment, we introduced the

question why they were interested to participate in this workshop and the main answer was that they were interested to find out a solution to this problem, meaning by that to have to migrate to Costa Rica.

After the first moment, the group opened a general discussion about the main causes of migration. It was interesting that a key historical element the participants pointed out was the political and economic changes that happened with the end of the revolutionary process in 1990, particularly the closure of the sugar plantations and refinery that the State had in Estelí and was close at the beginning of that decade. That refinery was a significant source of extra-income for many people of Condega, that use to work there as seasonal workers, very similar to the seasonal work they started to do in Costa Rica in the 1990s. Apart of the historical side of the process, many of the participants mentioned the lack of support of the State to the rural world and the growing unemployment that is increasing the economic and social vulnerability of a great number of households of the region. At this moment, it was clear that seasonal migration to Costa Rica became a part of a survival strategy for rural households in Condega.

The third moment of the workshop was dedicated to proposals. This part of the workshop was worked out in groups that discussed the following items, what to do in the local level, what to do in the local government, what to do in the national level and what to do in Costa Rica in relation to migrant organisation, economic and legal aspects, as well as communication. Figure 3.9 includes more detailed information about all fieldwork activities,

Figure 3.9: Date and information of the semi-structured interviews and community workshop.

Activity	Date	Place
Interviews with migrants		
1. Miguel Ángel Matey, 40 years old	06/06/03	Venecia, Condega, Nicaragua
2. Erick Arturo Melgar, 20 years old	06/06/03	Venecia, Condega, Nicaragua
3. José Virgilio Montalván, 38 years old	07/06/03	Labranza No2, Condega, Nicaragua
4. Gerardo Gómez, 33 years old	07/06/03	Labranza No2, Condega, Nicaragua
5. Julio César Hernández, 46 years old	19/07/03	San José de Pire, Condega, Nicaragua
6. Augusto Montalván, 22 years old	19/07/03	San José de Pire, Condega, Nicaragua
7. Victor Manuel Talavera, 44 years old	19/07/03	San José de Pire, Condega, Nicaragua
8. Ebert Montalván, 20 years old	20/07/03	Labranza No2, Condega, Nicaragua
Community workshop		
Community meeting, 20 participants	19/05/03	Condega, Nicaragua

In Figure 3.10 I synthesise the main components of the methodological strategy adopted for the thesis, including the research questions, the levels of analysis, the main sources and the main techniques,

Figure 3.10: Scales and levels of analysis for the study of migrant transnational spaces between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

RESEARCH QUESTION		LEVEL OF ANALYSIS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	MAIN TECHNIQUES
Migration production	1. Historical production of migration dynamics within the region and between Nicaragua and Costa Rica	Macro-regional: International and internal factors that transform the styles of development and their consequences in relation to migration dynamics between the two countries	- Mainly secondary sources ¹⁹ - Databases from ECLAC, SICA and Central Banks from Nicaragua and Costa Rica.	- Discourse analysis based in the main concepts of the theoretical framework
	2. Style of Development and migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica since 1990 until 2003	Bi-national: Main changes in development and migration dynamics, with particular focus in rural migration.	- Secondary sources - Primary sources, like expert interviews, use of official census data as well as official households surveys from both Nicaragua and Costa Rica	- Discourse analysis - Descriptive analysis
Main characteristics of rural migration	3. Rural migration from León, Chinandega and Estelí to Costa Rica	Local: Rural migration dynamics and characteristics of this migration.	- Primary source: Survey to 574 rural households from León, Chinandega and Estelí. - Semi-structured interviews with experts.	- Quantitative analysis including descriptive analysis, correlations and regressions. - Discourse analysis.

3.3.4 Final reflection about the fieldwork

I mentioned before how my original design changed when the opportunity of doing a survey appeared. However, it is also important to highlight some of the problems and difficulties that I confronted in the interaction with the household members and the migrants that I interviewed. In general terms, I had no problems in conducting the interviews (it was admittedly a long questionnaire, it required at least an hour of attention of the interviewee) in Chinandega and León because I was working with families that had

¹⁹ Secondary sources: Academic documents, Institutional documents, NGOs and grassroots organisation documents.

been part of the sample of the socioeconomic survey and they were familiar with my assistants. However, the case of Condega was different because it was the first time the migrants or others members had contact with me. The fact that I was coming from Costa Rica to research about migration and that I was asking personal information sounded very suspicious to the peasants that were invited to participate in the first . So, they asked *doña Carmencita*, who was helping me with the contacts for the fieldwork in the communities of Condega, to arrange a preliminary meeting to clarify their doubts.

We had the meeting and I was able to convince them that I was not working for the Immigration Department in Costa Rica and that the information that I was going to collect was not going to be used against them in their seasonal visits to the neighbouring country. I have to mention here that a key factor in overcoming their initial and strong distrust was the fact that I was born in Nicaragua and that my accent was not totally *tico* (Costa Rican). By the end of the process we were joking about the misunderstanding, but the experience make me question what would have happened if I were only Costa Rican? This experience confirmed for me the importance of the cultural dimensions in this kind of research, there are many complex issues that must be taken into account in conducting research into migration particularly with a population that normally works and lives in very vulnerable situations.

The other experience was totally different, it was more related to the role of international development agencies and NGOs that work in Nicaragua. In the three departments I found situations in which the interviewee asked what kind of direct aid they were going to receive through their participation or, at the other extreme, they expressed that they were tired of people coming to make surveys and promising aid only for nothing to happen and they continue living in poverty. My only answer to those attitudes was to clarify that I was not working with NGOs or International Cooperation Agencies, but that I had a personal commitment to use the research to publicise information about the reality of Nicaraguan rural migrants in Costa Rica and in that way to try to influence Nicaraguan and Costa Rican authorities and social networks that work on migration in both countries.

CHAPTER 4: The Central America context. The geo-historical production of a Transnational Social Space hegemonised by the United States.

The main purposes of this chapter are, on the one hand, to frame Nicaraguan migration towards Costa Rica as a part of a wider regional context, namely Central America, and, on the other hand, to explain how this region has been produced as a transnational social space in which human migration is a core element. In this macro-scale²⁰ analysis the long term geo-historical transformations that, in different levels, have occurred in the region are explained. Although the focus of this thesis is not the long-durée causes of current migration, making some reference to a foundational moment of the regional order in which present migrations are unavoidable. This key moment started at the end of the second half of the 19th century, when the United States became the hegemonic power in the whole Caribbean Basin, and transformed the Caribbean Basin into a U.S. 'Mediterranean' sea and the Central American countries into a U.S. 'backyard'. Since then, the United States' geo-political, economic, and cultural weight has cast a shadow upon this small region and has had a determinant influence upon its orientation. The role of the United States is hence a key element in explaining what Central America has achieved in terms of development, but also what it has not. The US' overwhelming presence has been a powerful structuring force of the dependent and uneven geographical development of the region right up to present days.

The U.S. imperial influence in Central America has relied on three main interwoven dimensions: the first is what could be named the geopolitical side of imperialism, meaning the diplomatic, political and military strategies invoked and used by any great power (in this case, the U.S.) to guarantee domination and control within and beyond the state boundaries. This dimension includes the rivalry with other global or regional powers with global aspirations for access to and the control of particular geographical spaces. In general terms, geopolitics is an attribute of great or regional powers that does not take into account the history, needs and interests of the population of the countries upon which they exert control and domination (Agnew and Corbridge, 1995; Harvey, 2003; Taylor, 1994; Sandner, 1990).

²⁰ Although in this scale only the US-Central American region is included, it is important to note that in US geopolitical terms the Central American countries belong to a wider region, namely the Great Caribbean Basin.

The second element is the symbolic and cultural dimension of any imperial enterprise and its correspondent narratives and politics of representation. This level is related to how ideas of 'We' and 'Others' are imagined, constructed and projected from the imperial power's perspective and how these views legitimise a set of imperial practices towards peripheral regions or countries.²¹ This is a fundamental dimension for the justification of the formal - or informal- expansion of any imperial power, as well as for the legitimisation of control and domination of peripheral regions or countries. As pointed out by Slater (1999):

'(a)n expansion of spatial power, or the establishment of a new spatial-political order... needs a justification, a principle of legitimacy, an ensemble of ideas and concepts that can provide a moral and cultural foundation. Furthermore, in the context of relations with other societies, and specifically in the Americas, remembering Jefferson's notion of the United States having 'a hemisphere to itself', the construction of a geopolitical identity included the positing of difference as inferiority *and* danger. The outside world contained threats to security and to the diffusion of mission...' (Slater, 1999: 65-66)

The construction of the 'Other' is particularly important in terms of political culture and institutional policies (the immigrants are the 'Others' per excellence) contributing to explanations not only of the orientation and content of 'gates' and 'bridges' (immigration policies) in both the host and original societies, but beyond that, of the political and economic orientation of a whole society as can be seen in the Central American experience.

The third and last component of this triad is the economic side of imperialism.²² This involves two 'organically-related' processes:

On the one hand, there is the process of capital accumulation which we can conceive of as

'...a diffuse political-economic process in space and time in which command over and use of capital takes primacy' (Harvey, 2003: 26).

In contemporary times, this process has been characterised by Harvey as a process of accumulation by dispossession which is particularly significant, but not exclusive to the

²¹ As explained by Slater (1999), there are some recurrent stereotypes that are produced in the core powers to legitimise their practices of domination and control, including the portrait of 'Others' as a threat, or as a 'child' that has to be looked after, or as 'primitive' or 'savage' countries that should be civilised, among others.

²² In a very basic definition, Imperialism is '...the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial relationship usually between States and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination.' (Johnston *et al*, 2001: 375).

peripheral regions. This concept is a reformulation of Marx's 'primitive accumulation' and it embraces:

'...the commodification and privatisation of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons; the commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); the monetisation of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; the slave trade; and usury, the national debt, and ultimately the credit system as radical means of primitive accumulation (Harvey, 2003: 145)

As discussed by Harvey, at the present time some of the traditional mechanisms of accumulation have been fine-tuned to play a stronger role than in the past,²³ but new mechanisms have also been opened up, particularly intellectual property rights as a key component of 'free trade' promotion by core countries in peripheral regions (Harvey, 2003: 145-146). This is particularly important in a region like Central America which has been part of a 'free trade' based framework, the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI, prompted by Reagan in 1983) with the United States and is now close to signing up a new 'Free Trade' Agreement with the same country.

On the other hand, there are the legal and political dimensions²⁴ that frame and facilitate the process of capital accumulation. Hence, if transnational enterprises are key socio-economic agents in the age of transnational and global imperialism, the application of Neoliberal economic policies, structural adjustment programs and free-trade agreements influenced by the 'Washington Consensus'²⁵ also contributed to the process of

²³ For example, accumulation by dispossession could include privatisation of public enterprises and the external debt payment in the Third World (Harvey, 2003: 67).

²⁴ In some Marxist discourse this could be considered part of the 'super-structure' that embraces the political and legal elements that facilitate the accumulation of capital.

²⁵ The term Washington Consensus is an expression coined by John Williamson and includes not only the policies of the US government, but all those institutions and networks of opinion leaders centred in the world's de facto capital—the IMF, World Bank, think-tanks, politically sophisticated investment bankers, and worldly finance ministers, all those who meet each other in Washington and collectively define the conventional wisdom of the moment. Using the same lines, Cypher indicates that the term "Washington Consensus" has served to 'encapsulate the crystallisation of a paradigmatic shift in economic policy making regarding Latin America. The intellectual impetus behind the consensus view clearly flowed from Washington, the locus of the U.S. Treasury, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Equally important, the consensus encompassed key Latin American business elites and functionaries of the state apparatuses. Transnational corporations, particularly in the financial realm, used their extensive influence to consolidate a policy that promised to open virtually all areas of the Latin American economies to foreign investment and unrestrained financial flows across borders, including fluid repatriations of profits. Leading orthodox economists both in the United States and throughout Latin America urged deregulation of capital markets, free exchanges rates, privatisation of para-state firms, and "flexible" labour markets' (Cypher, 1998: 47).

accumulation of capital by way of eliminating or minimising any possible obstacles in peripheral countries.

These three dimensions are developed by different agents and respond to different rationales, timings and logics of power, and for that reason they could differ or eventually oppose each other, but in the long run they tend to work within the same strategic frame: that of the hegemonic core state interests.

In Central America these three components have been interwoven with effective coordination allowing the U.S. to keep a significant level of control in the orientation of the region at least since the beginning of the 20th century. For the Central American states and societies, U.S. control has implied the deepening of uneven geographical development patterns expressed in the growing transnationalisation of production, consumption and trade processes, as well as a significant social polarisation and, in most cases, massive wealth concentration. The other side of such concentration is both symbolic²⁶ and material²⁷ concentration of opportunities that in the long term have configured the region as a transnational social space that includes a wide range of migration forms including: extra-regional or South-North emigration from all the countries of the region (with no exception) towards the United States and intra-regional migration, such as the particularly important North-South oriented Nicaraguan emigration towards Costa Rica.

The next sections of this chapter explain how the region was produced as a geopolitical unit and transnational social space under the hegemony of the United States. This regional dynamic plays a determinant role in understanding current regional and extra-regional migration trends and the position of the different countries in relation to these human displacements and dynamics in the period 1900-2000.

4.1. The production of Central America as part of the U.S. geopolitical sphere of influence in the Caribbean basin

There is a wide consensus among scholars that the period 1890-1930 was the period when the United States emerged as an important player on the global stage (Lafeber, 1993; Randall and Mount, 1998; Taylor, 1994; Agnew, 1995; Slater, 2004). The new U.S. position

²⁶ This makes reference to the access to services and goods such as education, information, communication, culture, leisure and so on.

²⁷ This makes reference to goods such as food, housing, fresh water, land, capital goods, and services such as health systems.

was an outcome of several different factors: the end of the Civil War (1876) and a subsequent economic and technological push; a military expansion based upon both a racist view of their internal and external 'Others' and a supposed 'Anglo-Saxon' superiority, a political will and power to make effective the 'Manifest Destiny', the Monroe Doctrine²⁸ and the Roosevelt corollary²⁹

The combination of these factors created a distinctive new form of U.S. imperialism that was 'naturally' projected upon the Caribbean Sea which was conceived as an 'internal sea', Central America as their 'backyard', and even beyond in the Pacific Ocean with the control of the Philippines and Hawaii in 1898 (see Figures 17 and 18). As is pointed by Healy:

'The role of the United States in contemporary imperialist activity began in the 1890's and had largely run its course by the end of the First World War. Reflected in the 1890's by a growing national bellicosity and a heightened interest in an isthmian canal and in Pacific islands like Samoa and Hawaii, the new American expansionism reached full flood with the Spanish-American War, the acquisition of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Hawaii, and the creation of a protectorate over Cuba. The years from 1900 to 1920 witnessed the erection of protectorates rather than formal colonies, as a Panama, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and other Caribbean areas came under a greater or lesser degree of control by the United States...' (Healy, 1967: 9-10).

The new regional order was built up with a combination of military coercion and economic control. A brief recounting of the different mechanisms of economic control and coercion used by the United States in the region in this period includes the following:

- Direct intervention of US troops: Cuba (1898-1902, 1906-1909, 1912, 1917-1922); Haiti (1915-34); Nicaragua (1909-10, 1912-25, 1926-33), Honduras (1924-25).
- Territorial annexations, leasing and other forms of territorial control: Puerto Rico (annexed in 1898); Virgin Islands (annexed in 1917); Panama (Canal from 1903 until 2000); Nicaragua (Chamorro-Bryan treaty signed under military occupation in 1914-16, it conceded to the US the leasing of the Corn Islands (1914-7), a perpetual concession to build a new interoceanic canal, and permission to build a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca); Colombia (lost of the Province of Panama in 1903); Cuba (the Guantanamo Bay, 1902-?).

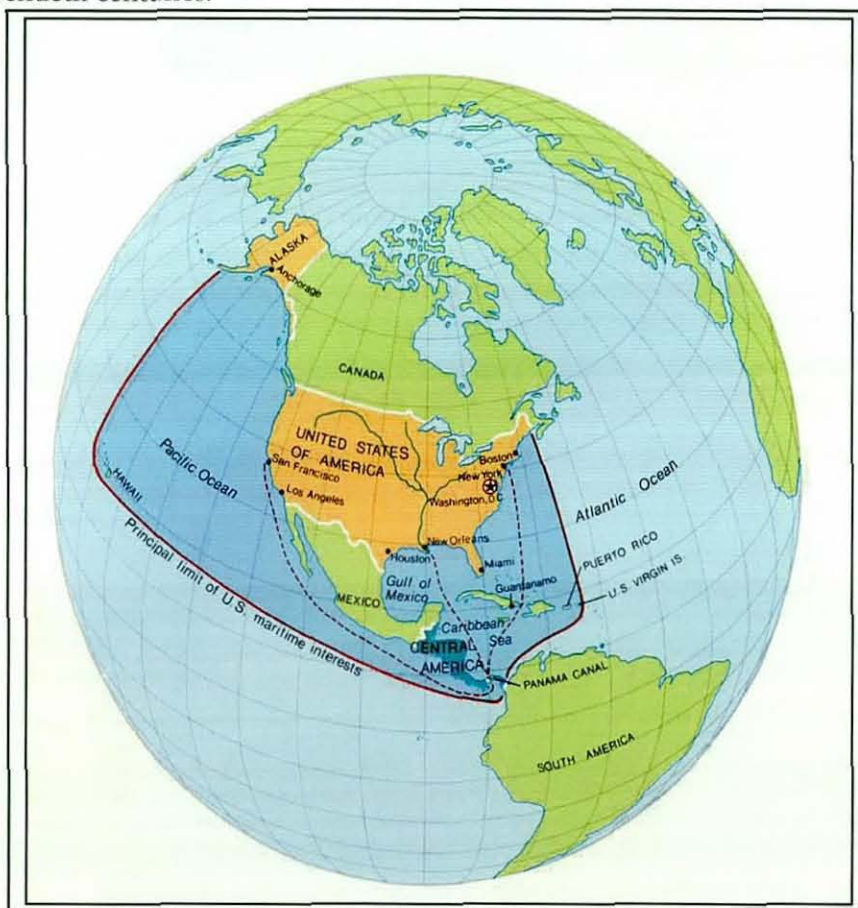
²⁸ A doctrine formulated by US President James Monroe in 1823 that could be summarised in the expression 'America for the Americans'. In this context, America could mean both the American continent, and the United States and it was a message directed to the European imperial powers.

²⁹ This corollary was a reformulation that US President Theodore Roosevelt made of the almost one-century-old Monroe Doctrine in 1904. This corollary stated that in keeping with the Monroe Doctrine the United States was justified in exercising 'international police power' to put an end to chronic unrest or wrongdoing in the Western Hemisphere in order to avoid future interventions of European countries.

- Direct mechanisms of economic and political control:³⁰ Dominican Republic (1905-1941), Haiti (financial supervision, 1916-1941) Nicaragua (financial supervision, 1911-24), Cuba (Platt Amendment, 1902-1934)

Although other mechanisms were informal, this does not mean that they were less effective, for example assuring the appointment of docile and corrupt politicians or dictators in governments to guarantee 'order' and/or respect for US citizens' investments and properties (Lafeber, 1993; Schoultz, 1998; Randall and Mount, 1998; Gilderhus, 2000).

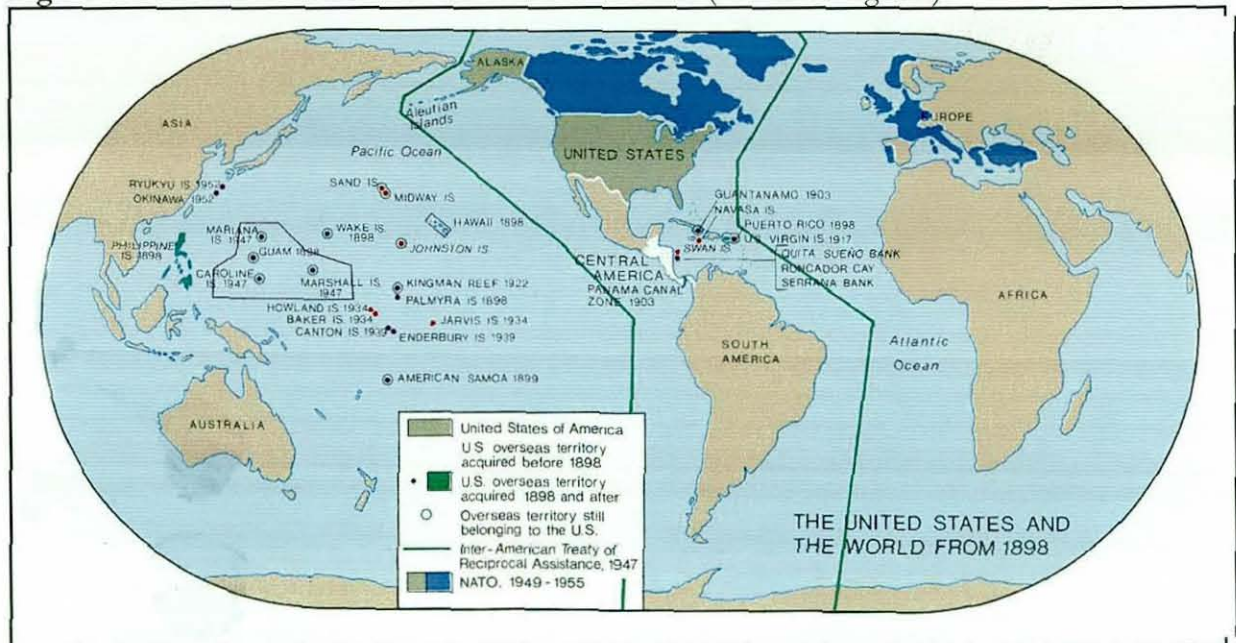
Figure 4.1: Principal limits of the U.S. maritime interests in the early twentieth centuries.



Source: Hall and Brignoli, 2003: 42.

³⁰ The name of this figure in those times was 'financial supervision' but it meant that US representatives were directly in charge of the administration of customs and taxation as well as the financial management of the country. The justification of this US policy was part of the Roosevelt corollary: the corruption and mismanagement of the Caribbean countries were promoting social unrest, but also these countries were not fulfilling their international duties (debt payment) and hence were giving excuses to European powers to intervene in the region something that the US was not eager to accept anymore.

Figure 4.2: The United States and the World from 1898 (Hall and Brignoli).



Source: Hall and Brignoli, 2003.

4.1.1 The cultural premises of US imperial expansion in the Caribbean and Central America

The cultural premises of the US interventions in both the Caribbean and Central America were based upon a set of three long-term core ideas. The first one is a conception of mission based on the self-perception of national greatness coupled with the promotion of freedom. Thus, their revolution should be replicated or copied by other countries. As is pointed out by Gilderhus, from this perspective

‘the advancement of U.S. ideals and interests simultaneously served the well-being of other peoples by expanding the areas of freedom and enterprise.’ (2000: 7)

A second core idea is U.S. conservatism in the sense that the US revere their own revolution but distrust any other process of social change, particularly if the changes are perceived as radical. In this case, the most important element is the U.S.’ deeply-held belief in the sacredness of private property (equated as freedom) in any part of the world. This helps to explain their negative and aggressive attitude and actions towards other revolutions in the 20th century, namely the Mexican, the Russian, the Chinese, the Cuban, and the Nicaraguan revolutions.

The third core idea is the U.S. sense of ethnic superiority, a 'colour consciousness' expressed in a racial hierarchy in which the white Anglo-Americans are on top: 'the whiter, the better' (Gilderhus, 2000: 7). In general terms, most of the stereotypes about Latinos originated in the time of the Mexican war and were reinforced with the defeat of 'uncivilised' Spain in the war of 1898. The logic of the U.S. government was that if the Spanish colonisers were barbarians, they could not expect anything else from their former colonies. Among other stereotypes, the U.S. politicians, entrepreneurs and military men constructed their backyard 'Others' as lazy, disorganised and conflictive peoples not able to fulfil their obligations with foreign powers, creating conditions that could lead to European military incursions or financial control. Furthermore, these countries not only required U.S. intervention to free them of potential European incursions, but also to bring order and progress to their own people.

There was an important geopolitical reason underlying this rationale. At the end of the 19th century European powers were intervening in some Caribbean and Central American countries (Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras). The U.S. governments of the time perceived this situation as a potential threat to the consolidation of their hegemony in a region that, after the beginning of the construction of the US Canal in Panama in 1903, was gaining even more strategic relevance. Hence to secure the canal, ensure investments, act as a 'natural protector', and, to replace the declining British presence, in 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt reformulated the Manifest Destiny through a Corollary³¹ that basically infers that the United States would act as the hemispheric 'civilizatory force' and as a policeman when any country of the region was not acting in a civilised mode. As Roosevelt told the Congress in the annual message that contained the Corollary:

'...It is our duty to remember that a nation has no more right to do injustice to another nation, strong or weak, than an individual has to do injustice to another individual; that the same moral law applies in one case as in the other. But we must also remember that it is as much the duty of the Nation to guard its own rights and its own interests as it is the duty of the individual so to do... But in international law we have not advanced by any means as far as we have advanced in municipal law. There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law... Therefore it follows that a self-respecting, just, and far-seeing nation should on the one hand endeavour by every means to aid in the development of the various movements which tend to provide substitutes for war, which tend to render nations in their actions toward one another, and indeed toward their own peoples, more responsive to the general sentiment of human and civilized mankind; and on the other hand that it should keep

³¹ It is known as Roosevelt Corollary.

prepared, while scrupulously avoiding wrongdoing itself, to repel any wrong, and in exceptional cases to take action which in a more advanced stage of international relations would come under the head of the exercise of the international police. A great free people owes it to itself and to all mankind not to sink into helplessness before the powers of evil...' (Holden and Zolov, 2000: 101)

After that he concluded,

'... All that this country³² desires is to see the neighbouring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrong-doing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or incompetence, to the exercise of an international police power... Our interests and those of our southern neighbours are in reality identical...' (Holden and Zolov, 2000: 101-102)

The central message of this statement was twofold, on the one hand, to project the United States as the 'civilizatory force' in the American continent and, on the other hand, to allow the United States to intervene in Latin American and Caribbean countries when they considered that the misgovernment of these countries might justify an external (European) intervention. In that sense, President T. Roosevelt was rewriting the original spirit of the Monroe Doctrine which was to protect the American countries from European empires but not to intervene within them. As is pointed out by Lafeber,

'... this Corollary meant more than merely making war for peace. It exemplified North American disdain for people who apparently wanted to wage revolts instead of working solid ten-hour days on the farm. Roosevelt saw such people as "small bandit nests of a wicked and inefficient type", and to U.S. Progressives such as T.R., the only sin greater than inefficiency was instability.' (1993: 38)

Hence, the main implications of the projection of the United States as 'the civilised force' in the Americas was that the US reserved for itself 1) the right to decide if others were or were not acting in a civilised manner, and 2) the 'right' and the 'duty' to intervene in any neighbouring countries they had decided were not acting appropriately. Since then, these two corollaries have been a constant within US foreign policy towards Central America. In the period of the construction of the Panama canal, Nicaragua and Panama were the

³² He is talking about the United States.

Central American countries where this policy was applied to its extreme. In the case of Nicaragua, it was reflected in the infamous Knox Note, in which the U.S. Secretary of State practically ordered President Zelaya to resign from the Nicaragua presidency. The cause of this request was that Zelaya would not accept that the Panama canal would be the only trans-isthmian canal to be constructed. This was interpreted by the US as a threat to their National Security. In a private letter of 1905, Root drew the lesson:

'The inevitable effect of our building the Canal must be to require us to police the surrounding premises. In the nature of things, trade and control, and the obligations to keep order which go with them, must come our way.' ... (Lafeber, 1993: 37)

These words were written in stone: in the future the U.S. was not going to accept the right of the indigenous population of Central America to decide about their own future or to make any noise or to disturb what the U.S. governments considered their own backyard. History has shown that U.S. power would be exerted with either carrots or bullets to impose a functional order, above and worst of all, with total neglect of the wishes and thoughts of the Central American people about their own destiny and development.

4.1.2 Central America as part of the U.S. Backyard in the Caribbean Basin

Renouvin and Duroselle point out that any state or region with a geography crossed by a 'natural' transit route, if it is strong enough, could be transformed into an attracting force, a pivotal element that could contribute to consolidate the nation-state or the region's development. However, if the transit route is located in a weak country or region, it could be transformed into the route of invasion or into an excuse to justify invasion from more powerful countries, in the process transforming a 'natural' gift into a geopolitical 'curse'. The 'gifted' country could become a victim of its own geographical 'exuberance' (2000: 26). This was the case for the Central American countries, particularly for both Nicaragua and Panama, countries deeply marked by the geopolitical designs of great powers and their exercise of territorial and maritime domination throughout different periods in the region's history. The interests of the great powers during this period were not, therefore, mainly oriented towards the natural wealth of the region which, in comparative terms, was modest in relation to the rest of the regions that had been colonised at that time in other parts of the American, African and Asia continents. Instead, the main interests of those powers in the Central American region were both its strategic geographical location and its great potential for the construction of a 'path between the seas' (McCullough, 1977). The control

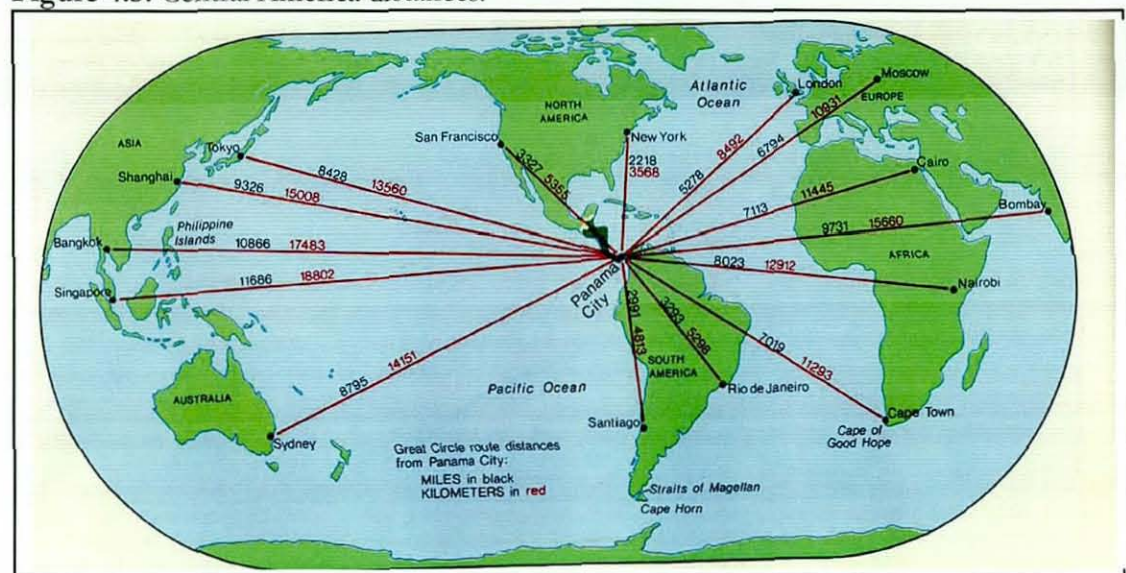
of the canal route and its access routes in the Caribbean basin were the main factors behind the strong competition between contending imperial powers. As is pointed by Langley,

'In Central America the competition generated by productionism from about 1850 to 1930 occurred on two levels: first, between U.S. firms trying to gain access to Central American raw materials, land and labour (mostly private firms) and the communications routes (both private and government competition); second, between governments and firms of different nations. Central America, only marginally valued for its resources, was important to any nation wishing to enter the Pacific Basin. Since all industrial, free market powers eyed at least some part of that vast domain, the isthmus attracted their attention.' (1995: 10)

The rivalry was not only amongst the great powers but also amongst the countries within the region. In more than one case, they were in conflict, divided and playing the 'game' of the imperial countries interests with the purpose of being chosen as 'regional partners'. This behaviour was one of the factors that contributed to the end of regional integration in that period of their history and some of the current border conflicts and differences that still exist between the Central American countries are an inheritance of these geopolitical divisions and games (Sohr, 1988: 12; Sandner, 2003). In relation of the origin of the US' geopolitical thinking, Foucher indicates that

'As early as 1897, Alfred Mahan was the first geopolitician of the United States to compare the maritime stretches of the Gulf of Mexico and of the Caribbean Sea to those of the Mediterranean of the Old World in his article 'The Strategic Features of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea'. His principal interest was in creating a set of new Gibralters. He hoped to persuade his compatriots to come out of their isolationism by agreeing to make the effort of constructing a naval fleet and bases. In the context of the debate over the United States' takeover of the construction works of the Panama Canal, he tried to show that this venture would be a strategic failure if the United States did not at the same time ensure the control of maritime gateways in the West Indies through the construction of naval base. It is known that his theories were adopted by president Theodore Roosevelt ... It is to Admiral Mahan that the United States owes the Panama Canal, the creation of naval bases (in Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, the Virgin Islands – bought from the Dutch in 1917), the appropriation of Hawaii and later the justification of the 'containment' theory, which is an elaborated form of naval blockade.' (1987: 108-109)

Figure 4.3: Central America distances.



Source: Hall and Brignoli, 2003.

Figure 4.3 gives a geographical idea of the strategic importance (in distance shortening) of a potential Central American canal to interconnect the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans and regions in economic and geopolitical terms at the beginning of the 20th century. It is in this period when the United States openly manifested their self-appointed 'right' and 'duty' to police the region and to intervene in any country in the region if they considered it necessary to guarantee their national security.³³

After consolidating their presence in the whole region (1900-1930), the U.S. governments turned their attention towards creating, training and supporting, in ideological, military and economic terms, National Guards in most of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic and Haiti. These armies were a sort of U.S. 'beach head,' more loyal to 'Uncle Sam's' geopolitical and economic interests than to their own national states.³⁴ The presence of this military corps allowed for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and a formal change of U.S. foreign policy after the 1930s, which shifted from the 'Big Stick' to the 'Good Neighbour' of F.D. Roosevelt. However, as is pointed out by Pérez Brignoli, in the

³³ This is very similar to the concept of the contemporary U.S. doctrine of the use of preventive force.

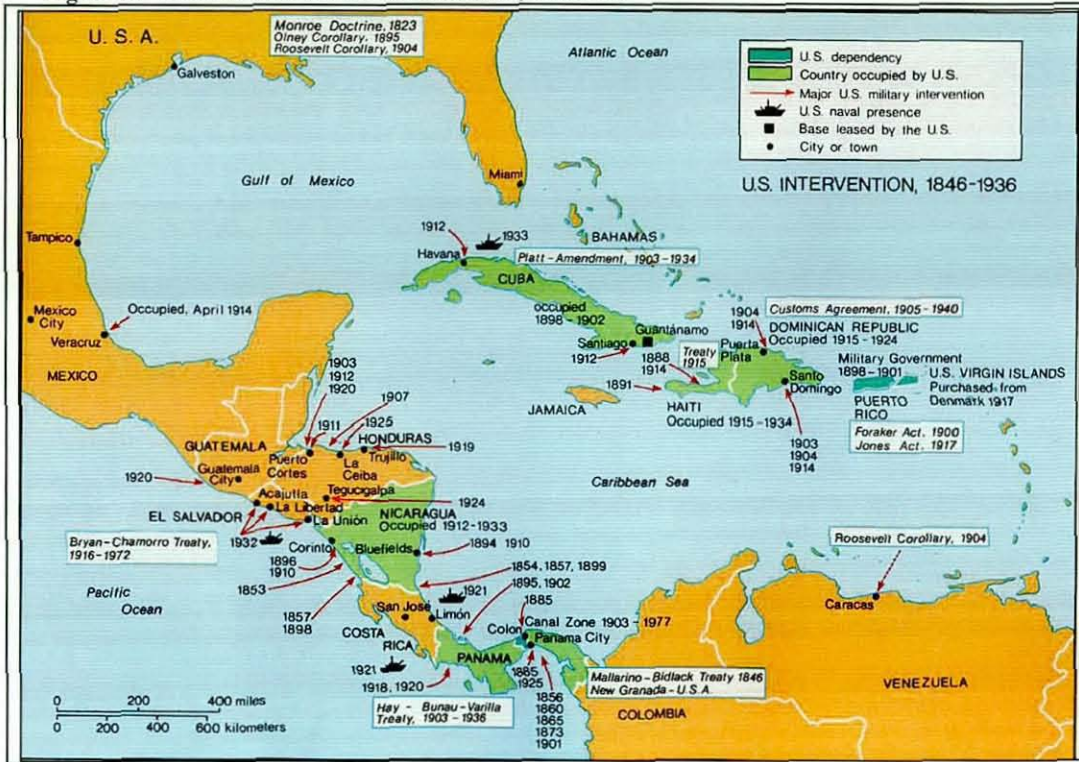
³⁴ In the conventional tradition, the main purpose of national armies is to guarantee the national defence from external threats, but in Central America the national armies were mainly used to control and repress the internal population.

Central American case the Pax Americana after the U.S. withdrawal was guaranteed by a set of dictators: A. Somoza in Nicaragua, J. Ubico in Guatemala, T. Carías in Honduras and M. Hernández in El Salvador (Pérez Brignoli, 1985: 131; Hall and Pérez Brignoli, 2003: 224). In the long term, the U.S. trained National Guards were to form the basis for the consolidation of authoritarian regimes in the region.

A significant feature of this regional order was the differentiated position that the hegemonic power defined for each of the countries at different junctures; roles that frequently were assumed with gusto by the Central American power elites. However, because of their geographical position, the importance of local U.S. investments or their relations with the Empire some countries have suffered from the geopolitical interventions and actions of the great power to the North more than others. In fact, for a long time, the two countries that suffered most were Panama and Nicaragua. In the case of the former, the country was configured as a virtual protectorate through the Canal Zone's permanent militarization, a process that lasted until the very end of the 20th century. In the case of the latter, the country was transformed into an informal protectorate, which included both military intervention and financial supervision during the period 1912-1933 (see Figure 4.4). After 1936, the US gave military, economic and political support to Somoza's dictatorship which lasted until 1979. Under the rule of the Somoza dynasty Nicaragua became a key piece in the US geopolitical strategy for the Caribbean Basin, particularly in the second half of the 20th century.³⁵

³⁵ U.S. governments were not concerned about the human rights situation of the Nicaraguan population until the Carter Administration. The lack of military and political support of the Carter administration to Somoza was one of the factors that explained the popular overthrow of the bloody dictatorship. One anecdote that illustrates the way of thinking of U.S. politicians about Somoza was expressed in president T.H. Roosevelt's comment about the dictator: 'Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch....'. Excerpted from: <http://home.iprimus.com.au/korob/fdtdcards/CentralAmerica.html>

Figure 4.4: U.S. Interventions in the Caribbean Basin, 1846-1936.



Source: Hall and Brignoli, 2004: 209.

U.S. geopolitics in the region have pursued one strategic objective: to guarantee at any price what they consider their National security and interests. The content of these interests has changed throughout time, as well as their conceptualisation of the threat. However, there have been some long-term regularities to U.S. actions in the region. For example, they have perceived any social transformation in the Central American countries as a potential danger for their interests and they have acted in consequence, undermining, sabotaging and confronting any reformist or revolutionary intent with the only exception of the Costa Rican experience in the second part of the 20th century. Any action generates a reaction and the responses and positions in relation to the U.S.' geopolitical design in Central America have been diverse, moving from the unconditional support of 'comprador' or power elites (Langley and Schoonover, 1995: 22), passing through different forms of compromised or negotiated positions before reaching open resistance and military confrontation to the U.S. presence or actions in the region. As a long-term balance, the dominant historical trends have tended to be in favour of the U.S.' geopolitical and economic interests.

4.1.3 The transformation of Central America into 'Banana Republics' (1900-1930)

The analysis of the Central American insertion into the World-Economy since the Spanish conquest could be characterised as an accumulative process of growing dependency. Wave after wave of economic reinsertion with different products did not change the fact that within the World-economy's international division of labour they were raw-material producers. In the second half of the 19th century, coffee became the main export product and, in fact, remained the most significant over a long period that lasted until the 20th century. Commercial production started in the 1830s in Costa Rica, although its regular exportation was only consolidated in the 1840s. Guatemala and El Salvador started their exportation in the 1850s and Nicaragua later in the 1870s. At the end of the century most of the Central American countries (with the exception of Honduras) were producing and exporting coffee. Their main destinies were Britain and the East coast of the United States. In 1913 coffee represented 63% of the total exports followed by bananas with almost 20% (Torres Rivas, 1980). The expansion of coffee production transformed the region during the 19th century in both its external relations and internal social relations. In the case of the latter, the product increased the level of dependency to the central countries throughout different mechanisms, including the foreign control of:

- Productive credit (and hence debt),
- The coffee processing plants (beneficios)

- Commercialisation through large commercial houses
- Means of transportation (particularly railroads)

In relation to the internal transformations, coffee's expansion was accompanied by deep changes in the social relations and the social structures of each country where it was produced, including massive processes of land privatisation. The cultural premise of these economic reforms (that were known as "Liberal reforms") was the ideology of 'progress' and they embraced a set of legal, political and economic policies and institutional changes oriented to reinforce the region's 'agricultural' comparative advantage, to attract capital for the expansion of the export-oriented products (mainly coffee), to populate the 'empty' spaces³⁶ with Western/white colonisers, and to connect the region with the rest of the World through the constructions of railroads and ports. This process included measures such as the forced privatisation of different forms of common land property, namely municipal commons (*ejidos*), lands of indigenous communities (*tierras comunales*) and the Catholic Church's land. These reforms contributed to paving the way for a massive privatisation and concentration of land tenure in most of the Central American countries, and is an excellent example of Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003). As is pointed out by Langley and Schoonover in relation to this period characterised by Liberal reforms:

'... They facilitated the privatization of communal land, advocated policies that hastened the growth of a wage-dependent labour force, freed domestic capital by undermining the *cofradías* (religiously inspired socioeconomic brotherhood) and other church-controlled sources of capital, and encouraged the formation of banks (especially hypothecary or mortgage land banks). They also offered inducements to foreign settlers and financial interests.' (1995: 14)

Land privatisation was total in El Salvador and Nicaragua; extensive in Guatemala and Costa Rica and partial in Honduras (Mahoney, 2001: 117). In relation to the mode of production there were important differences among the countries. In Guatemala and El Salvador coffee production was intertwined with the strengthening and consolidation of the hacienda (large estates). The manpower was obtained from the relative population surplus that was produced by the land dispossession of indigenous communities, mestizo peasants and even urban ladinos in the case of El Salvador. In these countries wages were

³⁶ Significant regions that were privatised were inhabited by indigenous population, but for the *criollos*, members of the Central American power elites, they were 'invisible', for them those regions were 'pristine' or empty spaces.

very low and working conditions extremely harsh because of the combination of relative surplus and repression (Stirton, 1994: 88).

In the Honduran case coffee production was not significant. The Liberal reforms and privatisation did not favour only large, but also small estates. This situation only changed with the consolidation of the banana enclave at the end of the 19th century. In Nicaragua coffee expansion started in the last quarter of the 19th century and only became the most important export product at the end of the century, but as is pointed out by Stirton, it never achieved the importance that this product had for Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica. The limitations that confronted the development of coffee production in Nicaragua arose, not only from other products such as mining, cattle or sugar, but the lack of manpower. Nicaragua was much less populated than Guatemala and it is the biggest country of the region, hence, the indigenous, mestizos and ladino population made governmental laws, policies and measures, that were intended to force them to work for the landowners, useless by fleeing to unutilised lands in the Central and Caribbean parts of the country.

In Costa Rica, coffee expansion was accompanied by an extensive process of land privatisation that mainly affected the Catholic Church, the State public lands and the indigenous communities. However, as a distinctive contrast to the Guatemala and El Salvador contexts, the main mode of production for coffee in Costa Rica developed mainly, if not exclusively, on small estates or *fincas*. The relative lack of (indigenous) population did not allow for the expansion of the haciendas and most of the labour force utilised in the *fincas* belonged to the households of the farmers themselves. This factor had a twofold effect in relation to labour conditions: first, from the 19th century wages were higher than in the rest of the Central American countries, and second, the labour conditions were less exploitative (Mahoney, 2001: 117; Stirton, 1994: 78-79).

The primacy of coffee, as export product happened during the period of British economic hegemony in the region throughout most of the second part of the 19th century. The beginning of banana production and exportation coincided with the turning point from British to U.S. economic hegemony at the end of the same century and the beginning of the 20th century. As is discussed in this chapter, the expansion of banana production had

impacts not only in the economic realm, but also in the social relations, political regimes and social structures of the countries where it was produced.

The mode of production and the social relations that accompanied the expansion of banana plantations in the Caribbean geography were a central feature of the new transnational social space in the isthmus. However, the U.S. economic penetration of the region did not only include the production of bananas and control of their trade, but also the appropriation of many strategic sectors such as finance, transport and mines (Langley, 1985: 89-91, Langley and Schoonover, 1995: 11-32; Lefeber, 1993: 19-85; Pérez Brignoli, 1989: 107-132). This was the period in which the nations of Central America became 'Banana Republics', a contemptuous name that became popular from the beginning of the 20th century. The origin of the name was not precisely the fact that the region was the biggest banana producer of the world from the end of the 19th century, but because of both the overwhelming political and economic power of the 'Banana men' in the region and the corruption of the 'comprador' elites and political representatives that, in general terms, were disposed to accept different forms of payment and bribery from the Banana men to favour their interests. It wasn't in vain that one of the salient founders of the Banana empire in Honduras, Sam Zemurray, used to say that '... the Honduran deputies³⁷ were cheaper than mules' (Ramírez, 2004).

The U.S. penetration and control of the Central American economy was an outcome of two intertwined but differentiated processes:³⁸

- 1) First, the U.S. internal economic expansion that led to the exportation of both capital (through investments in foreign countries) and entrepreneurs at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. During this period U.S. entrepreneurs penetrated the most strategic areas and sectors of the regional economy, including transport (particularly railways), cash-crop production and the financial sector. As was pointed out in the previous point, the most important new crop was bananas.
- 2) Second, the reforms promoted by the Liberal Governments to facilitate coffee's expansion in most of the Central American countries (Pérez Brignoli, 1985; Langley and Schoonover, 1995: 11-32; Viales, 2001a).

³⁷ Members of parliaments.

³⁸ The Liberal inner transformation started earlier than the U.S. expansion in the region.

After the first wave of privatisations related to coffee expansion, a second wave of land privatisation and inner colonisation was provoked by the construction of railroads to the Caribbean and the Pacific coasts to make coffee's exportation to Europe faster and easier, seeking to reduce the production and circulation costs.³⁹ The opening up of the Caribbean lowlands was soon interwoven with banana production and exportation mainly to the United States (in the Costa Rican case also to England). The banana expansion consolidated a third wave of land privatisation and accumulation by dispossession in the Pacific and on a bigger scale in the Caribbean lowlands of the region. The importance of banana's consolidation as an export-product was not only related to the income that it generated but also to the political and economic transformations that its production introduced in the geography of the region. Although its production in the Caribbean areas of the region started in the 1870s, the concentration of production and the commercialisation of the process, as well as its massive expansion, started at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century with the creation of the big transnational companies: the United Fruit Company, the Cuyamel Company (mainly in Honduras), and the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company. In 1929 the two former companies merged and together with the latter had a monopolic control of the banana activity not only in Central America, but in the whole Caribbean Basin.

To give an idea of the level of land concentration, it should be pointed out that in the case of Honduras the main banana companies' holdings in 1918 amounted to one million acres of the most fertile land of the country. This concentration was done to the detriment of the peasantry that totally lost access to their nation's good soil. It is not a coincidence that Honduras was the first country of Central America that became known as a 'Banana Republic' (Lafeber, 1993: 45-46). In Costa Rica between 1920 and 1935, The River Plate -a British trust- was the owner of approximately 86,000 hectares in both the Pacific and the Caribbean lowlands, and the banana producer United Fruit Company (UFCO) and the Northern Railway Co. had more that 115,000 hectares in the Caribbean province of Limón and 25,000 hectares in Quepos-Parrita in the Pacific province of Puntarenas. In synthesis, the Liberal reforms that started decades before were very functional for the United States

³⁹ Paraphrasing Marx, Harvey points out that: 'The capitalist mode of production promotes the production of cheap and rapid forms of communication and transportation in order that 'the direct product can be realized in distant markets in mass quantities' at the same time as new 'spheres of realization for labour, driven by capital' can be opened up. The reduction in realization and circulation costs helps to create, therefore, fresh room for capital accumulation. Put the other way around, capital accumulation is bound to be geographically expansionary and to be so by progressive reductions in the costs of communication and transportation'. (Harvey, 2001: 244)

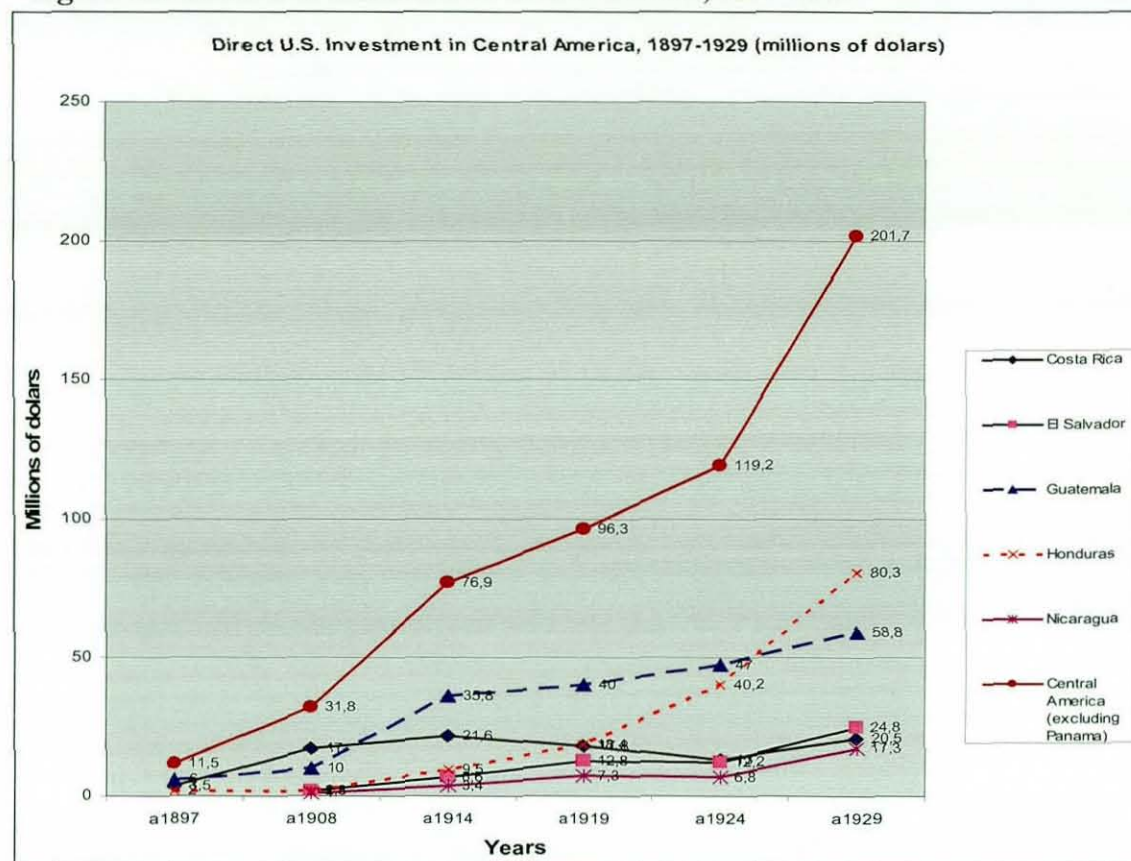
economic expansion into the Caribbean and the isthmus and the banana plantations were the best expression of it.

Apart from the expansion of land privatisation, the banana expansion introduced other major changes to the region, of which the expansion of the enclave economy was the principal one (Torres-Rivas, 1993: 14). In relation to this period and the growing importance of enclave economies in the region, Langley and Schoonover points out that

'Foreigners took advantage of the new liberalized laws to build isolated centres of extraction, exploitation, and production, which are commonly called enclaves... In the 1880s Costa Rica had enclaves for bananas, Honduras for mining, and Guatemala for coffee. The banana and mining enclaves (located mostly near the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica and Honduras, where governmental authority had traditionally been weak) came under extensive foreign control.' (Langley and Schoonover, 2000: 14).

From the end of the 19th century and parallel to the U.S.' geopolitical domination over the region there was a rapid economic penetration (Langley and Schoonover, 2000). As it is possible to observe in Figure 4.5 the U.S.' economic importance in the region was reflected in their direct investment in the region. Total US investment increased from \$11.5 million in 1897 to \$201 million in 1927, an impressive growth of more than 1700% in three decades or an annual rate average of more than 50% in that period. This process transformed the economic structure of the region and reinforced a dependent reinsertion of Central America into the world economy (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Direct U.S. Investment in Central America, 1897-1929.



Source: Torres-Rivas, 1993: 49.

The countries with the biggest U.S. direct investments were Honduras (where US investment increased from less than \$10 million in 1897 to \$80.3 millions dollars by 1929), and Guatemala (from less than \$10 millions to \$58.8 millions in 1927). The massiveness of the banana expansion in both countries explained the impressive growth of U.S. investments. Nicaragua was more important in geopolitical and military than in economic terms, the small El Salvador was more oriented to coffee production, a cash crop that never was under the U.S. shadow. In Costa Rica coffee production was penetrated by British capital from the first half of the 19th century, particularly in the toasting and commercialisation realms, but in the case of bananas the expansion was driven by U.S. capital. With the passing of time, the growing influence of the U.S.' economic presence was accompanied by the weakening of the old linkages with other metropolises such as Great Britain and Germany. As a general trend, U.S. enterprises and investments, as well as their transnational linkages, networks and flows were hegemonic in Central America at the beginning of the 1930s.

Figure 4.6: Banana producing areas of Central America, 1885-1950.



Source: Hall and Brignoli, 2003

In summary, the internal expansion of the U.S. economy created a pressure to export capital through direct foreign investment and also individual entrepreneurs. Central America was one of the recipient regions. There, U.S. investors took advantage of the Liberal reforms to penetrate the most strategic areas of the regional economy, as well as to develop new ones. The most salient of the new products was the banana that was massively developed in the Caribbean lowlands (Figure 4.6). A new mode of production accompanied the expansion of the banana production: the economic enclave. By the 1930s Central America was a 'Banana Republic' but also a transnational social space under U.S. hegemony in geopolitical and economic terms.

The consolidation in this period of an export oriented economic pattern with coffee production in the Pacific and Banana in the Caribbean increased the level of dependency between Central America and the World Economy. The linkages that produced a dependent insertion of the region were not abstract but developed via connections to specific metropolises or core states. By the beginning of the 20th century the main linkages

were with the United States. The uneven and asymmetrical transnational integration with this country was an outcome of different mechanisms, including the growing penetration of U.S. investments in those sectors oriented to exportation, particularly banana and mining; and the control of other strategic sectors such as the financial sector, transport (mainly railways) and an unbalanced trade exchange. The predominant pattern of this 'agrarian capitalism' which lasted until the mid 1940s reproduced a dual dynamic in which economic growth and wealth were concentrated into the hands of the comprador elites and foreign enterprises that controlled the export sector. In the long run, this feature greatly contributed to economic polarisation, social exclusion and massive poverty in the region (Pérez Brignoli, 1985).

4.1.4 Migration trends during the consolidation of Central America as part of a US transnational social space

In relation to the regional migration, there are some significant elements to highlight in this period. In fact, the political and economic changes mentioned above created human displacements and dynamics that are important for the purposes of this research in two senses: first, because some of the structural elements established at that time were going to last until present days. Second, because the analysis of the interaction between social change and migration could bring some useful insights for the study of current migration dynamics in Central America.

In previous sections relative population scarcity was discussed in some detail. In Figure 4.7 it is possible to observe the demography of the region in terms of total population and population density. In the period between 1900 and 1930, with the exception of El Salvador (44.8 and 68.3 persons per square kilometres), the rest of the countries were indeed scarcely populated (Guatemala with less than 20 and the rest with less than 10 persons per square kilometre).

Figure 4.7: Central America. Population and Population density in 1900 and 1930.

	Total Area (Km ²)	1900		1930	
		Total Popul. (millions)	Population Density (Pop/ Km ²)	Total Popul. (millions)	Population Density (Pop/ Km ²)
Guatemala	108,889	1.430,000	13.1	2,000,000	18.4
El Salvador	21,041	943,000	44.8	1,437,000	68.3
Honduras	112,088	500,000	4.5	840,000	7.5
Nicaragua	130,000	429,000	3.3	680,000	5.2
Costa Rica	50,700	288,000	5.7	500,000	9.8

Source: Hall and Pérez Brignoli, 2003.

In relation to the labour migration in that period, coffee's expansion between 1850 and 1900 did not require international immigration. In fact, the Liberal immigration policy of that period sought to attract Western/white settlers for the colonisation of the 'empty spaces'⁴⁰ although this did not succeed, mainly because of the strong competition of more attractive countries in the American continent, particularly the United States in the North and Argentina and Uruguay in the South. As is pointed out by Hall and Pérez Brignoli:

'...Numerous contracts were signed with private entrepreneurs for the introduction of foreign settlers. Racial discrimination officially ended with independence, but underlying prejudices persisted, and most of the early contracts were for the immigration of Europeans whom it was hoped would further "whiten" the population and introduce new technology. Guatemala and Costa Rica granted tens of thousands of hectares of *tierras baldías* for the establishment of European colonies...' (2003: 94)

The Liberal elites were interested in populating the 'empty' areas for two main reasons: on the one hand, to increase their territorial control and, on the other hand, to spread progress and modernisation in their respective countries, particularly if the immigration was from 'civilised' origin, namely U.S. or European settlers. In those days, much like in present ones, the power elites perceived western foreign investment and immigration as almost the only source of progress and development. In contrast to their small numbers, the political and economic weight of the small group of western settlers was very significant. In a relative short period, the newcomers were managing, controlling and expanding important economic businesses such as finance and banking, transportation (ships and railways), commerce and trade (particularly important in coffee), and the production of export-oriented cash crops (banana). In relation to the real outcome of the immigration policies of the Central American countries in the Liberal epoch, Woodward mentions that

⁴⁰ They were not empty, but populated by the indigenous population.

'Although foreigners played key roles in the Liberals' program of reconstructing and revitalising the Central American economy, few outsiders were brought to the isthmus as immigrants. As in the early years of independence, the intent of the Liberal immigration laws of the last third of the nineteenth century was to interest and attract large numbers of industrious foreigners to come and join in the agricultural and industrial development. These laws, intended to lure a large, exemplary working class, resulted instead in the entry of a small but experienced class of entrepreneurs who took advantage of the Liberals' laws to create an arrogant class of merchants and planters who determined the direction of the Central American economy for several decades.' (1999: 165)

In relation to the manpower for coffee production, it was supplied by the internal population. Thus, there was no need to import labour force from neighbouring countries or from extra-regional countries. Most of the human displacements were produced by the dispossession of the peasantry and indigenous population who were transformed into a rural proletariat and semi-proletariat by enforcing them to enter into both seasonal and permanent wage system (Woodward, 1999: 169; Viales, 2001a). This situation changed with the construction of the railroads and the establishment of the banana enclaves. During the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, indentured labourers from China arrived in the Pacific ports of Costa Rica to work in the railroads and in Panama, to work in the canal (Hall and Pérez Brignoli, 2003: 94).

In the case of bananas, there were differences between the countries. Thus, Guatemala did not import labour because they could mobilise enough indigenous and mestizo manpower to the banana enclaves. El Salvador did not develop banana plantations itself but after 1920 became a labour supplier country mainly to Honduras, a trend which was going to be a conflictive factor in the future of these two neighbour countries. In the Honduran case between 1910 and 1930, apart from the Salvadoran immigration, the transnational companies brought in labour from the Anglo-Caribbean Antilles (mainly Jamaica and Barbados). Nicaragua did not receive major labour immigration, but as with El Salvador, it began to send labour to Costa Rica, mainly to work in the banana enclaves. Most of the emigrants were from Rivas, the Nicaraguan Department that shares the border with Costa Rica. This country also received black labour immigrants from the Antilles from the 1880s until the 1930s. In this case, like in Honduras, they were brought to Costa Rica by the banana companies. For the Costa Rican ruling elite, to receive black workers instead of western/white settlers was not something that was easy to cope with. In fact, they only accepted the arrival of Afro-Caribbean workers because of the political and economic influence of the United Fruit Company in the country. As is pointed out by Stirton:

'In keeping with the enclave character of activity, the labour force for the banana plantations was recruited from abroad, consisting primarily of workers of African descent from the Anglophone Caribbean. The Costa Rican Government was not enthusiastic about this new population. Although the government continued to promote immigration to reduce labour shortages and high labour costs, earlier Costa Rican governments had explicitly prohibited immigration by Asians and Africans. In this case, however, they allowed the immigration of United Fruit Company workers but discouraged them from moving to or even travelling in the highlands.' (1994)

However, the dominant sectors would only allow the Afro-Caribbean immigrants to move out from *Limón*, the Caribbean province, in the aftermath of the civil war in 1948 (Foote, 2004). The Nicaraguan and Caribbean immigration into Costa Rica was reflected in the demography of the country. In the National Census of 1927 of a total population of 471,524 the Jamaican immigrants were the biggest group of foreign population, with a total amount of 17,248 (3.7% of the total population and 38.9% of the immigrants). The next biggest group of immigrants was constituted by the Nicaraguans, with a total amount of 10,673 (2.3% of the total population and 24.1% of the immigrants) (Brenes, 1999).

The immigration of thousands of wage workers from Jamaica and the other Antilles transformed the Caribbean physiognomy of Central America not only in economic but also in cultural terms (Pérez Brignolli, 1985: 112; Sandner, 2003). In current days, the Afro-Caribbean descendents of these immigrants are a fundamental element of Central America's cultural diversity and, together with the indigenous population, one of the most important sources of the cultural richness of the region. The migration trends discussed here are shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Central American International Immigration. 1880s-1940s.



Source: Hall and Pérez Brignolli, 2003: 95.

There were no significant changes in these migration dynamics until the beginning of the 1950s when Central America began a process of economic 'modernisation' that created important changes in relation to human displacements. These are analysed in the next chapter.

4.2 Some corollaries in form of conclusion

The present chapter set out to explain the origin of the production of Central America as a transnational social space under U.S. hegemony at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. As was pointed out, this was a process that involved, not only the isthmian countries, but the whole Caribbean Basin. The transnationalisation of this space was a result of the military, political and economic policies and actions of the US under the cultural premise of an 'Anglo' superiority, well represented by the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and the Roosevelt corollary (1904). The creation of this transnational social space in the region was accompanied by a deep process of economic and social transformation including U.S. military interventions, the nurturing and support of friendly dictators and

governments, massive land privatisations in favour of U.S. enterprises (particularly for railroads and bananas) and the development of the enclave economy that was very significant in Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala (but less so in Nicaragua). This particular transnationalisation strengthened the level of dependency of the Central American states upon the new metropole and reinforced their role in the international division of labour as raw material producers.

As part of this process of transnationalisation there were also new migration dynamics related to both new and old export-oriented economic activities. The development of railroads and the expansion of new export crops (such as bananas) whilst maintaining and expanding coffee production, required more manpower that could be supplied from the original population. This need was met through inflows of Afro-Caribbean workers from the Caribbean Antilles (Jamaica and Barbados) to Honduras and Costa Rica and via new intra-regional labour migration dynamics, including the mobilisation of workers from El Salvador to Honduras and Nicaragua to Costa Rica. These mobilizations were mainly organised by the compañías bananeras.

Although the Central American countries belonged to the same transnational social space, they had different relations with the hegemonic power and different internal social and economic arrangements that can help to explain the different trajectories that these countries have had throughout the 20th century. Some of the elements that were present in those days became structural features of most of the countries of Central America and could contribute to explain some of the contemporary dynamics of the region. One of the main factors was the extreme social polarisation produced by the land privatisation in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and, to a lesser degree, Nicaragua. In the one exception to this was Costa Rica, where land privatisation partially created a significant group of small and middle sized producers engaged in the production of coffee. Labour shortages in Costa Rica had created a particular situation in which labour conditions were less exploitative and the wages were higher in comparison to the rest of the Central American countries. These factors help to explain why, after the introduction of bananas, Costa Rica required labour immigration to expand production. For the purpose of this thesis in particular, it is important to highlight, therefore, the configuration of a labour migration dynamic between Nicaragua and Costa Rica as early as the beginning of the 20th century.

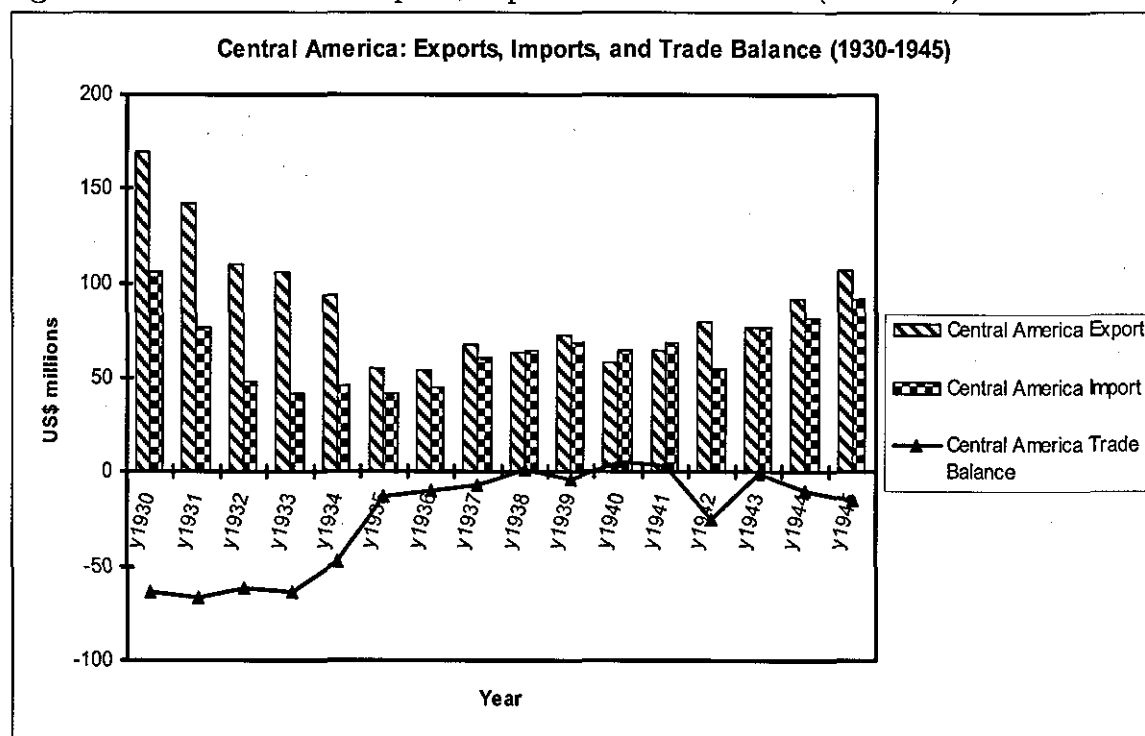
In the case of Nicaragua, from this period its role was going to be of great strategic importance for U.S. geopolitics in the Caribbean Basin. As a consequence, the 'weight' of the new hegemonic power in the internal life of Nicaragua was going to be much more significant than for the rest of the Central American countries. This permanent U.S. tutelage implied the interruption of any social or economic reform or revolutionary process that did not count upon U.S. approval (Zelaya Liberal reforms, 1909; Sandinista Revolution, 1979-1990), the support of a long-term dynastic dictatorship (Somoza Dynasty, 1936-1979) and the maintenance of an unjust social order with a deep social polarisation and massive land concentration. This helps to explain why the biggest and most unpopulated country of the region actually created a relative surplus population and saw labour emigration to Costa Rica as early as the beginning of the 20th century.

CHAPTER 5: MODERNISATION, MARGINALISATION, AND MIGRATION TRENDS IN CENTRAL AMERICA (1950-1980)

The previous chapter explained the establishment and consolidation of a transnational social space in Central America under U.S. hegemony between 1900 and the 1930s. This space was not only economic, but also geopolitical. It also explained the configuration of the main migration dynamics in that period for both the region in general, and between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in particular. In the 1930s and until the end of the 1940s the region witnessed a three-fold process: i. a consolidation of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships in most of the countries of the region⁴¹ except Costa Rica (Fonseca, 1996: 205-207), ii. a slowdown in economic growth, and iii. a period of social unrest in most of the countries.

The socio-economic crisis was caused by a combination of factors but the main one was the decline in the prices of the region's main export crops prices in the international markets. In the case of coffee this was due to a massive increase in coffee production in Brazil and other Latin American countries, whilst in the case of bananas the decline was caused by the demand contraction caused by the US economic crisis that occurred in the 1920s. At the moment of the U.S. depression of 1929, the Central American economies were extremely dependent and hence vulnerable to the fluctuations of the U.S. market, which was reflected in reductions of both exports to and imports from Central America to the United States in those years (Fonseca, 1996: 204-205). In 1932 Costa Rican exports of bananas and coffee reached their lowest level and they did not recover to 1929 levels again until 1945. In the general Central America case, coffee prices did not recover to their 1929 level until 1946 (Torres-Rivas, 1980: 154-5). Another factor that deepened the economic crisis was a trade exchange decrease with Europe during the World War (Sandner, 2003: 200). As can be observed from Figure 5.1, as a consequence of those factors, this period witnessed a general decrease in the level of international trade.

⁴¹ Jorge Ubico in Guatemala (1921-44); Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador (1932-44); Tiburcio Carías Andino in Honduras (1931-49); and Anastasio Somoza García in Nicaragua (1937-56).

Figure 5.1: Central America Exports, Imports and Trade Balance (1930-1945).

Source: Torres-Rivas, 1980: 72

The economic crisis invoked a period of social unrest with increasing military repression of grassroots organisations across Central America.

In terms of the migration dynamics in the region, the reduction in economic activity linked to the export sector reduced both the size and the intensity of the human displacements in the region, a trend that would change only with the new period of economic growth in the mid-1940s (Pérez Brignoli, 1985; Hall and Pérez Brignoli, 2003).

5.1 The beginning of the Cold War Era in Central America

The end of WW II configured a new global geopolitical order known as the 'Cold War'. As Slater points out, there were three salient features of this order:

- a) the emergence of the US as the leader of the Western world, as the pre-eminent hegemonic power;
- b) the eruption onto the world stage of the Soviet Union, as an opposing superpower, signalling the beginning of a superpower rivalry that came to mould world politics for a little over four decades; and
- c) the emergence of a whole series of new Third World nations, emanating from the process of decolonisation and political independence in Africa and Asia... (Slater, 2004: 64-65).

This stage started in 1946 and finished in 1990 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bloc of socialist countries in Centre Europe. Mutatis mutandis in Central America the Cold War was over after the electoral defeat of the FSLN in Nicaragua in January of 1990.

In relation to migration dynamics during the Cold War era, two main periods can be pointed out, the first lasting from the beginning of the 1950s until mid-1970s and the second, from the end of the 1970s until 1990. These periods are analysed in the next two sections.

5.1.1 U.S. Geopolitics towards Central America during the period 1950-1975

After World War II a new global order – the ‘Cold War’- was established. This geopolitical order lasted from 1946 until 1989 (Taylor, 1994: 35) and was characterised by an ideological, military, economic and technological confrontation between two blocs of countries, namely the capitalist bloc or the ‘Free World’ headed by the United States, and the ‘Communist Bloc’ headed by the Soviet Union (USSR). This confrontation was progressively spread throughout the whole planet and was perceived by the two contending powers as a sort of ‘global chess’ (Comblin, 1988: 17). However, there was also a third bloc of nations, mainly composed of recently decolonised Third World countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, but also of countries that had gone through processes of revolutionary change, like China (1948) and Cuba (1959), that were starting to act beyond the great powers’ geopolitical designs, will and desires (Slater, 2004: 64-65).

After W.W.II there was a significant change in the U.S.’ geopolitical and ideological conceptualisation of their National Security doctrine, including a change in what they considered as their main threat, namely the potential expansion of the Soviet Union into Europe and the Third World. As pointed out by Slater, President Truman conceived of the Cold War as a confrontation between two ways of life: the one promoted by the U.S. that was seen as based on the will of the majority and distinguished by freedom, representative government and guarantees of individual liberty, and the other, imposed by the U.S.S.R., was perceived as based on the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority, and dependent upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, and the suppression of personal freedoms (Slater, 2004: 65). In relation to U.S. Foreign-Policy towards the Third World, there were two important elements drawn at the beginning of the Cold War by President Truman at the end of the 1940s: first, the need to confront poverty as a

handicap and as a threat to both the undeveloped and prosperous areas of the world; and second, the need to confront communism (Slater, 2004: 65-66).

During the Cold War, Central America was part of the geopolitical design and action of one of the two great powers. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, this region was transformed into the U.S.' backyard in the first decades of the 20th century and the hegemonic power was not eager to accept any political and economic change that might lead to a transformation in that condition. This fact helps to explain the permanent surveillance and direct intervention of the U.S. within their 'informal' protectorates. In fact, the U.S. geopolitical discourse of freedom and democracy, contrasted with the U.S. political, economic and military support to dictatorships and authoritarian regimes in most of the Central American countries, with the exception of Costa Rica. In fact, most of the armies and national guards were trained by U.S. troops. Hence, it is not a coincidence that the Central American military leadership and dictators took the U.S. strategic perspective as theirs and developed their own version of the National Security doctrine, oriented against the 'inner enemy'. This was the Latin American version of the ongoing U.S. global anti-communist crusade. In this context, the U.S. geopolitical interest in the region was an insurmountable obstacle for those political agents and actors that were intending to promote social change and political democratic processes.

Any democratic reform between the 1950s and 1960s was cut down by the oligarchic elite and the military forces with the support of the U.S. government and their economic agents in the region. A clear example of this contradiction between rhetoric and practice was the case of the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz (1951-54) in Guatemala, who suffered a coup-de-etat because a key element of his governmental program was an agrarian reform that sought to challenge the dominant social order and its main beneficiaries, namely the traditional Guatemalan power elite and the transnational enterprises, including the United Fruit Company, the largest land-owner of the country (Torres-Rivas, 1991: 85). The Central American dictatorships were very repressive and in most cases political opposition was banned, persecuted, imprisoned or even disappeared. Human rights violations were a daily occurrence of life.

U.S. foreign policy towards Latin American and the Caribbean went through some changes after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 which soon became a source of

inspiration for many revolutionaries and national liberation movements in the region. The potential expansion of the 'threat' represented by the Cuban experience was a determinant factor in the articulation of a very ambitious foreign policy proposal for the region, namely the Kennedy Administration's 'Alliance for Progress.'. In basic terms, this proposal added a modernising and developmentalist component to the existing military one. Following the new line, most of Central America's military governments attempted to make some modernisation efforts in the economic realm (Sohr, 1988: 19). However, the reforms were less ambitious in the political realm and they did not include any sort of attempt to change dictatorships into democratic regimes. At the end of the day, the main outcomes were the solidification of a regional authoritarian order and an increase in the levels of social protest, including the eruption of guerrilla movements in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua (Sohr, 1988: 20; Cortés Ramos, 2003: 34).

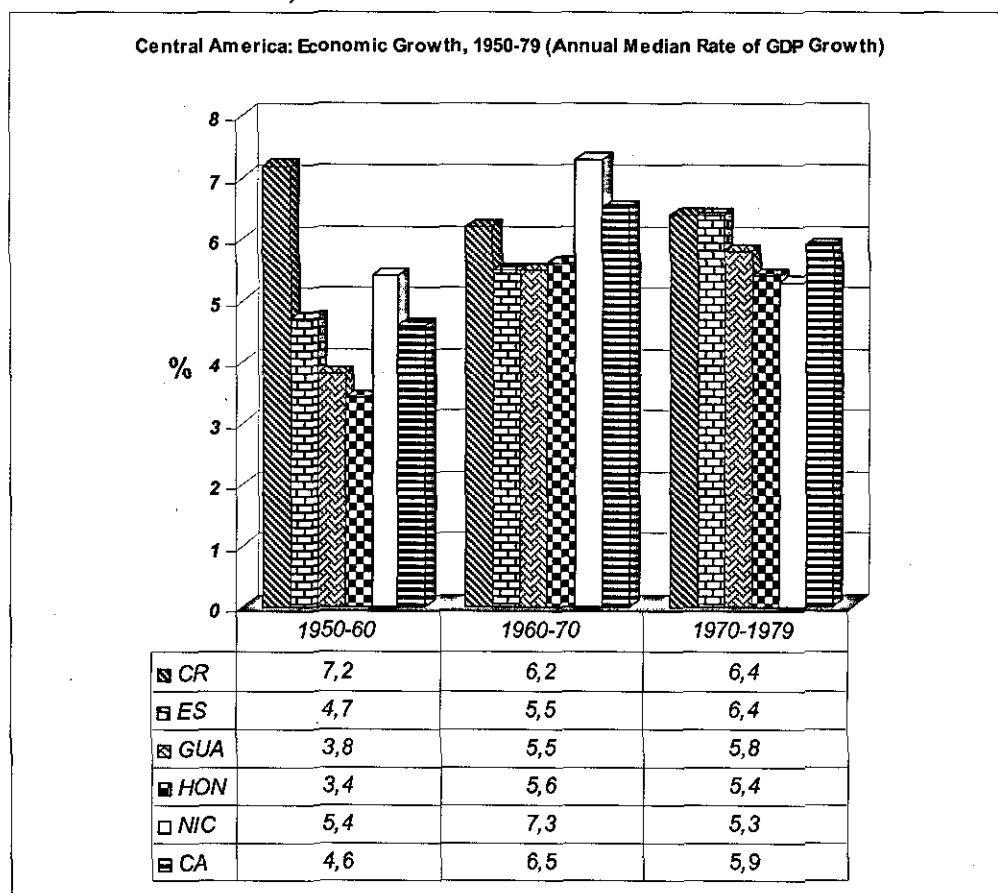
5.2 Impoverishing economic modernisation, population growth and migration dynamics in Central America (1950-1975)

In the economic realm, after W.W. II and particularly since the beginning of the 1950s the Western World started an impressive long cycle of economic expansion that lasted for almost three decades. This was largely the result of European and Japanese reconstruction under US hegemony. This global recovery was reflected almost immediately in Central America with a process of economic recovery, takeoff, and expansion that started in the mid 1940s and lasted up to mid 1970s. As Vilas describes this process (see Figure 5.2):

"Stimuli from abroad, generated by changes in the world economy, found fertile soil in the economies and societies of the isthmus, permitting very rapid responses to the new terms of the accumulation process." (Vilas, 1995: 41)

Although there was economic expansion and growth, this did not produce a process of structural transformation oriented towards overcoming the historical dependency and underdevelopment that has long characterised the region, neither was the oligarchic social structure inherited from the colonial times transformed. This economic growth was ill-founded: it was the result of the reproduction of social polarisation (concentration of wealth and social exclusion in the extremes) and massive urban and rural poverty (Bulmer Thomas, 1994: 139).

Figure 5.2: Central America, Economic Growth, 1950-79 (Annual Median Rate of GDP Growth).



Source: Vilas, 1995: 63.

As it is possible to verify from Figure 5.2, the region achieved solid economic growth that lasted for almost three decades with a general average of 5.7%. In terms of countries, the two with the highest levels of growth were Costa Rica (6.6%) and Nicaragua (6.0%). There is a wide consensus among scholars that this growth resulted from a twofold process of economic reforms, on the one hand, the capitalist modernisation and diversification of the agrarian structure and, on the other hand, the development of an import substitution industrialisation strategy with the creation of the Central American Common Market (CACM) at the beginning of the 1960s (Guerra-Borges, 1993: 13-56; Vilas, 1995: 42-46; Torres-Rivas, 1991: 89-106). Both dynamics reinserted Central America in the process of global economic expansion.

In relation to the aims of this thesis, the process of social change that requires most attention is the transformation in the agricultural sector. The main features of rural transformation during this period were threefold: first, the geographical expansion of

export-oriented crops, including both traditional crops such as coffee and bananas, and new crops such as sugar cane and cotton. Second, the introduction of more resistant species⁴², new production techniques⁴³, intense use of pesticides and fertilizers, and mechanisation of some crops, particularly cotton; and, third, a significant expansion in cattle raising, mainly for beef exports to the US as a direct consequence of the hamburger market boom, named the 'hamburger connection' by Myers and Edelman (Pérez Brignoli, 1985: 144; Vilas, 1995: 43-44). The cattle production implied a massive geographical expansion of pasture land that carried large social and environmental impacts, including social exclusion, deforestation and land degradation (Utting, 1996; Pasos *et al*, 1994), factors that triggered internal human displacements, particularly of Central America's rural population to the major urban areas and cities.

A key factor that helps to explain these new economic dynamics was the transformation of the region's financial sector or what Guerra-Borges terms financial modernisation, characterised by the expansion of intermediary mechanisms and the introduction of a developmentalist orientation in to the banking systems of the region. In fact, there was a significant increase in the number of banks and the consolidation of central banks in most of the countries. These changes were stimulated by the need for capital surplus reallocation created by the expansion of the traditional and new economic activities. To give an idea of the magnitude of the financial transformation, the Central American central banks' activities grew from a total of US\$ 339.0 million in 1960 to US\$ 636.0 million in 1970 (Guerra-Borges, 1993: 41-47). This transformation helps to explain why both initial capital and investment for the Central American economic takeoff were mainly domestic and also explains why the public financial sector played a prominent role, as is pointed out by Vilas:

"This accelerated diversification was carried out primarily by domestic capital. Foreign capital that participated did so mainly outside the sphere of primary production: banks, input supply, and marketing. The state took an active role by building infrastructure (roads, electrical energy, communications; offering bank credit and subsidies to companies for new products; writing pro-development tax policies; and encouraging mechanisation and technological research." (Vilas, 1995: 43)

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.4 shows the significant credit expansion for agriculture and cattle industries in each country and for the region as a whole; in all countries credit allocation

⁴² For example, the transnational banana companies changed the *Gros Michel* species to the *Cavendish* species, more resistant to plagues (Pérez Brignoli, 1986: 144).

⁴³ For example, an increase in tree number by hectare and the cutting down of shade trees, measures that would have a terrible impact on the environment decades later.

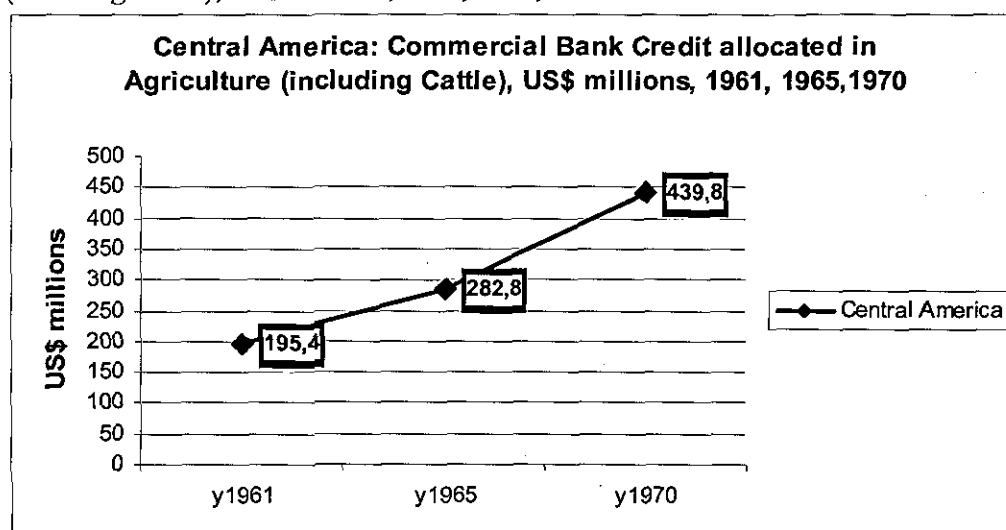
grew in relative and absolute terms: in regional terms it more than doubled in less than a decade.

Figure 5.3: Commercial Bank Credit destined for Agriculture (including cattle) in US\$ millions, 1961, 1965, 1970. The data in brackets is the percentage in relation to total credit.

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
1961	67,8 (56.2%)	32,5 (26%)	52,9 (47.9%)	7,3 (20.0%)	34,9 (62.0%)
1965	95,1 (53.8%)	47,1 (28.3%)	63,4 (40.2%)	20,0 (31.3%)	57,2 (55.7%)
1970	144,0 (57.1%)	59,1 (26.7%)	84,2 (36.3%)	53,1 (31.6%)	99,4 (60.2%)

Source: Bulmer-Thomas, 1994: 246.

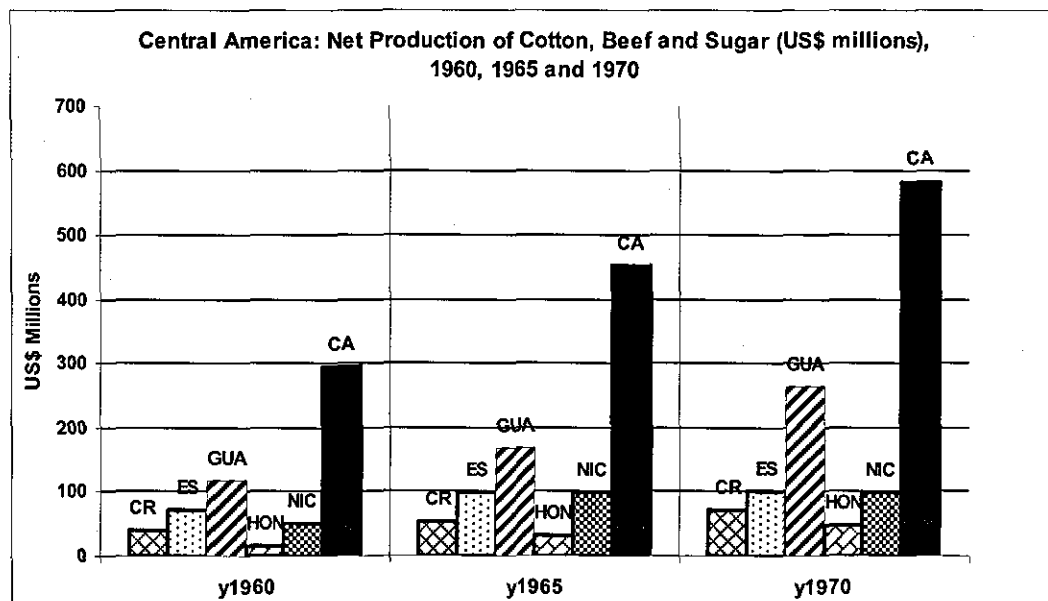
Figure 5.4: Central America, Commercial Bank Credit allocated to Agriculture (including Cattle), US\$ Millions, 1961, 1965, 1970.



Source: Bulmer-Thomas, 1994: 246.

There was an important correlation between credit allocation growth in export-oriented activities and their expanded yields for those years, as can be observed in Figure 5.5:

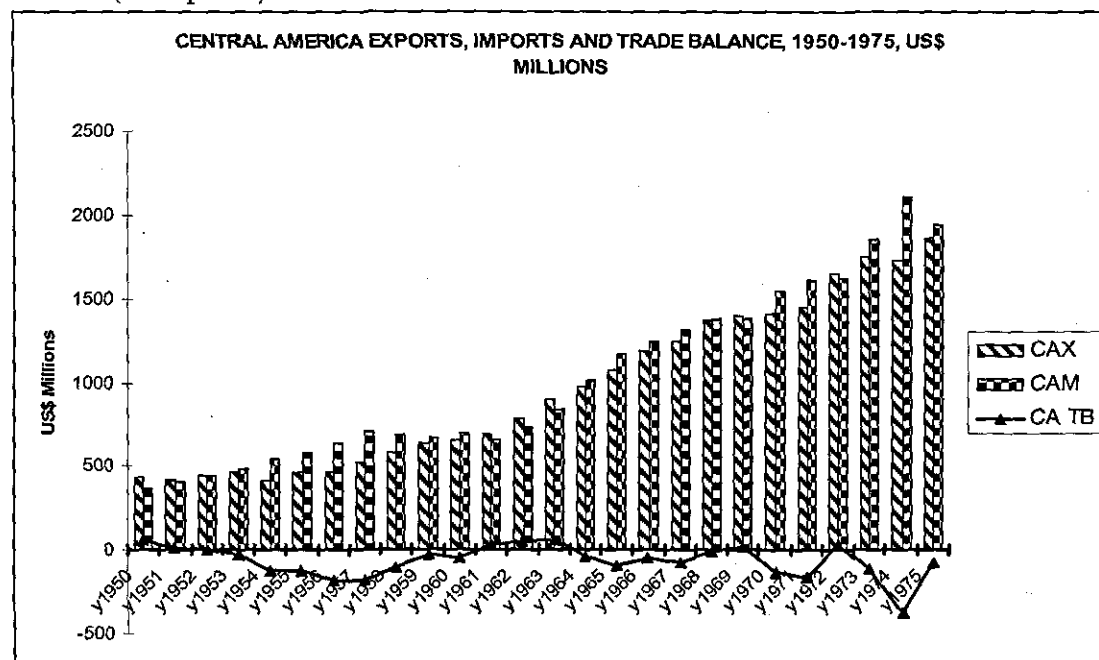
Figure 5.5: Central American Net Production of Cotton, Beef, and Sugar; US\$ millions; 1960, 1965, 1970.



Source: Bulmer Thomas, 1994: 247.

In fact, the new non-traditional exports (namely cotton, cattle and sugar) net yields almost doubled in ten years, passing from US\$ 295.2 million in 1960 to US\$ 583.9 million in 1970. However, the accelerated pace of economic growth was not exclusively due to the performance of these new export crops but was a general trend of the regional economy. In fact, during the period 1950-75 regional GDP more than tripled (353.8%) from US\$ 2,255.7 million in 1950 to US\$ 7,981.4 million in 1975 which gives an idea of the significant transformations occurring in the region during this period. Figure 5.6 points out an important structural feature of the international linkages of the period, the fact that throughout most of the period the region was in overall trade deficit, a sign of the dependent character of Central America's insertion in the World Economy.

Figure 5.6: Central America Exports, Imports and Trade Balance, 1950-1975, US\$ Millions (1970 prices).



Source: Bulmer Thomas, 1994: 433-435.

This profound transformation process counted upon an active role for the state by means of aggressive public policies in building infrastructure (roads, electric energy supply and communications), but also through offering bank credit, subsidies and favourable tax policies to export sector enterprises; that is why this period is characterised as *developmentalist*. From a geographical perspective, social and economic changes have a significant impact on the organisation of social and territorial space modifying social relations and land use patterns, as well as land property structure. In fact, a direct outcome of this *developmentalist* process was a massive geographical expansion of cultivated land for export-oriented crops as well as for cattle rearing, as is indicated by Figure 5.7. In general terms, from the 1950s to the 1970s export oriented crops expanded from the Pacific lowlands towards the central highlands across the whole region (see Figure 5.8 and CCAD, 1998: 42-44).

Figure 5.7: Central America: changes in land use between the 1950s and the 1970s.

Costa Rica	1) The land used for sugar cane doubled between 1950 and 1973, and production tripled. 2) The land under cattle doubled between 1950 and 1963 (from 630,000 to 1.2 million hectares); in 1973 it reached 1.7 million hectares, 34% of the nation's territory.
Guatemala	3) Lands planted in cotton grew tenfold between 1950 and 1963. 4) The area in sugar cane grew by a factor of twelve between 1967 and 1976. 5) The physical volume of beef exports grew eightfold during the 1960s.
Nicaragua	6) The land surface planted in cotton grew more than tenfold between 1950 and 1973. 7) Lands used for cattle raising doubled between 1960 and 1970.
El Salvador	8) Cotton farms, which numbered 654 in the 1950s, had multiplied to over 3,200 a decade later.

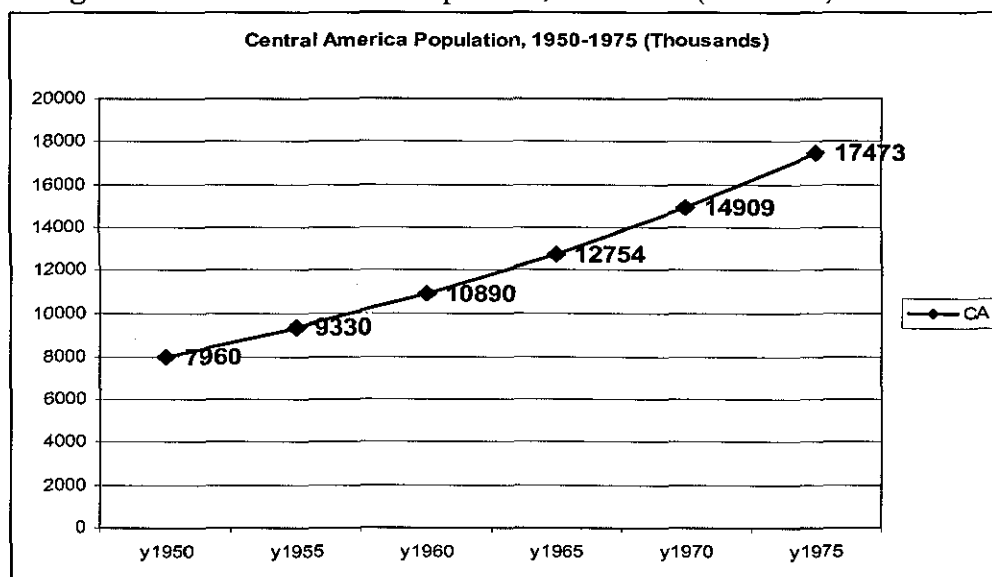
Source: Vilas, 1995:43-44.

Figure 5.8: Central America Cattle Raising Geographical Expansion, 1950-1990.

Country	1950	1960/1970
Costa Rica	Guanacaste Nicoya	Alajuela, Guanacaste, Pérez Zeledón
Guatemala	Escuintla Jutiapa	Santa Rosa, Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Izabal, Quiché, Petén, Zacapa
Honduras	Copán, Cortés, El Paraíso, Olancho, Santa Bárbara	Atlántida, Colón, Choluteca, El Paraíso, Olancho, Yoro
Nicaragua	Matagalpa, Nueva Segovia	Chontales, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Nueva Guinea, Río San Juan
Panamá	Coclé, Chiriquí, Herrera, Los Santos, Veraguas	Panamá, Colón

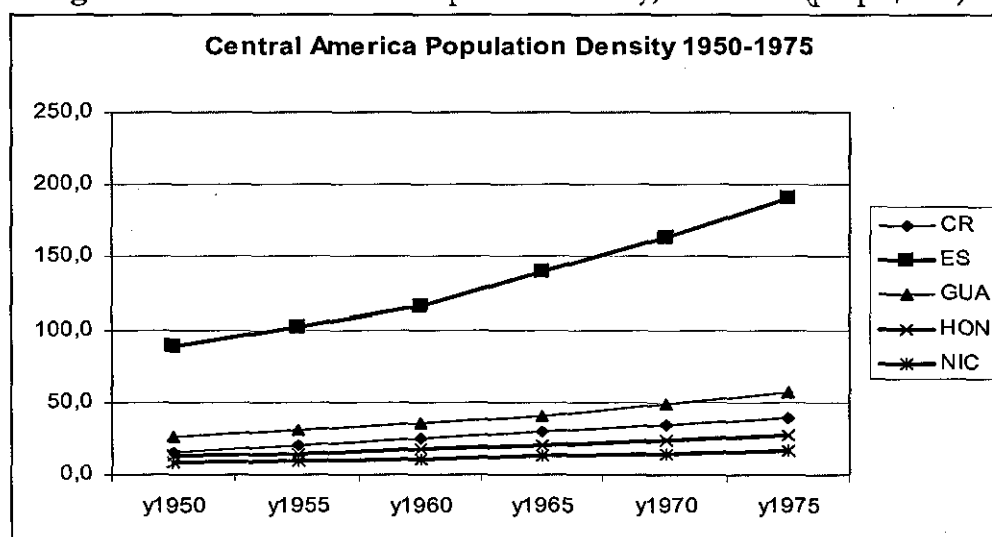
Source: Rodríguez, 1998: 43.

In parallel to all of these economic transformations, a very significant demographic change in the region also was occurring over the same period (1950-1975), namely very rapid population growth (Figure 5.9) that constituted a demographic *boom*. This trend, together with the economic changes already outlined, helps to explain the main human displacement and migration dynamics of the period.

Figure 5.9: Central America Population, 1950-1975 (thousands).

Source: Bulmer Thomas, 1994: 415, 416.

As can be observed from Figure 5.9, the Central American population more than doubled in this period with an overall growth of 119.5% in twenty five years and an average growth rate of 4.8%. The country with the fastest population growth was Costa Rica, with an average of 5.9% for the same period, passing from 800,000 inhabitants in 1950 to 1,970,000 inhabitants by 1975. In contrast, the country with the slowest pace of population growth was Nicaragua, with an annual average growth rate of 4.2%, passing from 1,060,000 inhabitants in 1950 to 2,160,000 inhabitants by 1975. As a consequence of this population boom, there was an increase in population density, particularly in the Salvadoran case which almost reached 200 inhabitants per square kilometre. However, contrary to the assumptions of orthodox demographic approaches, this level of regional population growth was far from creating an overpopulation situation. In fact, most of the countries' population densities were below 50 inhabitants per square kilometre, as is demonstrated in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10: Central America Population Density, 1950-1975 (people/km²)

Source: Bulmer Thomas, 1995: 415-416.

As was discussed in detail in Chapter 2, migration dynamics are not simple or linear functions of the relationship between population and natural resources, but a result of a more complex relationship: population - social relations - natural resources. Hence, to understand the human displacement dynamics that occurred in Central America during this period of intense economic, social and demographic transformations it is necessary to look at the changes in social relations as well. Pursuing this line of thought what is clear is that the agricultural modernisation discussed in the preceding pages did not modify the prevailing oligarquic property regime in the rural sector in most of the countries. On the contrary, it caused a new wave of accumulation by dispossession to the detriment of the peasantry and small and medium producers, as well as indigenous lands under collective ownership that were literally 'swallowed' by the oligarquic haciendas and transnational enclaves. Land concentration was the result of a creative destruction process that had three main outcomes. First, part of both the peasantry and the indigenous population were forcedly transformed into a sort of rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, creating the labour necessary for the modernisation of capitalist agriculture. Secondly, another part of the rural population was displaced to new regions of the agricultural frontier⁴⁴ provoking deforestation in the Pacific and central regions of Central America. Thirdly, an important part of the rural population was expelled towards the urban areas creating in a relatively

⁴⁴ *Frontera agrícola* in Spanish.

short period of time a great number of shantytowns and 'barrios marginales' or 'precarios' in all the capitals and important cities of the Central American region.

This process of dispossession was not peaceful but, on the contrary, was full of conflict and repression.⁴⁵ It is not a coincidence that it was precisely during this period when most of the liberation movements and guerrillas were born in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

In relation to the situation in specific countries, this transformation was most evident in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In fact, in the latter the land colonisation process (movement to the agricultural frontier) was finished as early as the beginning of the 20th century (Pérez Brignoli, 1985: 31). In the Costa Rican case the penetration and colonisation modes were different because they were not only driven by big land-owners or transnational enterprises, but also by small and medium rural producers and peasants, as well as by cooperatives.

5.2.1 Migration dynamics during the modernisation process (1950-1975)

During this period the migration dynamics were the outcome of three different but intertwined processes: first, the economic and technological transformation of the mode of production which now demanded less labour (CSUCA, 1978: 346-351); second, the land concentration process (accumulation by dispossession) that expelled the peasantry; and, third, the demographic boom in the whole region. These dynamics created a relative population surplus that was the foundation for an expelling population platform throughout the region. In schematic terms, for the period 1950-1975 the main migratory patterns were the following:

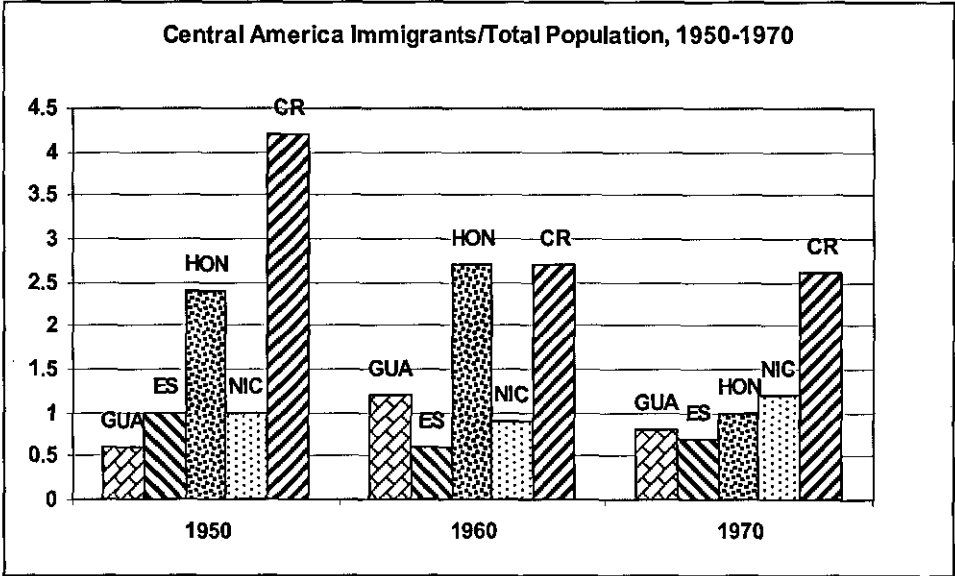
- Rural to Urban migration which created the shantytown in most of the Central American cities and capitals.
- Rural population displacement to new rural regions, in general terms this was towards primary forests that were cut down by this movement. The peasants cultivated basic grains for survival. As has been pointed out by some authors (Utting, 1996; Pasos *et al*, 1994), the peasants were dispossessed by the large land-owners, and then, when the peasantry had cut

⁴⁵ The violence and repression of this period was registered by the protest music and literature from Central America. Like the beautiful poem from Ernesto Cardenal: "*Las mujeres del Cuá*" and the music from Carlos Mejía Godoy y los de Palacagüina collected in the long play "*La Nueva Milpa*". It is not a coincidence that there is an expression in Central America which says that the best way to understand this societies is to read our literature.

down the forest, the landlords followed the peasant paths and forced them to sell on their lands again and to move on to new frontier lands. In spatial terms, this displacement was oriented from the Pacific side to the central regions in most of the countries. In the Guatemalan case, however, it was to the North and in the Costa Rican case, it was from the middle of the country to both the South Pacific and to the Caribbean region.

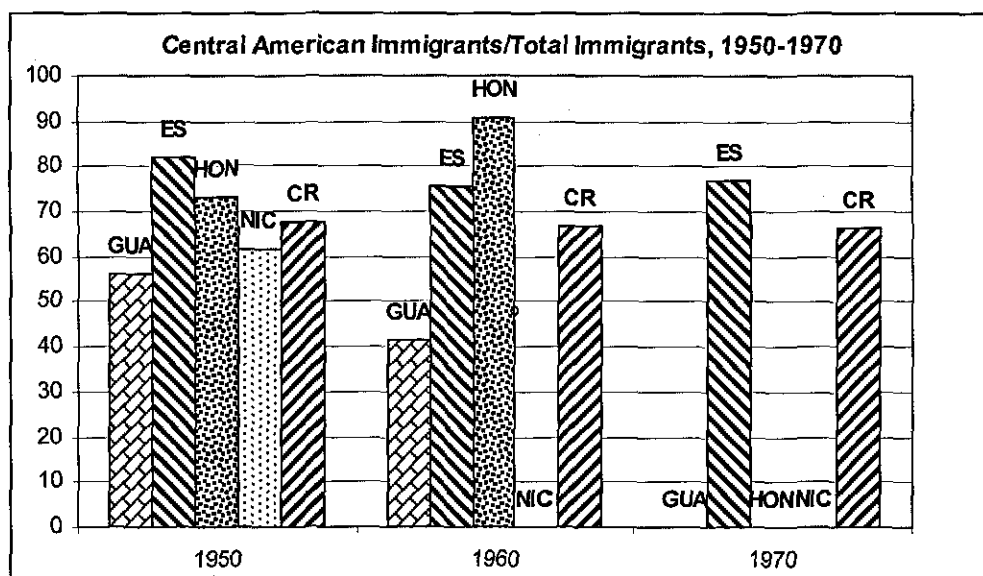
- In relation to intra-regional international migration, the main expelling country was El Salvador. The main causes were the combination of the relatively small size of the country, a relatively high population density and, above all, a very significant level of land concentration. In this period, El Salvador mainly expelled population to Belize and Honduras. In the latter case, the presence of Salvadoran immigrants was the main cause of the wrongly-named fútbol war between El Salvador and Honduras (Pérez Brignoli, 1989: 144; Sohr, 1988: 93; Woodward, 1999: 294). However, in general terms, the period 1950-1975 was one of relatively low intra-regional migration, as is shown in Figures 5.11 and 5.12.

Figure 5.11: Central American Immigrants in relation to Total Population, 1950-1970 (percent).



Source: CSUCA, 1978: 322.

Figure 5.12: Central American Immigrants in relation to Total Immigrants, 1950-1970.



Source: CSUCA, 1978: 323 (Percent). There is no data for Nicaragua 1960 and Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in 1970.

Figure 5.12 points out two important features of intra-regional migratory dynamics at this time: on the one hand, the fact that in quantitative terms the levels of immigration were not very significant (below 5% in all cases);⁴⁶ on the other hand, Honduras is the only country that shows a significant increase in the immigrant population. In the Costa Rican case, there was actually an important decrease from 1950 to 1960. Figure 5.12, although incomplete for lack of information, points out the significance of the intra-regional migration in relation to the total immigration into the Central American countries.

In the case of the migratory dynamic between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, it seems that the labour migration that had developed at the beginning of the 20th century did not continue. The causes of this change could be related to the long crises that Costa Rica experienced in the 1930s and 1940s, but also perhaps to Nicaragua's economic reactivation. However, it is interesting to point out that, since the 1940s, as a consequence of Somoza's dictatorship a new migration trend began, that of political refugees. A trend that was going to grow significantly between the 1950s and the 1970s.

⁴⁶

It is important to take into account that these data are taken from the National Census and for that reason they only represent the legal or documented migration. In that period, the authors indicated that in general term the immigrant population was under-registered. For example, in the case of the Salvadorans in Honduras the author indicated that the real number of immigrant was probably double or triple the data from the census (CSUCA, 1978).

5.3 A transition period: socio-economic crisis and civil warfare in Central America (1975-1979)

A new juncture or transition period started in Central America in the mid-1970s. In fact, one of the main outcomes of the prevailing accumulation regime in most of the Central American countries was a deepening of social polarisation that was contested and resisted by social and political grassroots organisations, political parties and later by guerrillas. This resistance was reflected in an increase in social protest and riots across the region. In the rural case, at first social resistance was mainly developed by a vigorous peasant movement that demanded agrarian reforms and initiated land invasions in all countries. At the peak of the political upheavals, guerrilla movements were created in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, and with less force in Honduras. It is interesting to point out that land reform was frequently signalled as a key issue in their ideological programs for the revolutionary transformation of their societies (Baumeister, 1999; Martí I Puig, 1997). A parallel process was occurring in the urban areas, with a growing political radicalisation of the population reflected in a significant increase in social protest against authoritarian political regimes throughout the region. The resistance was politically and ideologically diverse, including catholic organisations,⁴⁷ student unions, trade unions, and leftist political organisations forming the fundamental base for the anti-dictatorial struggle and the guerrillas in the 1970s and 1980s (Booth and Walker, 1999: 31-55).

The reaction of the regional power elites to these resistance movements was mainly coercive, increasing the direct use of force. At first, the repressive measures⁴⁸ were mainly directed towards the leadership of grassroots organisations, but as opposition to dictatorships gained social support, repression was extended to the civil population, particularly young people who were seen by national armies and 'intelligence' services as threats as they were potential guerrillas. As it is explained in a historical perspective by Pérez Brignoli:

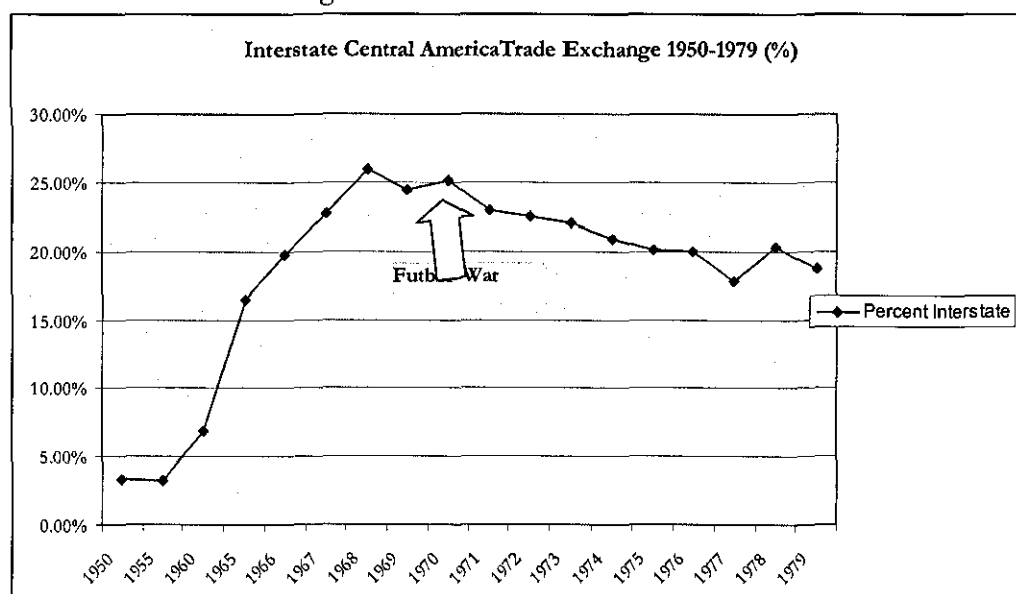
'... The twenty five years of prosperity in Central America initiated around 1950 provoked important material changes, modifying in an objective mode the life conditions of a vast majority. These changes generated, in different levels of the social pyramid, many new voices. The 'not-heard' voices became in the 1970s the most effective 'yeast' to develop the subjective conditions for insurrection and revolution.' (Pérez Brignoli, 1983: 13).

⁴⁷ Liberation Theology was just beginning at that time but played a significant role in creating political commitment in different sectors of the population.

⁴⁸ The measures included torturing, murdering and disappearance of the main leaders and militants of these movements and organisations.

At the end of the 1970s a combination of both extra and intra regional factors deepened the crisis. Among the exogenous factors, the principal was the world economic crisis which provoked an abrupt contraction of the international demand for Central American export goods and a consequent price decrease of such products (mainly cotton, banana and coffee), which was followed by economic stagnation in the region and a significant augmentation of both private and public international debt (Barracrough *et al*, 1988: 5, Vilas, 1995). At the intra-regional level, an important economic factor was the contraction of trade within the Central American Common Market (which had been in a critical situation since the “*fútbol*” war (1968-1969) between El Salvador and Honduras) as it is possible to see from Figure 5.15:

Figure 5.15: Interstate Central American Trade as a percentage of Total Central American Foreign Trade 1950-1979



Source: Woodward, 1992: 295.

After an accelerated pace of growth from less than 5% of total Central American trade in 1950 to 26% by 1968, the level of internal Central American trade fell to 17.8% in 1977. The addition of this reduction to the international economic crisis, contributed to the worsening of the social situation in the region.

In the political realm, the electoral triumph of Jimmy Carter in the United States (1976) implied an important change in US foreign policy towards Latin America, including a new

concern for human rights and the reduction of both, economic and military support to Central American dictatorships. As is pointed out by Woodward,

'... United States policy took a dramatic turn under the administration of Jimmy Carter, as he sought to improve the U.S. image abroad and place his country in step with the march of reform and respect for human rights. His pro-human rights policy brought stiff opposition from elites in Guatemala and El Salvador, especially after the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua...' (1992: 301).

The immediate effect of this change was a weakening of the authoritarian regional order. At the same time, the indiscriminate use of repression by the dictatorships against the social movements, grassroots organisations, and civil population, increased the level of social protest involving growing numbers of people, particularly young people in most of Central American countries. The eventual consequence of this dialectic between social repression and social mobilisation was a strengthening of the revolutionary guerrillas in the region and a total militarization of political conflict (Walker and Armony, 2000: 3-88; Vilas, 2000: 216)

5.3.1 Migration trends in the transition period (1975-1980)

In terms of human displacement and migration dynamics, political violence and military confrontation in the region provoked important emigration from Guatemalans and Salvadorans towards Mexico and from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. An important group of these immigrants were considered political refugees. About these transformations and trends, Castillo points out the following:

"... this situation suffered a radical change in the mid-seventies. Although the countries of the region were experiencing a deepening of a socioeconomic crisis mainly as a consequence of structural factors, there was no evidence of significant effect of these changes in the international human mobility patterns of their population. The main changes occurred when the countries suffered political and military confrontations. Most displacements were directly related to war territories and repressed zones, but also in an indirect mode with a context of generalised crisis." (Castillo, 1999:1).

The dominant flow was mainly international migration but initially most displacements were intra-regional, mainly oriented towards Costa Rica, Belize and Mexico. However, it was at the end of this period when Central American migration towards the United States and Canada started. As is pointed out by the *Proyecto Estado de la Nación* (1999), between

1970 and 1980 the amount of people from the region that migrated to the United States, Mexico and Canada more than doubled, passing from 138,000 to 361,000. In this period, the main contributor was El Salvador whose number of migrants increased from 18,000 to 100,000 emigrants over this period, followed by Guatemala and Panama (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 1999).

In relation to the main causes or expulsion factors, these migration processes were mainly related to political and military confrontation between armies and guerrillas in most of the countries of the region. Many of the immigrants directly suffered situations of both political repression and military violence. However, some of these displacements were caused by other factors, particularly by the general context of social crisis in Central America (Castillo, 1999; OIM/SIEMCA, 2004: 6). In relation to the Nicaraguans case in particular, Costa Rica became the main provider of political asylum for anti-dictatorial Nicaraguan politicians and also offered shelter to thousands of Nicaraguan who were escaping from military repression, civil war and social crisis. Although there is not much reliable data for the period, in part because of the critical situation, during those years there was a noticeable increase in the numbers of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. An indication of this change comes from the number of Nicaraguans listed in the Costa Rican Censuses of 1973 and 1984. In the former they totalled 11,871 (1.2% of total population), and in the latter they had reached 45,918 (3.7% of total population)⁴⁹.

To summarise, in this short but intense period of time (1975-1979), migration dynamics were mainly determined by the situation of political and social crises that most countries of the region were suffering. These migration dynamics widened the scope of the transnational migratory spaces reaching Mexico, the United States and Canada. In the Nicaraguan case, the causality of population displacement was shared with the rest of Central America, political and military repression and civil war, but most of its migration was oriented towards Costa Rica and not towards the Northern countries.

⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this is a partial indicator because thousands of Nicaraguans crossed the border to Costa Rica between 1977 and 1979 when the military repression and war was in the strongest point. After the Somoza's defeat and the Sandinista triumph, thousands returned to Nicaragua. Hence, the Costa Rican census did not capture these important and massive population movements.

CHAPTER 6: Migration in times of Revolution and Low Intensity War in Central America (1980-1990)

The 1980s opened up a juncture of fundamental importance for the creation of the contemporary transnational social space in Central America. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, what was begun during that period brought deep transformations to the region and also had global implications. As has been the case throughout the 20th century, US influence and geopolitical weight was a determinant factor in Central America's development orientation and its main outcomes, including migration trends, during the period studied in this chapter (1980-1990).

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, the impacts of US geopolitics upon regional development are discussed. In the second section, the main economic transformations inspired by the global Neoliberal turn are analysed. In the third section, the main demographic trends in the regional context are discussed, as an important background for understanding the international migration dynamics. In the same section, how the interaction of all these factors produced a complex set of international migration dynamics within the region is analysed. Particular attention is focused upon Nicaraguan migration towards Costa Rica over this period.

6.1 US Geopolitics and the promotion of Low-Intensity Warfare and Democracies in the region during the 1980s

In some ways the regional crisis⁵⁰ that was characterised in Chapter 5, was overcome on the 19th of July of 1979 with the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, a political event that had a very symbolic effect upon the rest of Central America and beyond. However, a new and different crisis was about to start because of the coincidence of two political events, the Nicaraguan revolutionary process itself and the arrival of Ronald Reagan to the US presidency (1981-1989). The Sandinistas developed the first left revolution in Central America, whilst Reagan started a conservative revolution in the United States (although it clearly had global impacts), changing the orientation of U.S. foreign policy by placing "National Security" issues once again at its core. According to this world-view, Central America and the Caribbean Basin was a region of strategic importance for the US, as was pointed out by President Reagan in a speech at the Organisation of

⁵⁰ In this context, crisis is used as transition, as the action or effect of passing from one mode or state to other different.

American States in February of 1982 during meetings surrounding the creation of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI),

'Today I would like to talk about our other neighbours -- neighbours by the sea -- some two dozen countries of the Caribbean and Central America. These countries are not unfamiliar names from some isolated corner of the world far from home. They're very close to home. The country of El Salvador, for example, is nearer to Texas than Texas is to Massachusetts. The Caribbean region is a vital strategic and commercial artery for the United States. Nearly half of our trade, two-thirds of our imported oil, and over half of our imported strategic minerals pass through the Panama Canal or the Gulf of Mexico. Make no mistake: The well-being and security of our neighbours in this region are in our own vital interest.' (Cited in Rojas Bolaños, 1988: 19).

The US Government considered the Cuban and Nicaraguan communist and socialist revolutions and their possible expansion to the rest of the continent as the main threats to their National Security interests in the region. This view had important political effects in Central America, as pointed out by Rojas Bolaños,

'... the rise of Reaganism, with its bipolar image of the World and its aggressive interventionist agenda towards the region, together with the conditions imposed by the International Financial Institutions, have provoked the local redefinition of political and ideological positions, pushing them to the right.' (Rojas Bolaños, 1988: 18).

A good expression of this bipolar mentality, comes from the words of Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations, the conservative scholar Jean Kirkpatrick, who at the beginning of the 1980s pointed out that '...Central America was the most important place in the world for the United States today...' (Cited in Lafeber, 1993: 271).

The main objectives informing US geopolitics towards the region were a) to recover their regional hegemony which they perceived as increasingly contested by the 'Communist threat' represented in the first place by the Nicaraguan Revolution and by the Salvadoran and Guatemalan guerrillas, and b) to create a new stability in the region that favoured their interests. In relation to the Nicaraguan Revolution, Robinson explains that the US objective was '... to subvert the Sandinista experiment in popular democracy, to prevent any transition to a democratic form of socialism, and to restore the old elite power'. (Robinson, 1996: 218)

To achieve their objectives, the US changed their approach that had previously been characterised by their support for dictators and authoritarian regimes as was explained in

previous chapters. This approach was unsustainable in a region that now had such a high level of popular and armed resistance. For that reason, the US Government rearticulated a new geopolitical framework in which the promotion of 'democracy' was placed at the forefront. This could not, however, be just any sort of democracy, but rather a limited or facade democracy. This strategy was intended to transform the authoritarian regimes prevailing in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador into 'polyarchies' or Low Intensity Democracies (Robinson, 1996: 2002). The defensive bias of this concept of democracy is developed in the following secret National Security Council paper of April 1982 quoted by Lafeber:

'We have an interest in creating and supporting democratic states in Central America that can act free from outside interference. Strategically, Washington must prevent proliferation of Cuba-modelled states which would provide platforms for subversion, compromise vital sea lanes and pose a direct military threat at or near our borders. This would undercut us globally and create economic dislocation and a resultant influx to the U.S. of illegal immigrants.' (Lafeber, 1993: 271).

It is interesting to observe that as early as the beginning of the 1980s the US power elite was already worried about a possible 'invasion' of Central American immigrants. As is discussed later, if one of the main purposes of the political and economic reforms they promoted in Central America was to stop immigration towards the United States, then the reforms were a total failure.

The US government at this time articulated a twofold strategy. On the one hand, a hard side in which they articulated what was known as Low Intensity War (LIW). As part of this, after 1983, the United States supported (in military, political, and financial terms) the Nicaraguan counterrevolution that was based in Honduras (1983-1990) and Costa Rica (until 1987) (Sanahuja, 1996: 271). At the peak of the aggression in 1986, for example, US agents mined Corinto, the main Nicaraguan port on the Pacific coast. Along the same lines, the US army trained and supported with military aid the Guatemalan, Salvadoran and Honduran militaries. In fact, until the mid 1980s, the idea of a direct US military intervention or invasion was not discarded by the Reagan Administration, but the possibility of a total war situation in their own backyard and both the internal and international opposition (particularly from Europe and Latin America)⁵¹ restrained them

⁵¹ In the case of Europe, the position of Socialist Governments in Spain and France was very important. In the case of Latin America, there was a very active position of four countries, namely Mexico,

from doing this. The Iran-Contra scandal in 1986 affected the credibility of President Reagan and his government at the same time as new presidents in Guatemala and Costa Rica arrived with more autonomous perspectives about how to solve the conflictive situation of the region. The military option was discarded and substituted for political negotiation which was the perspective that prevailed at the end of the 1980s. On the other hand, the soft side of the US strategy involved economic aid and cooperation mainly channelled by the US Agency of International Development (USAID).

The US geopolitical strategy was not a total failure in the political realm. As was pointed out above, their main strategic objective was to consolidate Low Intensity Democracies and to undermine and defeat the Sandinista Revolution and the leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala. By the end of the decade, most of the Central American governments were chosen through elections, substituting military government for civilian in Honduras (1981), El Salvador (1984) and Guatemala (1985). Although these elections were not totally free⁵², the United States considered them fully and free democracies. Costa Rica already had a consolidated democratic regime before the onset of the crisis and Nicaragua held its own elections in 1984, although they were boycotted internally by a part of the US-backed political opposition (Lafeber, 1993: 283-326; Vilas, 2000).

As for the Nicaraguan revolution, a decade of US aggression, counter revolution and internal mistakes progressively undermined their social and political support base. At the end of the 1980s, as part of the Central American Peace Process that started in 1987 in Esquipulas (Guatemala), the Sandinista Government agreed to hold elections in February of 1990, allowing for the participation of the main Contra leaders. In exchange, the Sandinista government demanded the Contra disarm, a stipulation that was largely met. In that election, the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega, lost to Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the candidate of a very heterogeneous political coalition openly supported by the United States.⁵³ That result initiated not only a government change, but a regime change that allowed for the reinstallation of pro-US power elites from 1990.

Colombia, Panama and Venezuela, that were pushing for a political solution for the conflict in Central America. Their initiative was known as the Contadora Plan.

⁵² The elections that were held in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador did not include the electoral participation of leftist parties and guerrillas, and for that reason they were exclusive.

⁵³ For an exhaustive explanation of the US intervention in the Nicaraguan election of 1990, see: Robinson, 1996, 222-239. In fact, US intervention in Nicaraguan elections has continued to the present day (2006).

6.1.1 Structural adjustment and neoliberal development in Central America in the 1980s

If the strategic objective of the military component of US strategy was to impose Low Intensity Democracies and to defeat the Sandinista revolution, the strategic objective in the economic component of this strategy was to consolidate a permanent change in the region's economic structure and, thus, in the style of development. In other words, the US Government, with the support of the International Financial Institutions and the regional power elites, promoted a transition to a new accumulation regime based upon a new transnational insertion of the Central American economies in the global economy (Robinson, 1996: 230).

The transnational economic reorientation was part of a global scale transformation promoted by the Group of Seven⁵⁴ and the International Financial Institutions in the periphery. Their agenda was to impose the Neoliberal program as a global recipe for all Third World Countries as a response to the international debt crisis that had erupted at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s (Mohan et al, 2000; Biel, 2000). For that reason, Franz Hinkelammert calls this strategy debt-payment-economy (*economía del pago de la deuda*), pointing out that the main objective of Structural Adjustment programs was little more than to force countries to create surplus in order to continue making international debt payments (Hinkelammert, 1999). Thus, in the 1980s, the Central American economies became net capital exporters. For example, between 1984 and 1988 these countries transferred almost US\$ 16 billion in debt servicing. However, during the same period the region's external debt rose by US\$ 5 billion, from US\$ 19,320 million in 1984 to US\$ 24,525 million in 1988 (FLACSO, 2005: 92-94). Mohan et al point out that,

'... In the case of Central America, between 1981 and 1984 the total debt of the region grew at an annual rate of 15 per cent (Dolinsky 1990), and by 1987 the foreign debt of the region was in excess of US\$ 19 billion or 89 per cent of the region's GNP (*ibid.*). Long term debt servicing consumed over 22 per cent of the region's total export earnings (*ibid.*).' (Mohan et al, 2000: 11)

The new mode of development in Central America was therefore an expression of the new global hegemony exerted by Neoliberalism. Although at first glance, this discourse is apparently related only to economic issues, it actually constitutes a broader project to create a new type of society and state, in which the market and its private logic and not the state would be the main means of social intermediation. The most radical versions of this

⁵⁴ This group was integrated by the main creditor countries, namely United States, France, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Canada and Germany.

current propose to reduce the role of the state to an absolute minimum. As highlighted by Harvey, when explaining the core of the neoliberal philosophy, he points out that

'...Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual *entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.* The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (...) It must also set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. ...' (Harvey, 2003: 64)

The consolidation of this new accumulation regime in Central America implied not only the abandonment of the previous developmentalist style of development,(see Chapter 5) but furthermore the dismantling of the economic productive base and industrial clusters that supported the old style. Hence, in the 1980s the region became a sort of Neoliberal laboratory. Most of the political parties not only did not resist these reforms but they actually supported them (with total or partial conviction) as the only possible path for overcoming the economic crisis the region was suffering. As such, during the 1980s most Central American countries (with the exception of Nicaragua until 1987) applied the new economic path.

It is important to highlight that this process of restructuring was imposed by means of World Bank (WB) funded Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and International Monetary Found (IMF) Stabilisation Programmes, These included such measures as: reduction of the state role in development (including privatisation of public enterprises and services), promotion of the private sector through directing public resources and favourable conditions towards foreign direct investments, reduction of import tariffs, cuts in subsidies for old industrial products mainly oriented towards the Central American Common Market (CACM: Nuhn,1995: 19-40), and new tax exonerations and subsidies for new and traditional export crops (Mohan et al, 2000: 33; Vilas, 2000: 211-216, Wilmore, 1997, Zukevas, 2000). Sánchez points out that

'...(a)t the beginning of the 80's, the Central American Governments in individual form but with the same orientation, approved laws for export promotions. They included figures such as exportation contracts, temporal admission regimes and 'tax-free zones' for exportation. By this means the governments brought incentives and benefits to the export enterprises. The benefits included rent tax exemption, as well as

for capital goods and raw material imports, and beyond that direct subsidies to exportation such as *certificados de abono tributario* (CATs).’ (Sánchez, 1995: 12)

At the same time, to guarantee an initial market for those products as well as to tightly link their production with the US economy, the United States launched two major development-oriented initiatives. First, in August of 1983 they promulgated the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) to guarantee free access to the US market for most of exports from the Caribbean and Central American countries. It established requirements for participation which included prohibiting the participation of countries that were considered ‘communist’ or did not respect the property rights and legitimate interests of US citizens. In Central America, these requirements were aimed at Nicaragua which, for obvious reasons, did not ask to be included (Sanahuja, 1996: 246). The CBI was a unilateral concession initially scheduled for twelve years. It played a key role in the transformation of development strategies in Neoliberal directions and its creation was clearly both geopolitically and economically oriented.

The second proposal was contained in what was known as the Kissinger Report, produced by the United States Bipartisan Commission for Central America. The main objective of this Commission was to create a national US consensus about the causes of and solutions to the main political, economic and social problems in Central America, in line with the ongoing US geopolitical and economic interests in the region (Leogrande, 2000). Reflecting the clear ideological orientation of the message of the Commission, the conservative *National Review* of that time pointed out that,

‘The commission unanimously agreed that Soviet-and Cuban-backed insurgencies pose a critical threat to the region’s security and recommended a massive increase in U.S. military aid to El Salvador and other countries to respond to that threat. (...) The commission’s good judgment did lapse in its assertion that military aid to El Salvador should be made contingent upon demonstrated progress in the area of human rights. This is, unfortunately, akin to insisting that a man whose house is burning down provide evidence that he has complied with all local building codes before offering him assistance. However, this is one requirement that Congress was almost certain to insist on anyway, regardless of what the Kissinger report said.

The price tag on the economic-aid program that the commission calls for is breathtakingly high—some \$8 billion over five years—and does not even include the cost of military assistance and some other forms of aid recommended in the report. Given the strategic stakes involved, however, the sum is paltry.’ (*National Review*, 1984)

The various initiatives described above created favourable conditions for export production expansion in the region and also favoured US entrepreneurs already linked to transnational

production processes as well as their national political and economic partners in the region. It also created a favourable environment (free taxation and other measures) for future foreign or national investments through financial and technical support. Because of its anti-state bias, it did not contemplate any financial aid for state or public investments. The idea was to allocate these resources through the private sector and thereby to strengthen its role in regional development. Beyond this, the US created a legal and political framework that reinforced the dependent insertion of Central America within a new transnational division of labour that deepened economic linkages with the US economy. The production and trading of export-crops and US Foreign Direct Investment were two fundamental components in the production of this new transnational social space. This phenomenon is what Helio Gallardo conceptualised as asymmetric globalisation (Gallardo, 1995) accompanied by deep transnationalisation as conceptualised in detail by William Robinson (Robinson, 1996).

These changes were operating within a very conflictive context; two countries were embroiled in civil wars and one faced ongoing aggression against their revolution. Hence, for the US Government, it was very important to avoid a situation in which the effects of the new strategies would trigger conflict (except in Nicaragua) or bring social support to resistance groups and leftist political parties in El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica⁵⁵. To make changes smoother in those countries, USAID promoted a massive program of financial cooperation during the 1980s which in combined military and economic aid gave US\$ 2.3 billion to El Salvador, US\$ 1.0 billion to Honduras, US\$ 802 million to Guatemala and US\$ 1.0 billion to Costa Rica (mainly in economic aid along that decade) as could be seen in the Table 6.1 (Vilas, 2000: 218-221).

Figure 6.1: USAID Assistance to Central America, 1984-1990 (US\$ Millions).

Central American Countries/ Years	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	TOTAL
Costa Rica	168.0	217.1	159.4	178.1	116.4	118.2	92.7	1,049.9
El Salvador	215.9	434.0	322.6	462.9	314.1	307.0	246.7	2,303.2
Guatemala	17.6	103.9	113.7	184.7	128.1	142.8	112.1	802.9
Honduras	91.2	224.0	131.4	192.6	150.3	81.2	188.2	1,058.9
Nicaragua	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	222.9	226.4
Panama	12.1	74.4	33.3	12.1	1.2	0.3	396.6	530.0

⁵⁵ Costa Rica was playing a very strategic role as *democratic mirror* to confront the Sandinista Revolution at an ideological level.

CA Total USAID Assistance	520.4	1,159.9	823.4	1,088.7	768.7	700.7	1,288.8	6,350.6
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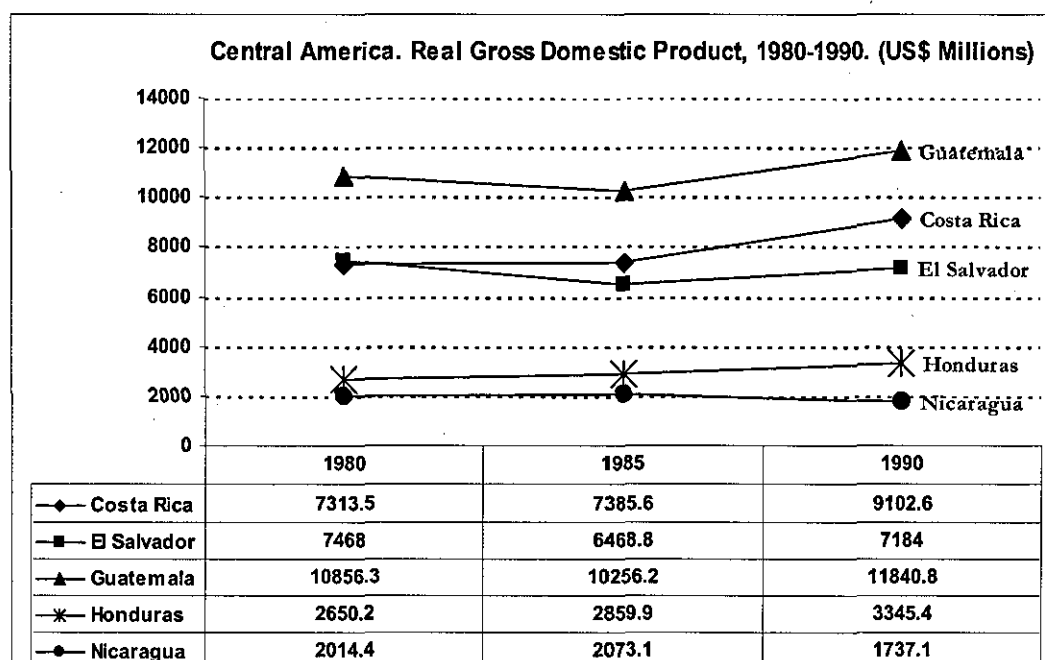
Source: USAID, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants; PL480 includes Titles I, II, & III; data are for U.S. fiscal years ending September 30. In: Lanic.

<http://www1.lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/aid/aid96/Assistance/cen.html>

The success of the structural transformation could be considered moderate in terms of economic outcomes. After a deep economic crisis at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s (reflected in negative economic growth rates, high rates of inflation and negative trade balances) most of the Central American economies started to show slow and irregular growth in terms of GDP in the mid 1980s (See Figure 6.2), although there were significant differences between the countries.

In terms of per capita GDP, the regional average continued to decline between 1983 and 1986. Costa Rica was the major exception to this trend, with per capita GDP rising by a cumulative 5.6% over the same period whilst Honduras also registered a very moderate growth (Altenburg, 1995: 49).

Figure 6.2. Central America. Real Gross Domestic Product, 1980-1990 in US\$ Millions.



Source: FLACSO, 2005.

The regional economic crisis ended at the beginning of the 1980s, and after a period of stabilisation, economic growth was relaunched at mid 1980s. To analyse the difference between the period before (1980-1985) and after (1985-1990) the beginning of the neoliberal strategy, it is useful to compare the economic growth average in two sub-periods 1980-1985 and 1985-1990:

Figure 6.3 Central America. Economic growth average, 1980-1990.

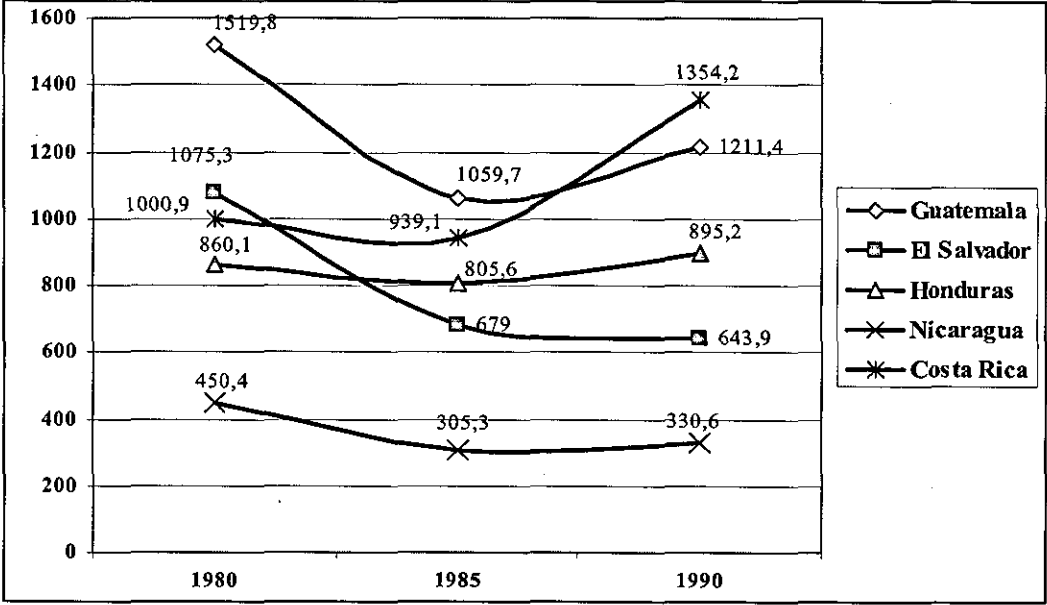
Country	1980-1985	1985-1990
Costa Rica	0.2	4.6
El Salvador	-2.7	2.2
Guatemala	-1.1	3.1
Honduras	1.6	3.4
Nicaragua	0.6	-3.2

Source: FLACSO, 2005.

In relation to the exports that were an important component of the economic take off, the main indicators show that the outcomes were also irregular, with a very clear 'successful'

country, namely Costa Rica, and three countries with a relative recovery of their exports, namely Guatemala and Honduras as is possible to observe in the Figure 6.4,

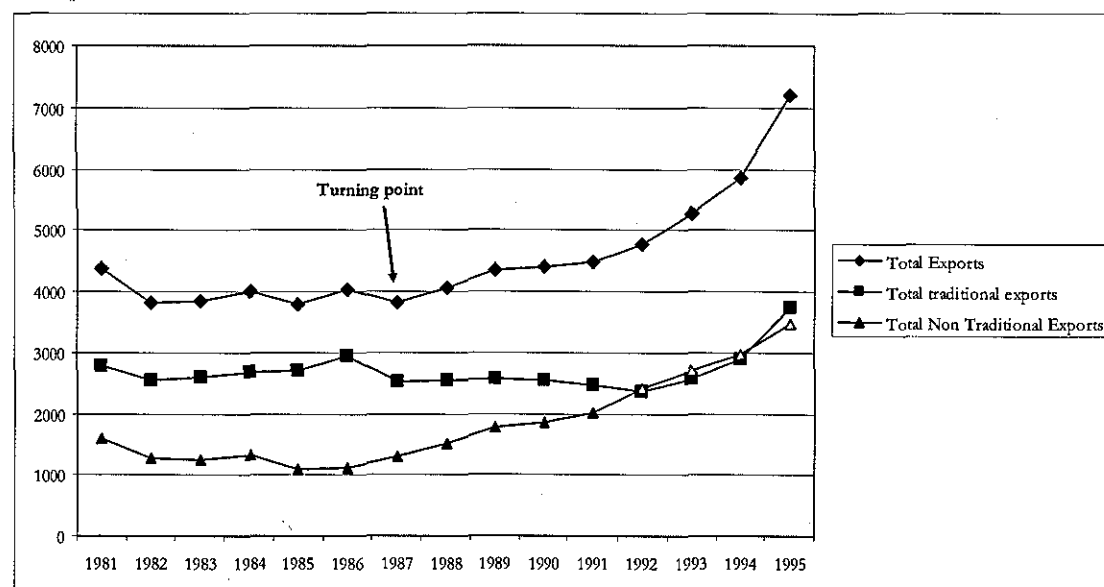
Figure 6.4: Central America. Total Exportations in 1980, 1985, 1990 (US\$ Millions).



Source: Source: FLACSO, 2005.

The new Neoliberal mode of development introduced new trends: first, a significant expansion of what were known as new export products. From 1986 to 1990, non-traditional exports demonstrated an important rise in relation to total exports, growing from US\$ 1.1 billion in 1986 to US\$ 1.9 billion in 1990 constituting a relative growth of 81 percent and an annual average growth rate of 20.2 percent for the period (Figure 6.5).

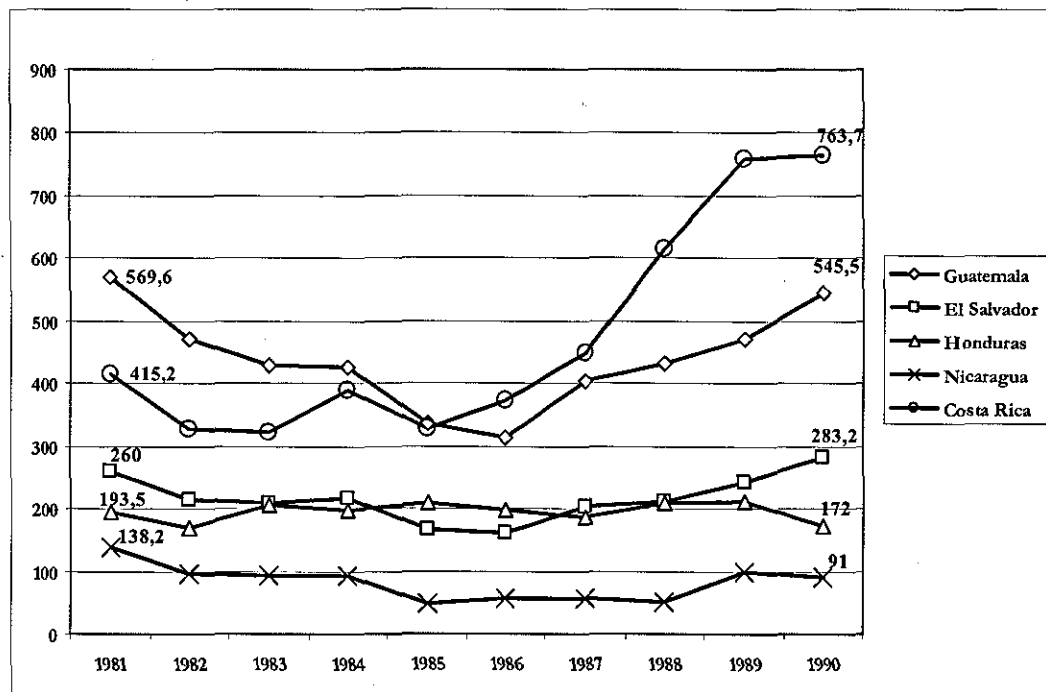
Figure 6.5: Central America. Total, Traditional and Non-Traditional Exports, 1981-1990, US\$ Millions.



Source: Consejo Monetario Centroamericano. From: Wilmore, 1997.

Costa Rica was the successful case of the period. In percentage terms, its exports rose by 44.2% between 1985 and 1990, to give an annual average of 8.8%. Guatemala and Honduras also had relatively good performances in relation to exports. The former's exports rose 14.3% in that period for an annual average of 2.9%, whilst the figures for the latter were 11.1% and 2.2% respectively. Nicaragua and El Salvador, on the other hand, had poor performances with Nicaragua's exports only increasing by 8.4% over the period (with an average of 1.7% per year), whilst the value of the latter's exports actually fell over the same period by 5.2% (an average of -1.0 per year).

Figure 6.6: Central American Countries. Total Non-Traditional Exports, 1981-1990, (US\$ Millions).



Source: Consejo Monetario Centroamericano. Excerpted from: Wilmore, 1997

These results are probably related to the level of military and social conflict each country was suffering, as well as the level of aid they were receiving from international cooperation, particularly that of the US (Wilmore, 1997). Thus, Costa Rica had been able to take advantage of its absence of military or significant political conflicts, as well as its access to financial cooperation, to create a transnational platform to push its exports; while at the other extreme Nicaragua had suffered an external military aggression and El Salvador had been in the middle of a civil war. Although the results of the new style of development were not overly impressive in terms of economic outcomes, it is clear that the basis for the permanence of this model was laid down in that period, as is discussed in more detail later.

The range of political and economic transformations described in this section had a significant impact upon human settlement dynamics in the region, including the use of land and agrarian structure and access to and distribution of material and symbolic resources. These configured massive human displacements and new migration dynamics that are analysed in the next section.

6.2 The demographic dimension: International migration trends in the production of a transnational social space in Central America during the 1980s

It seems clear that during the 1980s US geopolitics and their promotion of a Neoliberal economic model for the region were significant factors in the configuration of Central American international migration dynamics. However, as was pointed out in previous chapters, for our purposes is also necessary to analyse the demographic dimension and how it interacts with the ongoing transformation in the socio-economic and political realms. Although this is not a population-oriented research project as such, the demographic factor is a variable that could not be disregarded in this research because throughout the second half of the 20th century Central America has experienced a very changeable demographic pattern, particularly in the last quarter of the past century. As was discussed in the theoretical chapter, however, there is no intention here to create a direct and simplistic connection between population growth and migration. In fact, if the information is analysed in detail, the trends that the combination of these factors produced in the individual Central American countries were very dissimilar, with for example a strong contrast between the two countries with the highest rate of emigration, El Salvador and Nicaragua. In the case of El Salvador, they provoked a reduction in its relative population weight in Central America, passing from 22.7 percent in 1980 to 20.4 percent in 1990. In the case of Nicaragua, the result was the opposite, with an increase from 14.5 percent to 15.3 percent.

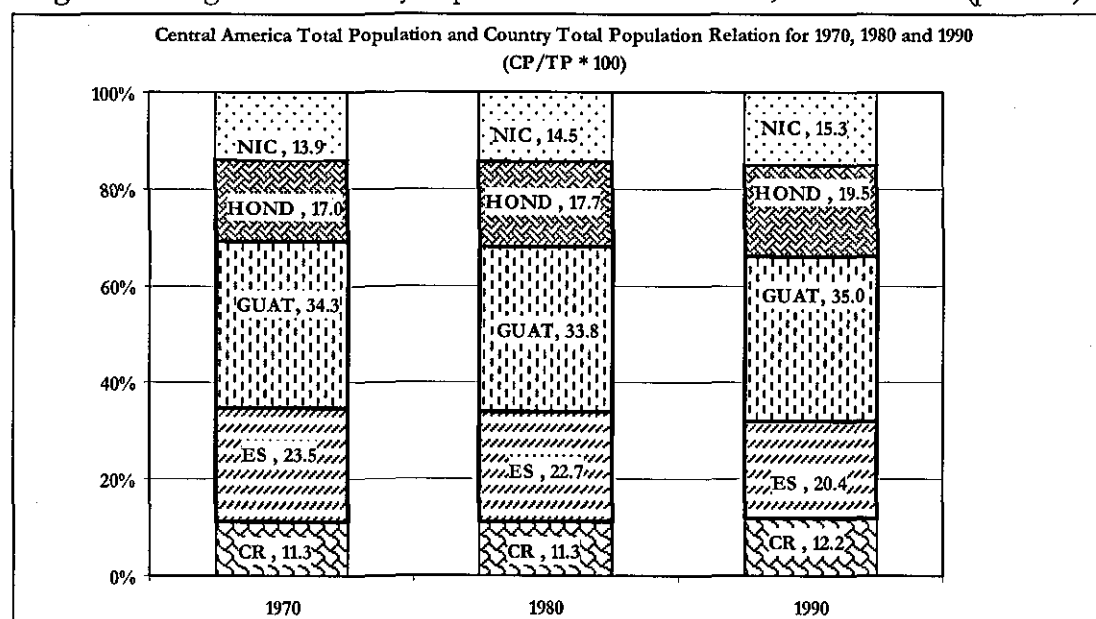
Figure 6.7: Central America Total, Relative and Annual Average Population growth in 1970, 1980, 1990.

	1970 (mill)	1980 (mill.)	1990 (mill)	Population Growth 1980-1990 (%)	Annual Average Growth Per Year (1980- 1990)
COSTA RICA					
Total Population (millions)	1.7	2.3	3.0	33.5	3.4
EL SALVADOR					
Total Population (millions)	3.6	4.6	5.1	11.4	1.1
GUATEMALA					
Total Population (millions)	5.2	6.8	8.7	28.3	2.8
HONDURAS					
Total Population (millions)	2.6	3.6	4.9	36.7	3.7
NICARAGUA					
Total Population (millions)	2.1	2.9	3.8	31.0	3.1
CENTRAL AMERICA					
Total Population (millions)	15.3	20.2	25.0	23.9	2.4

Source: CELADE, 1998. Author elaboration.

As can be derived from Table 6.7, during the 1980s the whole region experienced a total population growth of almost five million people, passing from 20.2 million people in 1980 to 25 million in 1990. This implies a rise of 23.9% and an annual average growth rate of 2.4 per cent. This average was slower than the 1970s' average growth rate of 3.2 per cent. This decrease was not, however, distributed in an even manner throughout the countries of the region. Those with the highest annual rate of growth were Honduras (3.7%) and Costa Rica (3.4%). The country with the lowest annual rate of growth during this period was El Salvador. These trends had an impact upon the relative share of the region's total population, with Honduras and El Salvador moving in opposite directions (see Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8: Region and Country Population Totals for in 1970, 1980 and 1990 (percents).



Source: CELADE, 1998. Author's elaboration.

The moderate total population growth and the reduction in its annual pace in the region were related to a confluence of several factors pulling in different directions. On the one hand, increases in life expectancy (Figure 6.10) and reductions in child mortality rates (Figure 6.12), although with significant differences between the countries, contributed to population growth. On the other hand, factors such as a significant decrease in global fecundity rates (Figure 6.11) and international migration were the main factors in lowering the pace of population growth in the Region.

Figure 6.9: Central America Population Density.

	1980	1990
Costa Rica	44.9	59.9
El Salvador	219.1	244.1
Guatemala	62.6	80.3
Honduras	31.8	43.5
Nicaragua	21.0	27.5
Central America	46.7	59.3

Source: CELADE, 1998. Author's elaboration.

Figure 6.10: Central America Life Expectancy, Fecundity, 1970-75, 1980-85.

	(a) 1970-75	(b) 1980-85	Increase a-b (%)
Costa Rica	68.1	73.8	8.4%
El Salvador	58.3	57.1	-2.1%
Guatemala	53.9	58.2	8.0%
Honduras	54.1	61.6	13.9%
Nicaragua	55.2	59.5	7.8%
Central America	57.9	62.0	7.1%

Source: FLACSO, 2005..

Figure 6.11: Central America Global 1970-75, 1980-85.

	(a) 1970-75	(b) 1980-85	Increase a-b (%)
Costa Rica	4.3	3.5	-18.6%
El Salvador	6.1	4.5	-26.2%
Guatemala	6.5	6.3	-3.1%
Honduras	7.1	6	-15.5%
Nicaragua	6.8	6.2	-8.8%
Central America	6.2	5.3	-14.0%

Source: CELADE, 1998. Author's elaboration

Figure 6.12: Central America Child Mortality Rate 1980-1990.

	1980	1985	1990
Costa Rica	30.4	19.2	16.0
El Salvador	87.3	77	54
Guatemala	82.4	78.8	65
Honduras	81	65	53
Nicaragua	96.6	79.8	65
Central America	75.5	64.0	50.6

Source: FLACSO, 2005.

Taking these factors into account, there are some questions that we now need to answer, namely what were the main international migration characteristics, trends and dynamics over this period of such rapid change? How did they contribute to the production of a transnational social space in the region and, what were the main characteristics of the migration dynamic between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in this decade? The author shares the view of other scholars (Castillo, 1999; Morales et al, 2002; Vargas et al, 1995) who have pointed out that during the 1980s the main factor in the production of human displacements was the political and social violence expressed in civil wars and military conflicts in three countries of the region. It is also true to say that, although the economic adjustment and the economic reorientation towards new export activities created some recovery at the macro level, they also increased poverty and inequality, negatively affecting

employment and income levels, factors that induced people to migrate (Vilas, 2000: 216-220).

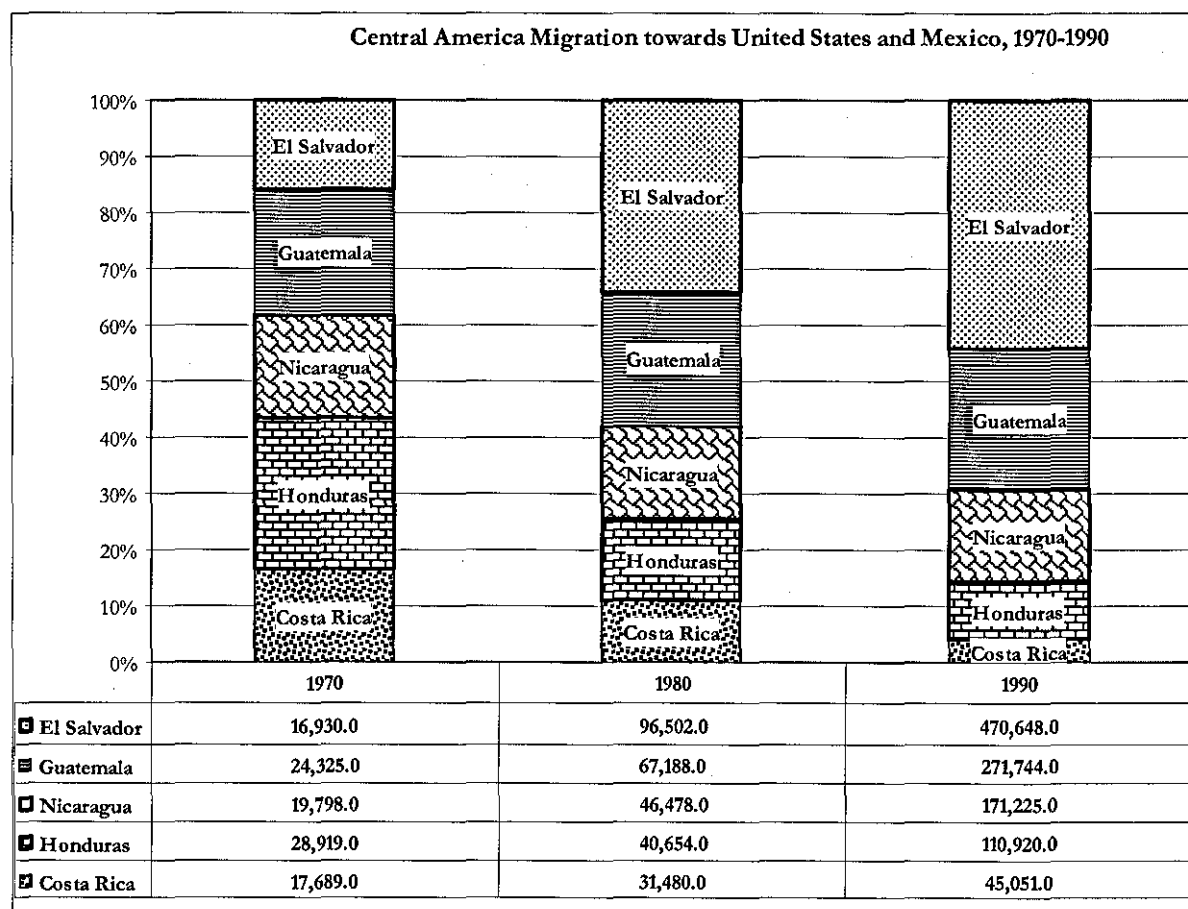
Although internal migration was massive,⁵⁶ this research is focused upon international migration in the region and, particularly, in the Nicaraguan and Costa Rica migration dynamics. Here the region witnessed an increase, but not only was there a quantitative increase in total out-migrations, there was a process of differentiation in their destinations and dynamics, which become much more complex than they had been during the previous period.

The first trend to mention was a significant rise in the number of people travelling from Central America to the North of the continent, but particularly to the United States, which was the main recipient country of the period. In fact, in 1980 the number of Central Americans in Mexico and the United States had been 282,000 and yet by 1990 there were 1.7 million people there, meaning a fivefold increase over the decade. In the case of Central America immigration to Canada, there was also a big increase with immigrant levels passing from 4,465 in 1980 to 18,365 in 1986. However, it is clear that the main pulling country was the United States which was the destination of more than 9 per cent of total Central America emigration to the North (see Figure 6.14) (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003; MIRO, 2001).

The immigration to the United States and Mexico had a clear political component reflected in the anti-Communist and counter-Revolutionary political identity of most of the Nicaraguan immigrants in Florida. However, there was also an economic component particularly evident in the case of Salvadoran immigrants living and working in California and Guatemalan immigrants in Mexico (Vilas, 2000: 222).

⁵⁶ Some calculations indicate that there were approximately one million internally displaced people in the whole region during this period, reaching between 10 to 15 per cent of the total population in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala (Cortes Ramos, 2003: 38).

Figure 6.14: Central America Immigration in the United States and Mexico, 1970, 1980, 1990.



Source: Miró, 2001: 22

However, it is important to point out that the massive growth in Central American emigration to the United States was not a coincidence; it was a consequence of both the US' geopolitical actions in the region and the permissive immigration policy promoted by their government as part of their struggle against Communist subversion in Central America (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 1999: 371). In this way, as is pointed out by Vilas, '... At the end of the 80s more than 1.3 millions of Central Americans (principally Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans were working and sending remittances to their families...' (Vilas, 2000: 217).

At the regional scale, migration movements and dynamics were no less massive and significant than the out-regional trends. There was important migration from Guatemala and El Salvador to Belize, in such a way that by the end of the 1980s the immigrant population (including registered and not-registered refugees and immigrants) was calculated at 20 per cent of the total population of Belize (Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano, 2000; Moss et al, 1992: 161-167).

Over this period, refugees were an important component of Guatemalan migration. Mexico was the main recipient with approximately 40,000 formal refugees and 150,000 non-recognised immigrants and refugees. In the Salvadoran case, it is important to remember that it was and still is the most relatively populated country of the region (in terms of the relation population/per sq. km). In this decade, El Salvador expelled approximately 20 percent of its total population, with almost one million emigrants. Almost 200,000 Salvadorans moved to Guatemala, between 50 and 100,000 emigrated to Mexico, almost 40,000 to Honduras and more than 20,000 to Nicaragua. However, the main destination of Salvadorans was the United States, where approximately 500,000 Salvadoran immigrants arrived during the 1980s transforming this tiny country into a massive expeller of human population. Later on these trends and dynamics would become a very important component in the creation of a transnational social space between the region and the United States.

As was pointed out earlier, in terms of size, Nicaragua became the second most important expelling-population country in the region with almost 700,000 people living outside the country by the end of the decade. This migration was distributed mainly between Costa Rica (270,000), Honduras (200,000), the United States (170,000), and Guatemala (40,000), meaning approximately 20 per cent of its total population had migrated (Stein et al, 1992: 67-71; Membreño, 2001: 103).

In terms of the causation of migration, an important part of this international displacement of population was provoked by the war. Another significant part was a consequence of ideological differences with the revolutionary process, particularly clear in the cases of peasant concerns about agrarian reform, the ethnic conflict with the Miskito indigenous population and young people seeking escape from the compulsory military service at the end of the decade. In this context, the number of Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras and Costa Rica increased as never before. A salient point of the Nicaraguan migration in this period was the

fact that those who were leaving the country belonged to all social classes. However, there was also a clear destination differentiation related to class, the upper class and middle class migration was mainly directed to the United States, whilst the migration from low-income classes was mainly directed towards Costa Rica and Honduras. Of course, there were exceptions, but these were the main trends in terms of the social origins of international migration (Membreño; 2001: 104; Walker, 1997: 8-14; Robinson, 1997a: 23-25; Brockett, 1998: 156-184; Butler, 1997: 220-222; Serra, 1993: 21-44).

Figure 6.15: Nicaraguan population living in other countries, 1980-1988 (thousands).

Countries	1980	Nic Migration Destiny Per Country (%)	1988	Nic Migration Destiny Per Country (%)
Costa Rica	45,885.0	42.2	285,000.0	42.7
United States	44,166.0	40.7	170,000.0	25.5
Honduras	15,149.0	13.9	203,000.0	30.4
El Salvador	N.D.	N.D.	4,000.0	0.6
Mexico	2,312.0	2.1	2,566.0	0.4
Guatemala	1,098.0	1.0	2,133.0	0.3
TOTAL	108,610.0		666,699.0	

Source: Excerpted from Membreño, 2001: 103 (*Cuadro No. 12*) (reworked by the author).

As is clear from Figure 6.15, from the beginning of the 1980s, approximately 95 per cent of Nicaraguan migration was accounted for by the three countries of Costa Rica, the United States and Honduras. The following section analyses the principal dynamics of the migration to these destinations.

6.3 The growing importance of the migration dynamic between Nicaragua and Costa Rica during the 1980s

In this period Costa Rica became the most important recipient country of Central American immigration. Most of their immigrants were coming from Nicaragua, representing almost 45% of the total between 1980 to 1990. In fact, there were 35,000 recognised refugees, 80,000 non recognised refugees and more than 170,000 Nicaraguans belonging to other categories including labour migration, in Costa Rica during that period. In demographic terms, this was a very young population with 54 per cent of these immigrants being under 15 years old. Most of the Nicaraguan refugees were from the poorest sectors (Vargas et al, 1995: 66-69).

At the end of the decade, with the consolidation of the Peace process in Central America and the realisation of presidential elections in Nicaragua (1990) which were won by Doña Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the outflow of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica not only diminished but, at the beginning of the 1990s, reversed as thousands of migrants returned to Nicaragua.

Conclusions

During the 1980s there was an intense mobilisation of human population within each country (internal migration), within the region and outside the region. The main factor producing this mobility was related to military conflicts and political violence, which in a significant part was the result of U.S. geopolitics towards Central America. However, this period also saw the beginning of the Neoliberal era in the region and the promotion of a new export-oriented development style. Because of effects such as wealth concentration and increasing poverty, this style of development was not able to reduce out migration, but to the contrary, taking into account the fact that many of the displaced population were poor, it could be reasonably concluded that this new style was part of the pushing factors that stimulated out migration.

In terms of identified trends which are important to this research, we can highlight the fact that Nicaragua became the second most important country in terms of the production of migration flows out of and within the region, in the former case to the United States and in the latter case to Honduras and mainly to Costa Rica. In terms of the production of a transnational social space involving the whole region and the United States (but also intra-regional spaces), this period was fundamental for the creation of a first strong transnational link. This will be discussed in chapter 7, when the particular articulation between Nicaragua and Costa Rica is thoroughly explored.

CHAPTER 7: Neoliberal Development and the production of a new migratory transnational space between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the 1990s

The two previous chapters analysed the evolution of the relation between style of development and the production of migratory processes, particular attention was drawn to of the evolving migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica at different moments of the twentieth century (spanning the labour migration dynamics at the time of the banana enclaves at the end of the 19th century up to the political migration waves of the 1970s and 1980s).

One of the salient characteristics of the previous migration flows is that in these cases, the meso-link, namely social networks, that connected the original society with the host society were not so evident or solid like present situation. Thus, while the current migration dynamics could be named as transnational, the previous are better defined as international migration flows.

This chapter brings the story up-to-date and explains how the main changes in the development process in both, Costa Rica and Nicaragua explain the production of a new migratory transnational space with a set of complex migration dynamics that articulate in an asymmetrical mode both societies.

7.1 Main characteristics and effects of the Neoliberal transformation in Central America in the 1990s

In historical terms, the period studied in this chapter began at a moment of dramatic geopolitical, economic and ideological transformation at different scales. The most important one was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the *Socialist Bloc*, implying the end of the *Cold War Geopolitical Order*. Other changes were related to US internal politics, meaning the arrival of the Bush Government (1988) with a more pragmatic approach to the Central American situation. Other factors emerged at the regional scale, such as the coincidence of a majority of presidents in Central America in favour of a political solution to the military conflicts within the region. As a consequence of the combination of these factors, the Peace Plan for the region came to reality when it was signed by the five presidents of the Central American countries in 1987, finishing the military conflicts and pushing for elections with the participation of the guerrillas and other military groups in Nicaragua (1990), El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996). A new period started in 1990 with the FSLN's electoral defeat meaning, not just the end of the

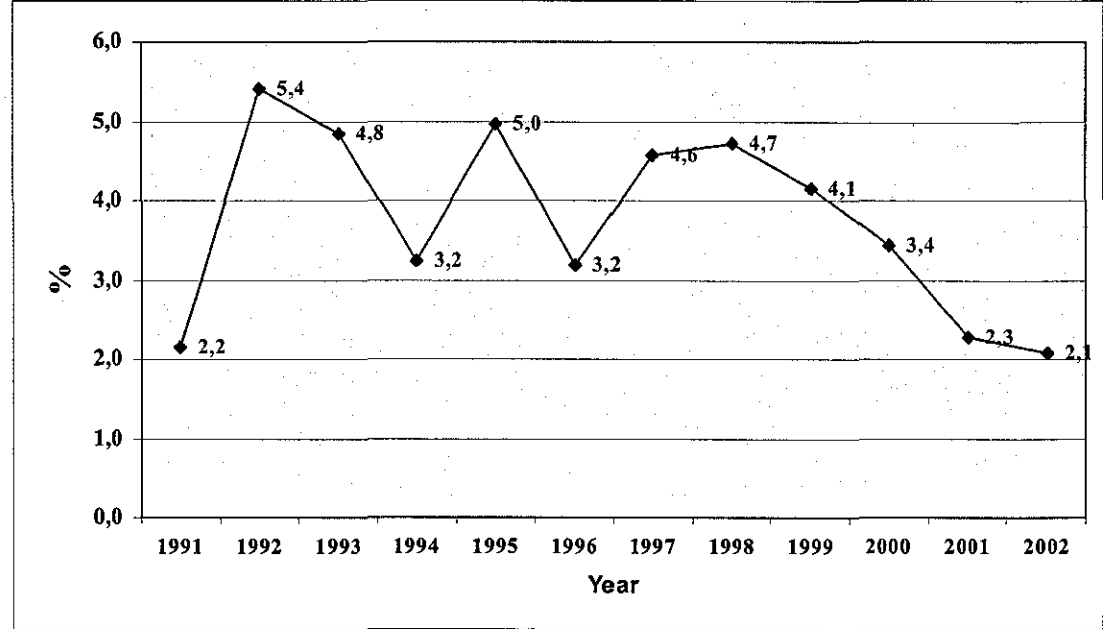
only ongoing revolutionary process in the region, but also the deepening of Neoliberal hegemony in the region.

In relation to US geopolitics, the election of William Clinton as president of the United States in 1992 created a new situation. The new Democrat administration changed the strategic orientation towards the region, reducing its importance within the US' international agenda and also emphasising the economic (trade, economic aid) dimension instead of the geopolitical/strategic one. The main impact of this change was the deepening of the market-oriented Neoliberal economic policies which were now increasingly being promoted by the Central American governments and power elites themselves. Although these reforms started during the 1980s (including under the final years of the FSLN government in Nicaragua), they were consolidated in the 1990s under further US and IFI orientation. Local embracing of this agenda was strongest in El Salvador and Nicaragua, where radical right-wing Neoliberally-inclined groups took control of the government. Reform continued to be more gradual in Costa Rica, in part as a consequence of the strong opposition of social movements and organised sectors of civil society to privatisation intents and proposals (Vilas, 2000: 222-228; Robinson, 1997b: 33-66; and 2001: 529-563).

The combination of these policies produced a good example of Harvey's (2003) idea of accumulation by dispossession privatising previous public economic assets in to the hands of transnational enterprises as well as in favour of the national oligarquies. In terms of capital accumulation, this process strengthened and expanded five main axis namely, first, agro-export crops; second, the *maquilas* and industrial free trade zones; third, the tourism industry; fourth, the financial sector and five, the economic activities related to transnational labour migration (Robinson, 1997b; Cortés Ramos, 2003).

The balance sheet for this growing process of transnationalisation is not positive. Among the main achievements are macroeconomic stability, export growth and diversification, a significant increase in foreign direct investment and dramatic growth in the *maquila* industry. However, the negative aspects are also significant and evident, including the basic fact that economic growth has been moderate with a majority of the countries' average annual GDP growth falling between 3.5 and 4.5 percent from 1991 to 2002 (see Figure 7.1). This is much lower than the average annual growth obtained during the previous style of development between 1955 and 1975 (6 percent).

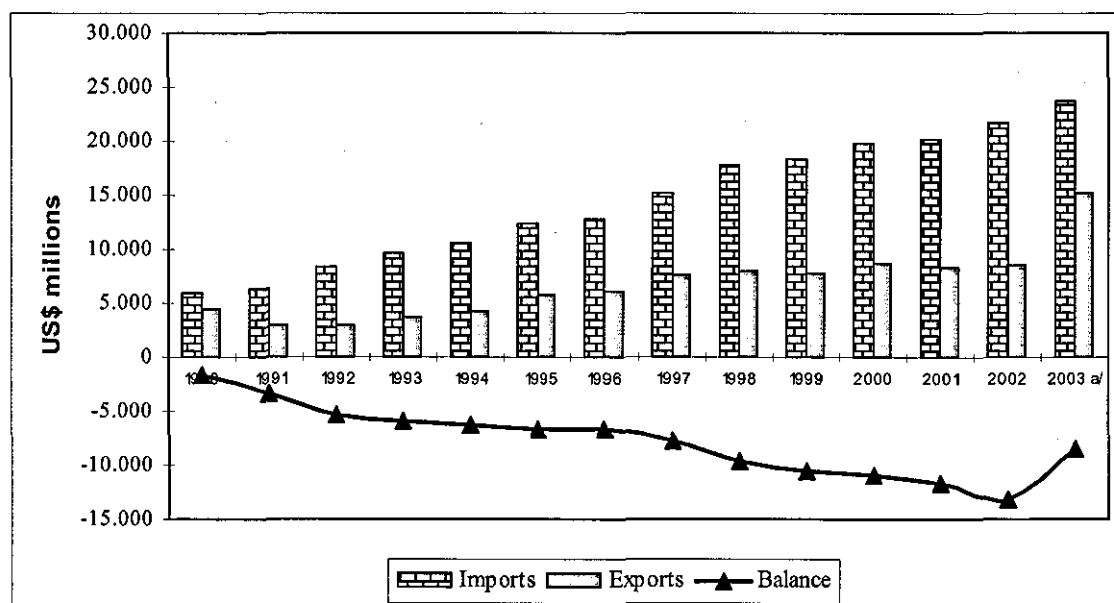
Figure 7.1: Central American Countries. Gross Domestic Product Annual Growth Rate, 1991-2002.



Source: FLACSO, 2005: 126.

Exports clearly do show a significant growth over this period but this positive outcome should not hide the increase in the overall trade deficit during the same period, as can be observed in Figure 7.2. The main cause of this growing gap is the fact that the rise in imports continues to be higher than the rise in exports (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003: 103; Nowalski, 2002). As a result, the regional trade deficit grew from US\$ 2.5 billion in 1990 to US\$ 9.1 billion in 2000 (Stein and Arias, 1992: 37).

Figure 7.2: Central American countries. Exports, Imports and Trade Balance, 1990-2003.



Source: ECLAC. www.eclac.cl

An important structural feature of the trade dynamic was the fact that most production was oriented towards the United States (61% approximately), this level of geographical concentration clearly increased the dependency of the Central American economies upon the US (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003: 109-111; Nowalski, 2002: 28-29). In relation to the wider impacts of the growth of the export sector in this period, in terms of cluster generation and economic chains (vertical integration), impacts were relatively limited because of the enclave logic of the free trade zones and garment industries (*maquilas*). Traditional and non-traditional agro-export activities mainly require unskilled labour that has largely been supplied by labour migration. These activities have been weak in terms of value addition and also in terms of cluster and chain generation (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003: 130-131).

In relation to labour markets, Nowalski points out that this style of development has produced economic growth without employment (*crecimiento sin empleo*) (Nowalski, 2002: 109). In fact, the main economic activities were unable to create enough jobs to absorb the annual rate of growth of the labour force during this period. This situation is particularly worrying, when you take into account the fact that Central America is a region with high

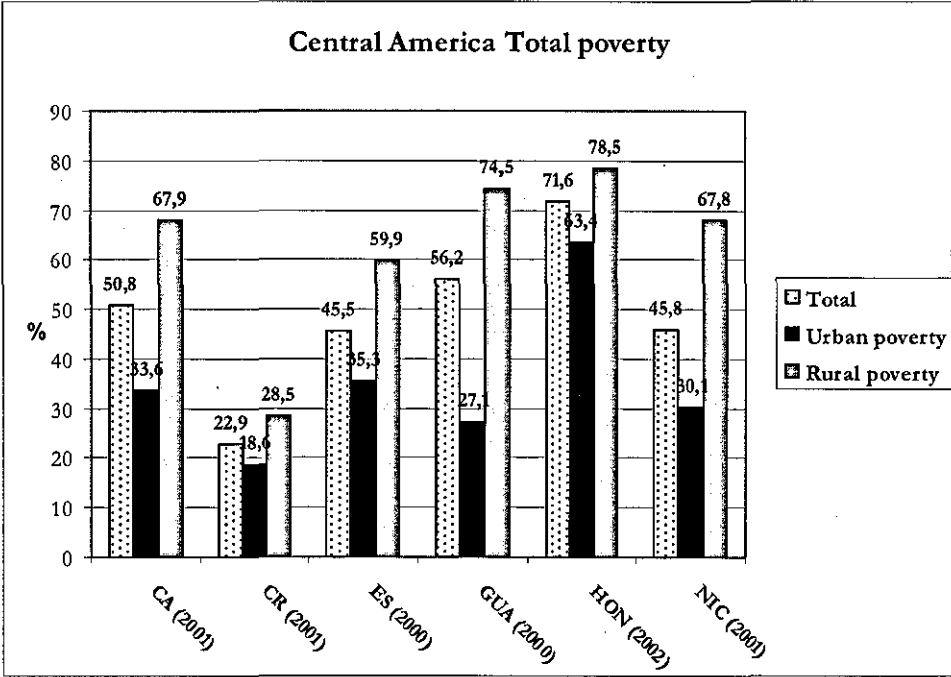
rates of population growth. Aside from this, the Neoliberal economic policies and the process of accumulation by dispossession through privatisation and state contraction also contributed to the growth of unemployment and underemployment. Nicaragua was an extreme case where, as a consequence of a series of privatisations, the number of public employees passed from 55,000 workers to 12,500 between 1990 to 1995. The situation was particularly critical in the rural sector where the undermining of the peasantry (and their basic grain production for local and national markets) increased, not only rural-to-urban migration, but also international migration.

Another important element to point out in relation to labour markets is the quality of the jobs that were created in this period. In general terms, the main trend was towards deterioration in the quality of jobs, as well as a growing informalisation of labour markets. Many jobs do not fulfil minimum requirements in terms of labour rights including, for example, a failure to make social security payments or pay the minimum wage to cover basic needs. As is pointed out by *Proyecto Estado de la Región* (2003: 47-48),

‘...the new jobs were not the more adequate. It is estimated that of every 100 new jobs generated between 1990 and 1999, 31 were created in the formal sector, 12 in agriculture and farming, and 57 in the non-formal sector. Hence, for the year 2000 is estimated that 30.1 percent of the 13.7 millions of workers in the labour market belonged to the formal sector, 39.3 percent in the non-formal sector and 30.6 percent in agriculture and farming. Three of every five Central American women were working in the non-formal sector... the main problem with these kind of jobs is they belong to economic activities with low productivity and produced *clusters* of poors. Thus, in the year 2000 the poverty level among the agriculture workers was 69 percent, in the non-formal workers 40.4 percent and 18.7 percent in the formal workers.⁵⁷

The combination of these factors with a deterioration in the quality and coverage of public services generated an uneven distribution of the fruits of economic growth, increasing the already dramatic levels of economic and social inequality and extending the gap between the richest and the poorest sectors within Central American society. By 2001 half of the Central American population were living below the poverty line and one of every four persons was living in extreme poverty, situations that contributed to generate structural bases for the production and reproduction of human displacements. Again, this situation has been particularly critical in the rural areas and in the indigenous population as can be seen in Figure 7.3,

Figure 7.3: Central America. Total, Urban and Rural Poverty.



Source: Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003: 49.

In terms of inequality and income distribution, Central America has kept the patterns of the rest of the Latin American region, which is considered the most uneven region of the world. Nicaragua and Guatemala are the countries with the most uneven income distribution of the region and, at the other extreme, is Costa Rica with the most even income distribution within the region as can be observed from Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4: Regional income distribution and inequality, 2000.

	Gini Coefficient	Poorest 40%	Following 30%	Following 20%	Richest 10%
Costa Rica	0,473	15.3	25.7	29.7	29.4
El Salvador	0,518	13.8	25.0	29.1	32.1
Guatemala	0,582	12.8	20.9	26.1	40.3
Honduras	0,564	11.8	22.9	28.9	36.5
Nicaragua	0,584	10.4	22.1	27.1	40.5

Source: Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003:, 69.

This trend reflects the assymetrical or uneven development within the region and also contribute to explain the orientation of the studied migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica.

The economic transformation and the growing inequality in the region was accompanied by political corruption, a factor that contributed to the weakening of the 'horizon of hope' (*horizonte de esperanza*) of the population, particularly for the young people of the region. This phenomenon is particularly strong in Nicaragua, where two former presidents (Ortega and Alemán) were accused of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. It is not a coincidence that in a survey carried out by the University of Central America (UCA) in Managua two thirds of the respondents consistently say that they have thought about the possibility of migrating to Costa Rica or the United States as an option for personal or familial survival. At the end of the day, expectations and hopes are important part of the subjective motives of the individuals in the decision to leave or stay (Cortés, 2003).

The Neoliberal orientation and the deepening of a regional development with a growing transnational component also had an impact on population displacements through different transnational migration dynamics within and beyond the region. These processes have transformed the Central American countries into a population expelling platform, particularly in the form of labour. It is ironic that fifteen years after the end of the main military conflicts, the region is expelling more of its population than in any other moment of its recent history. In fact, more than 5 million of the 35 million Central American people are living in a different country to the one that they were born in.

Figure 7.5: Evolution of the proportion of the US population born in Central America 1970-2000 (thousands).

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2001
Costa Rica	16,7	29,6	39,4	77,0	116,0
El Salvador	15,7	94,4	465,4	765,0	1.118,0
Guatemala	17,3	63,1	225,7	327,0	627,0
Honduras	19,1	39,1	80,5	250,0	362,0
Nicaragua	16,1	44,2	168,6	245,0	294,0
Total	84,9	270,4	979,6	1.664,0	2.517,0

Source: Baumeister, 2006. For the years 1970-2000 the data is from the US National Census. In the case of the year 2001 the data was obtained from Logan (2001) quoted by Baumeister. The data included regular and non-regular immigrants.

Figure 7.5 highlights the impressive growth in the number of immigrants flowing from Central America to the United States, strengthening the already existing transnational linkages between the two. In general, the country with the highest number of emigrants is El Salvador, with 2.8 million, followed by Guatemala and Nicaragua, both with approximately one million emigrants (OIM, 2001).

It is important to highlight that, at least initially, the new transnational migration trends were more of an unintended outcome or consequence of the impacts of neoliberal policies, rather than an explicit economic objective of the Neoliberal economic strategy. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, these dynamics created a new political economy in which labour force displacement was to become a fundamental part of the process of capital accumulation in this transnational development. In fact, the growing movement of population within and beyond the region was very functional to the power elites of the region and their foreign business partners for at least two main reasons. On the one hand, the departure of thousands of relatively young people at a very productive moment of their lives reduced the pressure on the labour markets and the public services of the expelling society whilst, on the other hand, most of those who have left their native countries have kept strong links with their families, a connection expressed, among other manifestations, through the sending of remittances. By the end of the 1990s, remittances had become one of the most important sources of income for most Central American countries.

Figure 7.6: Central America. Remittances and its relation to GDP, 1995-2002. (US\$ millions and percent).

		1995	1996	1997	1998	2002
Guatemala	Remittances	349.7	362.7	387.5	423.2	1,689
	Remittances/GDP (%)	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.1
El Salvador	Remittances	1,060.8	1,086.6	1,199.5	1332.8	1,935
	Remittances / GDP (%)	16.4	16.5	14.5	18.8	17
Honduras	Remesas	120.0	128.4	160.0	n.d.	720
	Remittances / GDP (%)	3.0	3.1	3.7	nd.	7.5
Nicaragua	Remittances	75.0	95.0	150.0	200.0	660.0
	Remittances / GDP (%)	4.1	4.9	7.0	8.9	22.0

Source: Baumeister, 2006.

Thus, as pointed out by Morales and other scholars, the transnational dimension of the new migration dynamics of the region are synthesised by the growing importance of the remittances sent by the migrants to their relatives in the country of origin. In fact, remittances have become a significant component of the macro-economic aggregates of all Central American countries and also a fundamental source of complementary income for millions of urban and rural households in the region (Morales, 1999a, 2002; Orozco, 2003). The amount and periodicity of remittance sendings to their relatives highlights the solid

link or bond between the immigrants and their communities of origin, a feature that was not present in previous waves of migration in the region.

Although the main transformations of this period were developed at the regional scale, particularly the transition to liberal democracies or poliarchies at the political level and the deepening of a Neoliberal transnational style of development (Robinson, 1996), the content, form, procedures and rhythms or temporalities of the reforms and adjustments had particularities in each country. In relation to this thesis, it is particularly important to understand the differences in the process of structural transformations between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Nicaragua was the country that suffered the most radical and deepest privatisation of any country in the region over a very short period of time from the early 1990s. In contrast, Costa Rica is the country where the Neoliberal process of transformation has been developed at the slowest pace, in significant part because of the social and civic opposition to any privatisation attempts. Nevertheless, in the economic realm, particularly in terms of the orientation of economic structure to external markets, Costa Rica was, together with El Salvador, the country with the deepest rate of *openness*. The expansion of export-oriented economic activities required a significant amount of extra labour that could not be supplied from purely national sources. This created a rare situation of historical coincidence in which Nicaragua was expelling population when Costa Rica needed it. This coincidence contributed in a significant way to the production of a complex set of transnational migration dynamics which are discussed in more detail in the following section.

7.1.1 Neoliberal transformations and the production of a migratory transnational articulation between Costa Rica and Nicaragua in the 1990s

The existence of a functional historical coincidence between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in which the former country was transformed into a population expelling society and the latter into a population pulling country has to be explained in accordance with the theoretical premise of this thesis, which is that migration dynamics cannot be explained by themselves but only in relation to the development processes of both societies, the recipient and the country of origin. Accordingly, this section has a twofold objective, first, to explain the main changes in the style of development in the 1990s in both Nicaragua and

Costa Rica and, second, to explain how these changes contributed to the articulation of transnational migration dynamics between the two countries.

7.1.1.1 Nicaraguan Neoliberal transformation after 1990s and the production of a country with relative population surplus

As mentioned before, the Nicaraguan case was an exception, in the sense that at the time that the neoliberal perspective was being consolidated across the region, it was the only country of the region that was trying to build a revolutionary process, through a radical set of political, economic, social and cultural transformations with a popular orientation. For that reason, the electoral defeat of the *Sandinistas* by a US-supported political coalition in 1990 implied a radical reorientation in all aspects of the country.

The three governments from 1990 to 2003 were pro-US and anti-*Sandinista*, and were enthusiastic promoters of Neoliberal policies, including massive privatisation of state properties and economic liberalisation in both external and internal sectors.

Several important institutional and economic transformations which occurred during this period contributed to the production of an expelling population platform, the most significant of these were, first, the massive reduction of the number of soldiers in the army. The deactivation of the political and military conflicts allowed for the reduction of the National Army as well as its institutionalisation.⁵⁸ This change was reflected in a significant reduction of their members from eighty thousand to fifteen thousand. The *Proyecto Estado de la Nación* estimate that military spending fell from 28% of GNP in 1989 to 1.5% in 1996; whilst Fitzgerald, Brück and Grigsby suggest that it fell from 16-18% in the period 1985-1990 to 5-6% during the 1990s (Fitzgerald et al, 2001: 11; Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 1999: 197 Walker, 2000: 80). The former members of the Army were supposed to receive land and credit from the Government to get reinserted in a productive mode in Nicaraguan society. Eventually, however, neither *doña Violeta Barrios* nor Arnoldo Alemán fulfilled their duties in relation to these commitments. Second, the total demobilisation of the Contra (more than 15,000 men in arms). The new Government was committed to giving the ex-contras the same treatment given to the former members of the Army, that is access to land and economic aid, but, ultimately, the promises and commitments were not honoured by the government. The government failed in providing access to land and credit to both

⁵⁸ During the Revolution the Army was named '*Ejército Popular Sandinista (EPS)*', after the elections in 1990, a new name was given to it: '*Ejército Nacional de Nicaragua*'.

an important group of ex-contras and ex-compas,⁵⁹ generating great economic and social difficulties and uncertainties in many rural communities. This was a key factor in the creation of rural emigration to Costa Rica, particularly from the North of the country (Armony, 1997: 203-218).

However, the significant transformations went well beyond the army and contra demobilisations. In the economic realm, the Chamorro Government saw the 'Free' market as the main driving force behind, and private enterprise as the only possible engine to achieve, economic development. As Arana points out:

'It was moving from war to peace and the demobilisation and resettlement of previous combatants; from a restriction of civil and political rights in the face of foreign aggression and domestic discontent to a more democratic and open society that enjoyed renewed press freedom; and from a highly regulated economy and state-centred accumulation model to a market-based system undergoing a Neoliberal adjustment and stabilisation program' (1997: 81).

The transformation of Nicaraguan economic structure was oriented towards an asymmetric reinsertion of Nicaragua into the global economy. This process involved reinforcing and diversifying export crop production; the development of extractive activities, mainly mining and the attraction of '*maquiladoras*' to free zones based upon labour force overexploitation (Fitzgerald et al, 2001; World Trade Organisation, 1999; Close, 1999). In fact, the Chamorro Administration pursued an ambitious policy of privatisation (Close, 1999: 126-137).

In the rural sector there were important changes. Among the principal of these we could mention⁶⁰ State privatisation and private land market creation. As an outcome of the privatisation policy, by 1994 the National Corporation of State Enterprises (CORNAP) had privatised, or liquidated 343 out of a total of 352 state enterprises, including state agricultural enterprises. Among the groups that gained were ex-land or enterprise owners⁶¹, co-operative workers and peasants. (Arana, 1997: 86) Of all the properties that were

⁵⁹ Namely '*recontras*', in the case of the former contras and '*recompas*', in the case of the former members of the Army. In some cases they acted together under a '*campesino*' common identity.

⁶⁰ There is a very extensive literature about the Chamorro Government (1990-1997), which is not the case with the Alemán Government (1997-2002). However, in general the main trends of economic transformation were maintained during the Alemán and Bolaños administration and it responded to an international reinsertion of the country in the global economy with the support of the international financial institutions.

⁶¹ It is important to mention that many of the former owners of properties expropriated during the revolutionary years returned as US citizens and for that reason counted on the support of the US Embassy in Managua that opened up a particular office for this purpose. Antonio Lacayo, Minister of Presidency and son in law of President Chamorro, called them '*gringos caídos*'. This group rejected any compensation, except their former lands. By the year 2000, 3317 property cases had been favourably resolved for U.S. citizens, with 800 still left. (NicaNet, 2000a)

privatised, land was the most demanded asset.⁶² By 1993, a partial report revealed that of the privatised state agricultural enterprises, 35 percent were returned to former owners, 31 percent was divided among former state workers, while the remaining 34 percent was given to demobilised combatants (Jonakin, 1997: 102).

All these changes implied a deep transformation of the rural world. As is shown in Figure 7.7, during the period 1988-93 the main beneficiaries of the changes in agrarian structure were the small- and medium-sized producers; these grew from 47.1 percent of the arable land in 1988 to 70 percent in 1993.⁶³ Large estate owners were also beneficiaries of the changes, shifting from 21 percent in 1988 to 26 percent by 1993. The *Sector Agrícola Reformado*⁶⁴ practically disappeared, passing from 31.8 percent in 1988 to 2 percent in 1993,

Figure 7.7: Changes in Land Tenure Structure between 1988 and 1993 (percentages).

Estate Size/Property Form	1988	1993
<i>Small- and Medium-Scale Farms</i>	47.1	71
Less than 50 mz ¹	18.7	39
Non-SAR: Private		
SAR lands: parceled co-ops and Individual lands	-	21
Post-SAR lands: primarily former combatants	-	10
Post-SAR lands: APT members	-	6
50 to 200 mz	-	2
	28.4	32
<i>Large-Scale Estates</i>		
200 to 500 mz	21	26
Greater than 500 mz	13.5	16
	7.5	10
<i>SAR² sector(Untransformed)</i>	31.8	2
Cooperatives ³	20.1	2
State farms	11.7	0
Other	-	2
Total	99.9	101⁴

Source: Jonakin, 1997: 109.

1. Abbreviation for *manzana*, or 1.7 acres.

2. Sandinista Agrarian Reform.

3. Figures for 1993 represent only the non-parceled collective cooperatives or CAS.

4. Percentage figures from source document totalled 101 percent.

⁶² Land privatisation was accompanied by land market liberalisation, which implied that beneficiaries of the redistribution of state lands through privatisation could sell their land if they wanted. This was an important change compared to the Sandinista Agrarian Reform that had banned individual beneficiaries (as well as members of cooperatives) from selling their land.

⁶³ The first wave of massive transference of public properties to small and medium farmers was done by the FSLN in the transition period between their electoral defeat (26th of February) and the change of government (24th of April), by means of the Laws 85, 86, and 88. These laws were known as 'la piñata', because the Sandinista leadership took advantage of them to keep in their hands the most productive and biggest estates and properties (Close, 1999: 163).

⁶⁴ Sector Agrícola Reformado is Agriculture Reform Sector.

At first glance, this could seem like a democratising redistribution of land, but in fact it gave rise to a massive process of land reconcentration. The creation of a private land market was a major factor behind this process during both the Chamorro and the Alemán Governments. The lack of legal security for peasantry properties,⁶⁵ the State's withdrawal from the technical support of rural producers, and credit concentration in the hands of large scale landowners, forced thousands of peasants and small producers to sell their properties at very under-valued prices to former landowners and other members of the power elite (including part of the former revolutionary Sandinista leadership) in a typical process of accumulation by dispossession. In addition to these factors, during the Alemán administration (1996-2001) political corruption increased to impressive levels, with prominent members of the government using their position to take advantage of impoverished peasants, buying massive amounts of lands in many cases using public resources. The president himself was involved in such corrupt practices (Nicanet, 2001; Elton, 2002).

The main peasant organisation leadership has aggressively denounced the insecurity that now exists in the rural world. For example, Sinforiano Cáceres, President of the National Federation of Farm Industry Cooperatives (FENACOOOP), argued that

'...in 1999 alone, nearly a million acres farmed by 436 coops, had been lost. Peasants were losing their land through bank foreclosure due to the current drought, and pressure to sell to a new 'landed gentry', drawn from among political and military leaders, including Sandinistas.'

He also criticised

'U.S. pressure to return lands confiscated from Nicaraguans who later became U.S. citizens, claiming that one third of the land distributed during the Sandinista Agrarian Reform had been taken back.' (quoted in NicaNet, 2000b)

It is important to note that where potential and real conflicts are most serious (and where the interests are most evident) is around the most productive lands. By the end of the

⁶⁵ Martí points out that in 1995 approximately 40 percent of land were in legal dispute (Martí I Puig, 2000: 95).

1990s, less than 30 percent of this land was not involved in some kind of dispute over ownership (Envío, 1997: 3).

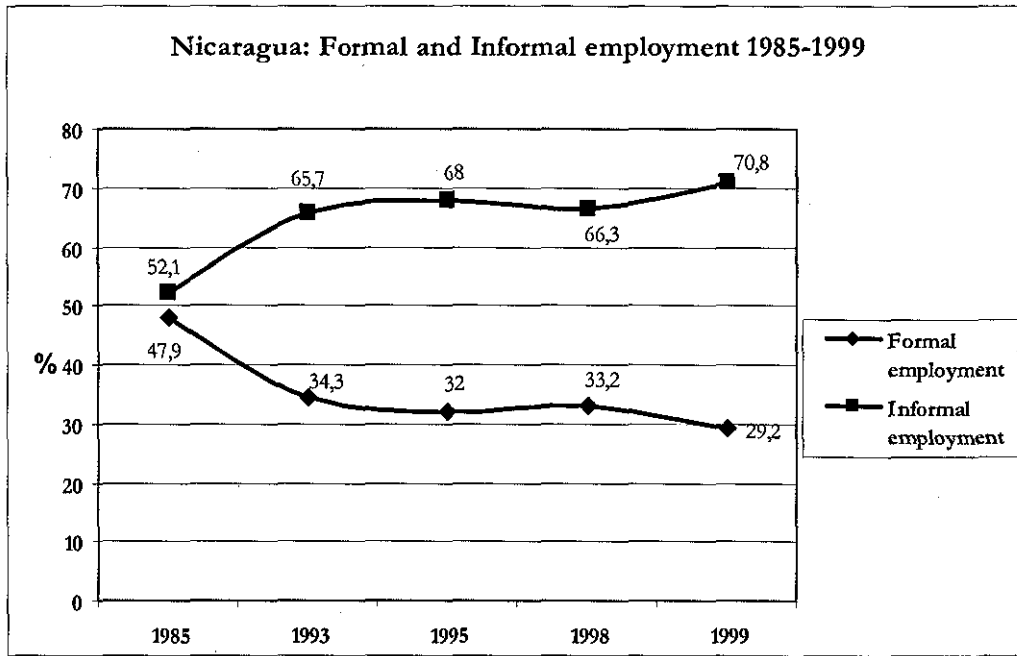
Another important structural or institutional transformation was the contraction of public expenditure and state withdrawal from many functions. In fact, public expenditure fell from 41.3 percent of GDP in 1988 to 17.5 percent in 1992 and 1993 although the expenditure levels as state spending started to fell in 1989 under FSLN government. As a direct result, thousand of workers were laid off, which dramatically increased unemployment and underemployment, and hence, poverty⁶⁶ (Arana, 1997: 92-93),

'Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America; its per capita GNP is only one third the regional average. Of thirty-three Latin American countries, Nicaragua is the poorest after Haiti. It is thus not surprising that, based on the consumption index, almost one half (47.9 percent) of Nicaragua's population are poor. This is equivalent to 2.3 million people, of which 830,000 (17.3 percent) are extremely poor. Measured by the UBN method, poverty rises to 72.6 percent, and extreme poverty to 44.7 percent. Measured by the income distribution method, overall poverty is 60.0 percent and extreme poverty is 33.5 percent. Although the incidence of poverty remained high in 1998, there was a small reduction compared to 1993.' (Gobierno de Nicaragua, 2000).

Independent sources argued however that, despite the government figures suggesting that poverty levels were improving, in reality poverty was actually worsening (CINASE, 2000). This is consequence of the reduction of formal employment, increase in both unemployment, and under-employment, as well as upon the quality of the jobs that were worsened with a significant growth in the level of informal jobs as can be seen from Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8: Nicaragua. Formal and Informal Employment, 1985-1999.

⁶⁶ Unemployment and underemployment were near 60 percent during the period 1990-1995 and dropped a little during the period 1996-2000.



Source: FLACSO, 2005.

In addition, dramatic public expenditure cutbacks and personnel reduction had a negative impact upon technical support and assistance for producers, particularly small and medium sized farmers, as well as peasant co-operatives (Jonakin, 1997: 102-103). It is not a coincidence that Nicaragua became the second poorest country (after Haiti) in Latin America and the Caribbean during this period, 76 percent of their rural population is considered poor. Taking into account this severe situation, internal displacement to other parts of the country or migration to Costa Rica was a plausible survival strategy for a growing number of rural peasants in Nicaragua.

A third significant institutional transformation was the privatisation of the financial system.. From the beginning of the Chamorro Administration, private banks were allowed to develop financial activities together with the National Development Bank (BANADES). Historically, the private banking system was in the hands of very few families and the sector largely remains structured in that way, similarly credit allocation by private banks has been concentrated towards a very limited number of businesses and entrepreneurs, most of them members of Nicaragua's traditional bourgeoisie. (Spalding, 1997: 261-62) By the end of the 1990s, the lack of controls meant that more than four private banks went bankrupt,

affecting thousands of customers, many of them small producers and workers who lost their savings⁶⁷ (El Nuevo Diario, 2001).

BANADES, the only public bank remaining, suffered a deep restructuring between 1990 and 1995, involving personnel reduction and many branch closures, mainly in rural areas. This made financial services less accessible to the peasantry. Credit allocation was shifted from agriculture to consumption and service activities and from small and medium producers to large farm owners. Most agricultural credit was directed towards export crop production, which remains largely in the hands of members of the power elite. As pointed out by Jonakin, in 1990 the credit allocated to large estate owners was 31 percent by 1993 it had reached 71 percent (1997: 105). In addition, corruption has been a severe problem and some members of the power elite were favoured with huge credits because of personal contacts and political influences. (Spalding, 1997: 263-64) In 1997, BANADES went bankrupt. Since then, there has been no public bank in the country, which has reinforced the concentration of credit described here. The reduction in credit access left small producers without any opportunity to obtain capital to produce their basic grains, threatening not only their material reproduction, but beyond that, their way of life and culture. This factor is particularly important in explaining the decision to migrate to Costa Rica for seasonal work (Fitzgerald et al, 2001: 33).

In synthesis, the foregoing analysis has demonstrated that the application of neoliberal policies in Central America has had direct impacts in the rural world, reducing the options for survival of the rural population and, as consequence, forcing at least some of them to migrate. In addition to this, it is necessary to mention the growing deterioration of Nicaragua's rural environment (deforestation, soil degradation, and so on) (PNUMA-OEA, 1997) which has had significant effects on the level of productivity, thereby increasing poverty in the rural population still further and contributing to the conditions that produced rural migration.

This analysis of the main political and economic changes that have occurred in Nicaragua during the last fifteen years help to explain the production of a massive rural and urban

⁶⁷ The banks were: INTERBANK (Sandinista property), 'Banco del Café' (which was managed by Francisco Mayorga, the first president of the Central Bank during the Chamorro Administration), 'Banco Mercantil' and, Banco Nicaragüense de Industria y Comercio.

transnational migration dynamic from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. In synthesis, the main factors that produced such an out-migration platform are the following:

- i. A growing level of political corruption that undermined the legitimacy of the political regime and created low expectations in people's perspectives about their future.
- ii. A reduction of the opportunities for the urban and rural population to survive in their original livelihoods as a consequence of:
 - Massive privatisation of public assets as well as the demobilisation of thousands of men that were part of the Army or the Contra. These processes increased the level of unemployment and under-employment.
 - A change in the strategy of development that provoked a welfare polarisation expressed through rising poverty levels, high unemployment, underemployment and labour force 'informalisation' in both urban and rural areas.
 - A reconcentration of property ownership as a result of lack of credit and technical support from the State, political corruption and the pressure exerted by former landowners (some of them directly protected by the U.S. Government).
 - Privatisation of the financial system, including the bankruptcy of the only public bank of the country. As a direct consequence, there has been a massive credit reconcentration in service and consumption activities, as well as large landowners that produce export crops, to the detriment of small and medium producers that cultivate basic grains for the national market or for self-consumption.
- iii. A growing process of ecological degradation that has intensified rural encroachment and the social impact of natural disasters upon the rural population.

All of these factors help to explain the growing population expulsion from Nicaragua to Costa Rica in the 1990s. However, the selection of the migration destination does not depend only upon the expelling (or pushing) factors, but also on the pulling factors. Hence, to understand these transnational migration dynamics it is necessary to study, not only the changes in the style of development in Nicaragua and how they configured expelling dynamics, but also how transformations in the style of development in Costa Rica contributed to the attraction of different kinds of transnational migration from Nicaragua.

7.1.1.2 Neoliberal transformations and the production of Costa Rica as a labour attracting country in the 1990s

As argued in the previous chapter, Costa Rica was one of the first countries in Central America to start the process of Structural Adjustment. Actually, Rovira Mas identifies 1982 as the end of the economic crisis and the years 1984-1985 as the departure point of this style of development in the country (Rovira Mas, 2004: 317). The same author mentions two different sets of factors that explain the reorientation of the style of development in the Costa Rican case. The international economic crisis that induced a global restructuring of the international division of labour, passing from the Fordist mode of accumulation to a flexible mode of accumulation at a global scale that, in a very simple way, implied the disaggregating and relocation of the production process in different regions, countries and cities of the world with the purpose of obtaining the highest rate of surplus and a secure environment for investment. This transformation was conducted by transnational enterprises and implied a global process of liberalisation, not only of trade, but also of financial and investment flows as well as state withdrawal of many economic functions and the weakening of its regulation capabilities.

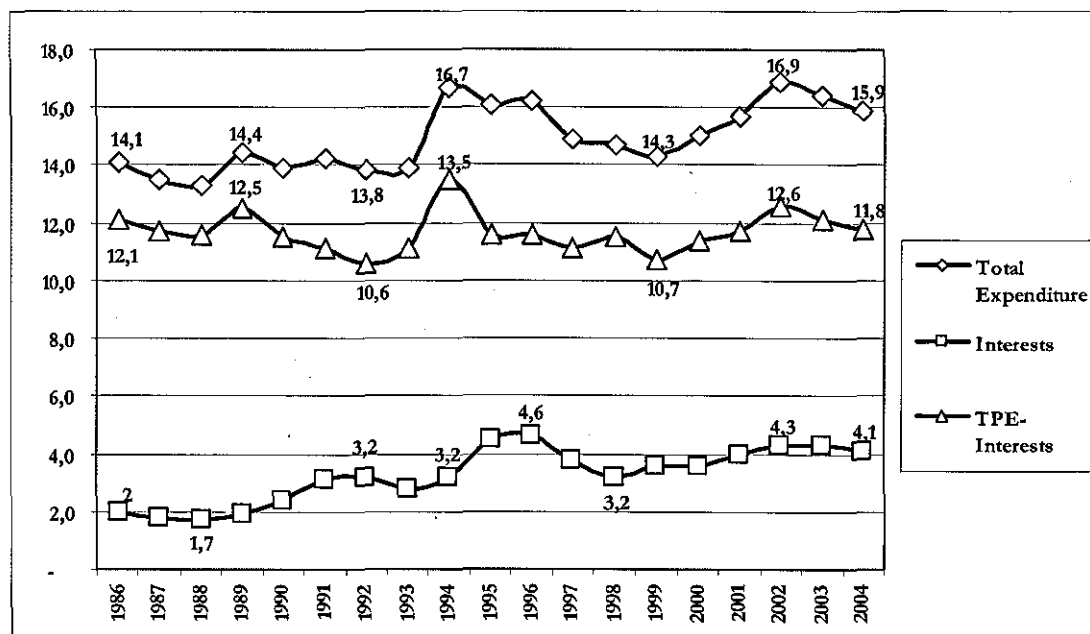
As mentioned previously, Nicaragua suffered a low intensity war during the 1980s, whilst Costa Rica played a significant geopolitical role as a democratic contrast to the Nicaraguan revolutionary process. This allowed Costa Rica to gain what Pérez Sáinz terms geopolitical rent, by which he means the political and economic room for manoeuvre obtained by the Costa Rican government because of their neighbours, namely Noriega in Panamá and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. This rent was twofold; on the one hand, financial support from the US government which allowed Costa Rica to reduce the social impact of economic transformations and, on the other hand, the ability to bargain for softer conditions in the application of structural adjustment (Pérez Sáinz, 2000).

It is also important to mention another determinant factor that favoured change in the style of development, namely the desperate need to overcome the economic and social crisis that Costa Rica was suffering at the beginning of the 1980s. The crisis was particularly severe between 1980 and 1982 with high inflation rates and negative economic growth. To sort out this crisis, in 1982 the two main political forces of the country, Liberación Nacional (PLN, social democrats) and Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC, social christians), negotiated the start of the Structural Adjustment process as the new style of development in Costa Rica (Rovira Mas, 2004: 317-320).

Although the Neoliberal transformation was less radical and more gradual than in the rest of the Central America countries, there was a set of reforms that achieved significant structural transformations after two decades of application. The main components of structural reforms were, first, trade liberalisation; second, state reforms and the initiation of different forms of privatisation of public entities and enterprises; third, the reform of the labour market and fourth, financial sector reforms (Hidalgo Capitán, 2003: 120-121; Rovira Mas, 2004; 322). The process of transformation has advanced with uneven pace in each sector. Costa Rica has followed a slower route in public enterprise privatization than the rest of Central America. In fact, only a few public enterprises were privatised by the end of 1980s and after that, the main privatisation mechanism used by the power elite was to open up public monopolies by allowing competition between public and private entities, as well as the transformation of public enterprises into more market-focused entities through prioritising profit maximisation. Good examples of both mechanisms of privatisation were the energy and financial sectors. However, it is important to point out that significant sectors of the Costa Rican economy still are in the State hands as public monopolies, such as telecommunications and insurances.

The public sector reconfiguration was oriented to strengthen the engine sectors of the new style of development, namely those oriented to the external markets. This fact was reflected in the structure and orientation of public expenditure. During the period 1988 to 2004, the public budget and expenditure oscillated between 13.3 percent (1988, lowest peak) and 16.9 percent (2002, highest peak) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In this period, the interest charged on both internal and external debts rose significantly, constraining the real expenditure available for public policies. In fact, before 1990 interest payments were below 2 percent of GDP, while in the following decade the level oscillated between 2 and almost 5 percent (4.6 percent in 1996, highest peak) as shown in Figure 7.9,

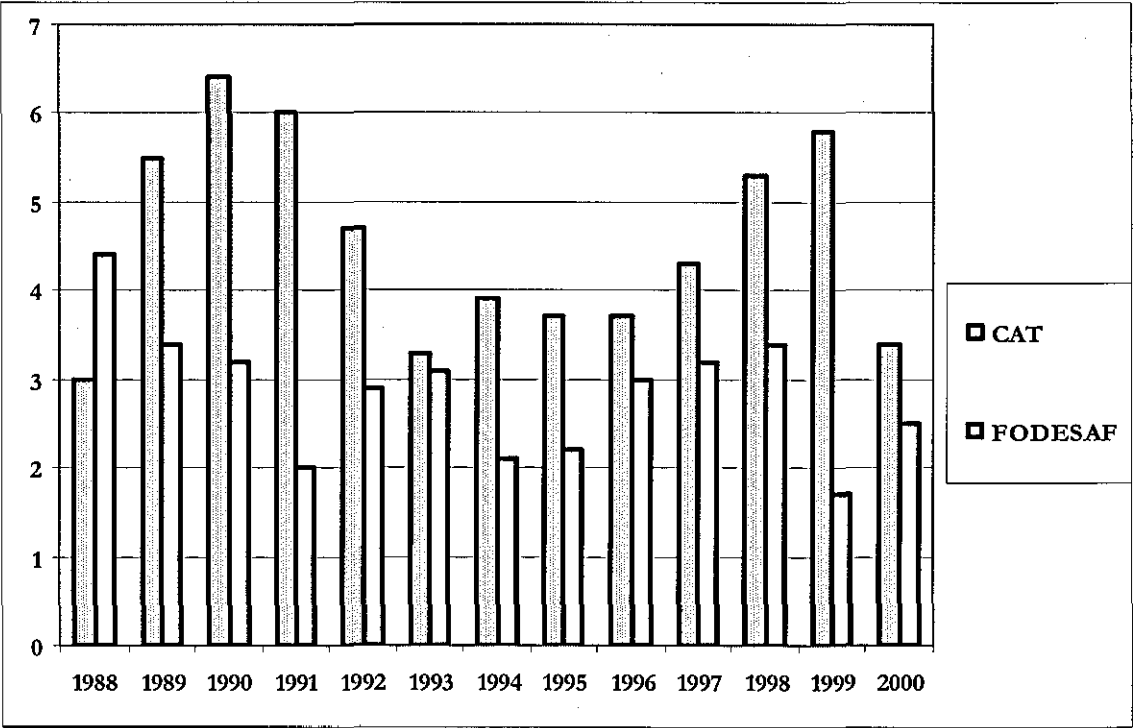
Figure 7.9: Costa Rica. Total Public Expenditures, Internal and External Debt Interest Payments and Public Expenditures without interests (percent in relation to GDP), 1986-2004.



Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, www.bccr.go.cr; Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica de Costa Rica, www.bccr.fi.cr

The reduction or freezing of state expenditure was evident in the case of the FODESAF, program whose main objective was to support the poorest rural and urban families or those in critical situations. In 1988 this program received more than 4 percent of total public expenditures, its highest point, whilst by 1999 it received less than 2 percent of total public expenditures, its lowest level. This trend contrasts with that of the CAT, a tax exoneration program directed towards export producers, which received 3 percent of total public expenditure in 1988, jumped to between 4 and 6 percent between 1989 and 1992 and then decreased to a little more than 3 percent in the period 1993-1996, before then increasing again to just over 4 percent in the period 1997-1999. In this comparison it is important to point out how the contrast of the expenditures in these programs reflected the priority change of government during the Structural Adjustment period, thus after 1988 the export oriented incentives (CAT's expenditures) were always higher than the socially-oriented expenditures (FODESAF) as shown in Figure 7.10.

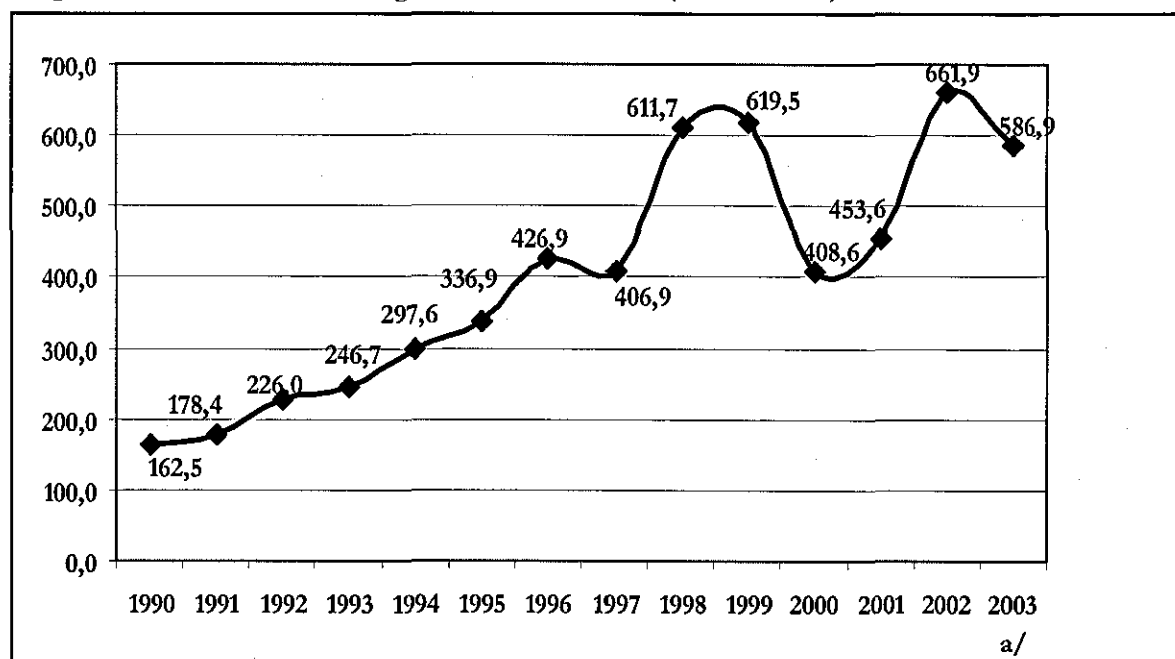
Figure 7.10: Costa Rica. Public Expenditures in CAT and FODESAF in relation to the Total Public Expenditure (percent), 1988-2000.



Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, (www.bccr.go.cr); Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica de Costa Rica (www.mideplan.go.cr).

The transformation in the public sector stimulated another key element for the production of a new style of development, namely an increase in the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Costa Rica. This was encouraged through the creation of a set of public incentives to attract transnational capital, including tax reduction or elimination, as well as subsidies for export-oriented businesses. As a result of this state policy, the level of FDI increased from US\$162.5 million in 1990 to US\$ 661,9 million in 2002, the highest peak in the studied period as is shown in Figure 7.11.

Figure 7.11: Costa Rica. Foreign Direct Investment (US\$ millions), 1990-2003.

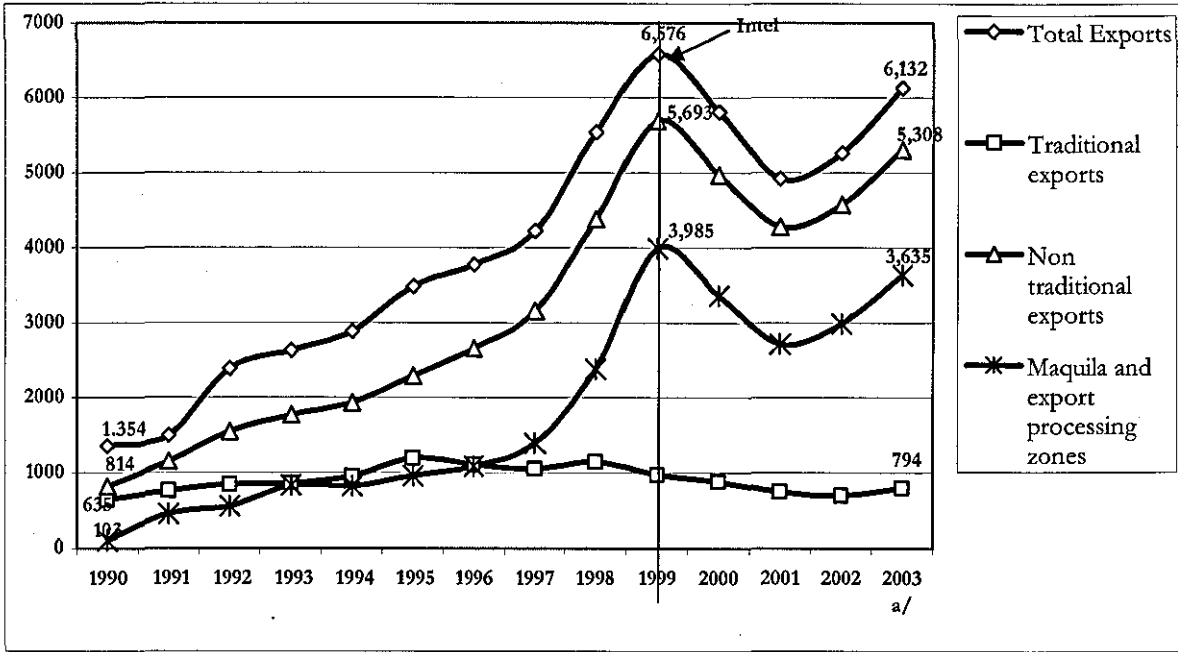


Source: Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003.

The growing presence of transnational capital and investments was reflected in the overall performance of many economic activities in which this capital was decisive. This relation was particularly clear in the export oriented sector that grew from US\$ 1,354.0 million in 1990 to US\$ 6,132.0 million in 2003, implying an increase of 353 percent in the level of exportation over the period as shown in Figure 7.11. Costa Rican exports not only showed impressive growth but also witnessed an important diversification. Thus, since the end of the 1980s, the consolidation of two principal export categories can be noted, namely the traditional export sector, with products such as bananas, sugar, meat, cocoa and coffee and the non-traditional, namely seafood, oranges, flowers and plants, pineapples, but also garments and other industrial products, including computer components and so on. These latter products have gained significant relevance in terms of their weight in the export structure. For example, in 1990 the goods and merchandises produced in maquilas and export processing zones represented less than 10 percent of total Costa Rican exports while in 2003 they represented almost 60 percent of the total exports of the country. Particularly relevant for this process was the Intel installation in Costa Rica in 1999 that increased the level of investment and exports in a significant way as it could be observed in Figure 7.12.

Another important trend in the export sector was the relative decline of agricultural products in relation to total exports, particularly in the traditional sector that had represented almost half of all exports in 1990 but only 13 percent by 2003. However, in absolute terms, the export of agricultural commodities still continued to grow at a moderate pace overall.

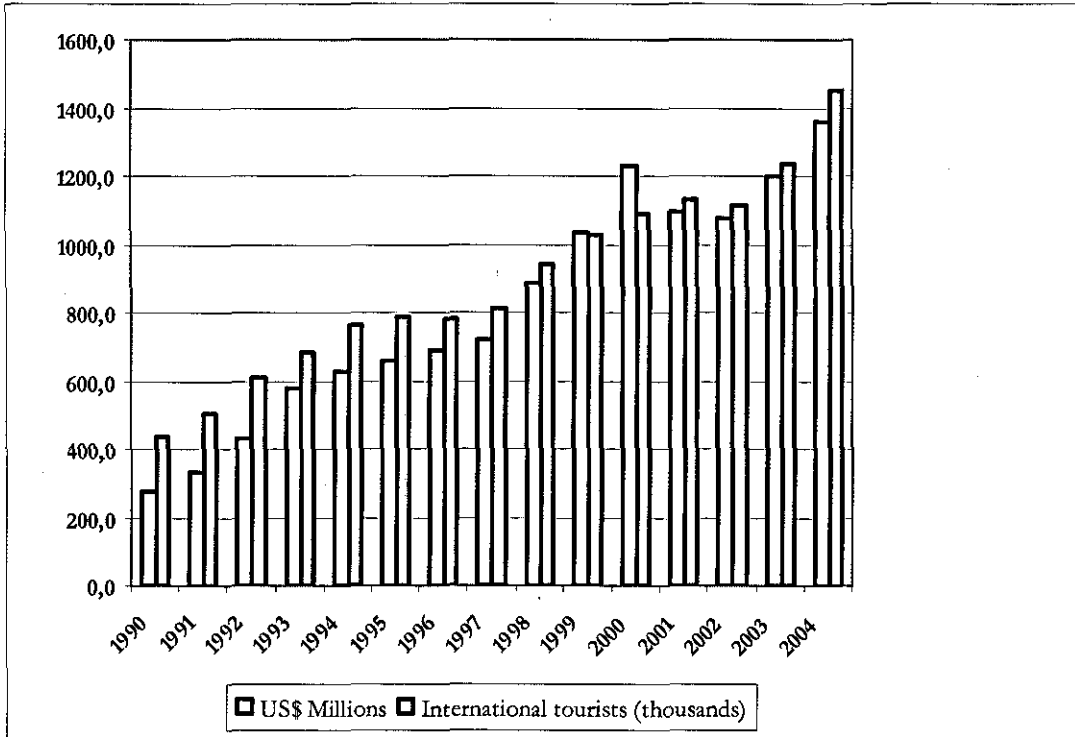
Figure 7.12: Costa Rica. Total Exports (US\$ Millions), 1990-2003.



Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, www.bccr.go.fi.

Although the export sector was one of the main engines of growth of the new style of development, there were other important sectors that underlay the levels of economic growth, including construction, commerce and tourism (Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003). Tourism in particular has become one of the most important economic sectors of the new transnational style of development, a factor which is reflected in the impressive sectoral growth outlined in Figure 7.13.

Figure 7.13: Costa Rica. Tourist sector growth (US\$ millions), 1990-2003.

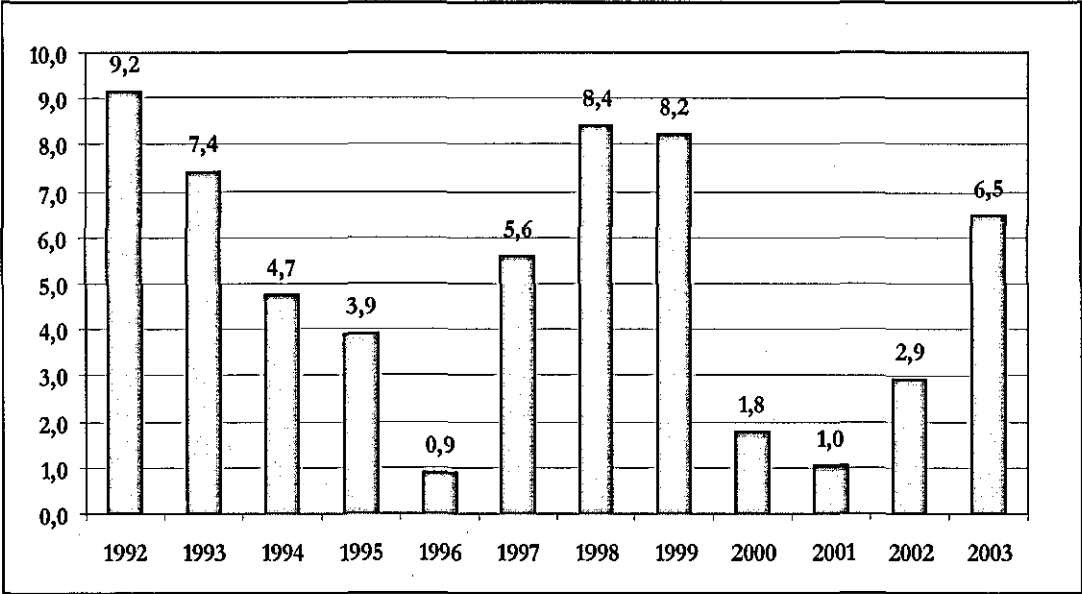


Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, www.bccr.go.cr; El Observatorio del Desarrollo, 2001.

In the period 1990-2004 the tourist sector's income rose almost 400 percent, passing from less than US\$ 300 million to more than US\$1,300 millions, implying an annual rate of growth of almost 30 percent. This was an outcome of the massive increase in the number of international visitors which grew from 435,000 tourists in 1990 to almost one and a half million tourists in 2004.

The new dynamic clearly generated a process of economic expansion. In fact, the annual rate of growth of GDP for the period 1992-2003 was 5 percent, although it is important to point out that this economic growth was not steady but, on the contrary, very unstable with a highest level of 9.2 percent (1992) and a low point of 0.9 percent in 1996, as can be observed in Figure 7.14.

Figure 7.14: Costa Rica. GDP annual rate of growth, 1992-2003.



Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, www.bccr.go.cr

The growing transnational influence of the new style of development is reflected in the growing level of openness of the Costa Rican economy, which is the weight of total imports and exports in relation to the GDP. In the decade from 1994 to 2004, this level passed from 77.3 percent to more than 95 percent.

Figure 7.15: Costa Rica. External openness index (percent), 1994-2004.

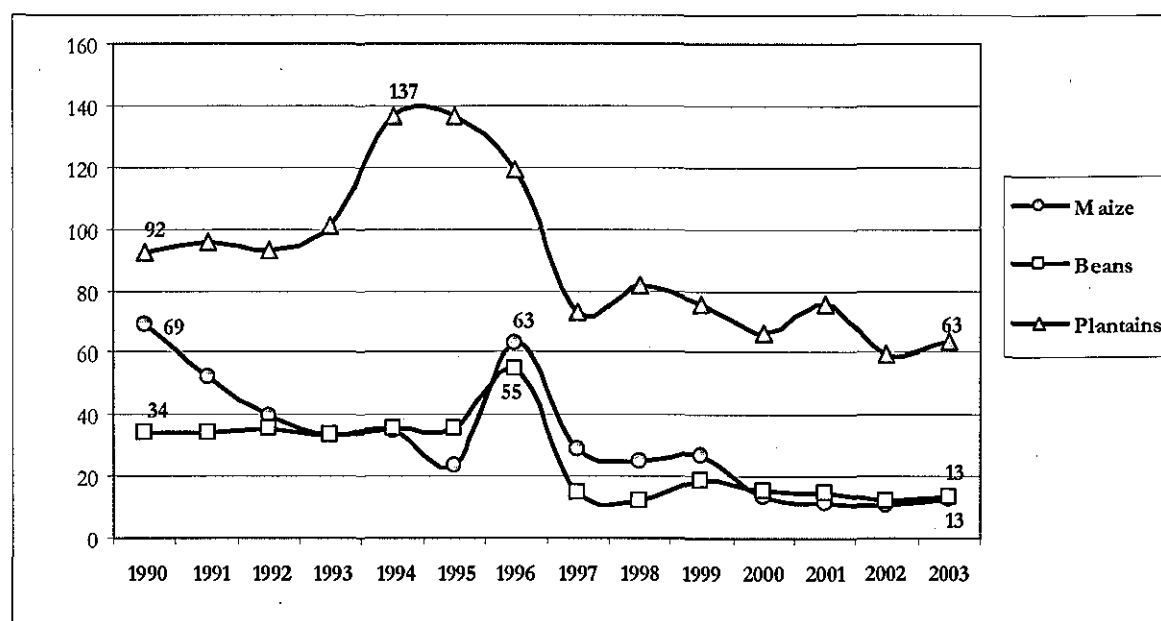
1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
77,3	78,2	83,5	86,2	98,8	97,7	94,4	83,7	88,2	95,3	96,2

Source: Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2003.

There were not only winners in the economic transformations described up to this point. As much as exports were stimulated, internally-oriented production was not supported by the State and, on the contrary, incentives and subsidies they had received under the previous style of development were withdrawn. This was particularly clear in the cases of maize and beans production. It is important to mention that these crops were mainly produced by peasant family units of productions, that is small producers. The withdrawal of the state in terms of financial or credit support, as well as technical assistance, was

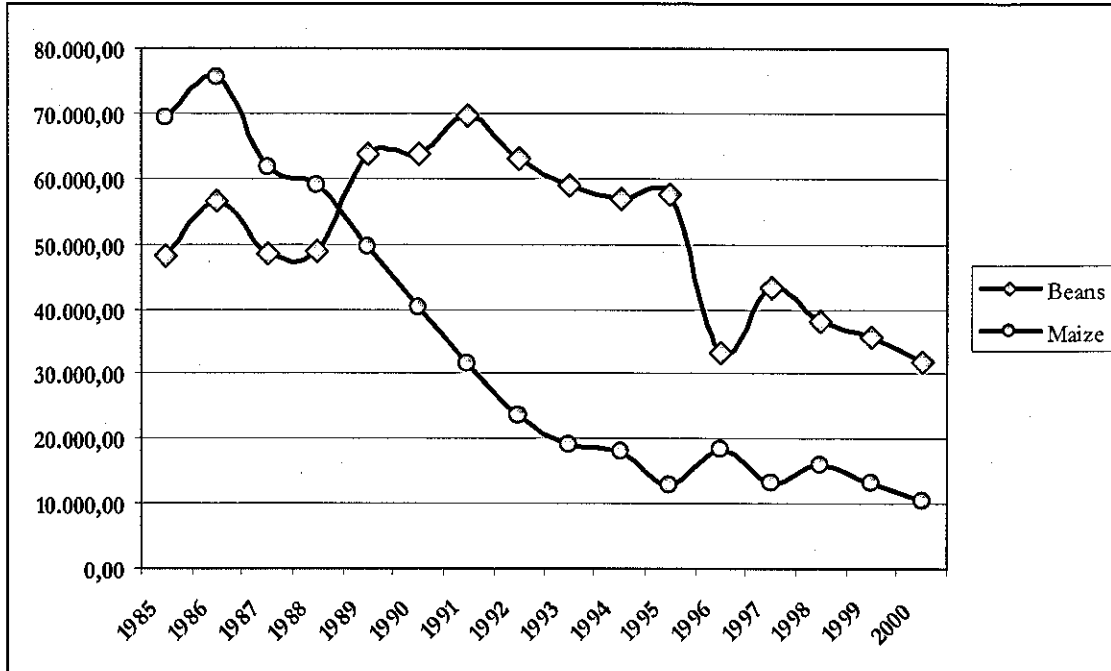
reflected in a significant reduction of product yields for these crops in the 1990s and also produced a massive accumulation by dispossession in different parts of the country, particularly in the North Pacific and the Caribbean regions where small producers were increasingly obliged by these conditions to sell their lands to export oriented big producers or transnational companies. Figure 7.16 demonstrates the configuration of these trends in the cases of maize, beans and plantains throughout the 1990s and up to the beginning of this decade.

Figure 7.16: Costa Rica. Maize, Beans and Plantains Total Yields (thousands of tons), 1990-2003.



Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica, www.bccr.go.cr

These trends can also be seen in the figures for total cultivated area of these crops which also suffered dramatic reductions in part as consequence of thousands of peasant land dispossession. Figure 7.17 demonstrates this reduction in terms of cultivated hectares of maize and beans,

Figure 7.17: Costa Rica. Cultivated Area of Maize and Beans (Hectares), 1985-2000.

Source: FLACSO, 2005.

Of these products, the most dramatic cases were those of maize and beans, the most basic products of peasant production and consumption. In the case of beans, the annual yield fell from 69,000 tons in 1990 to 13,000 tons in 2003, and the produced area declined from 70,000 hectares in 1992 to 32,000 hectares in 2000. In the case of maize, the annual yield passed from 34,000 tons in 1990 to 55,000 tons in 1996 and then had a massive decrease to 13,000 thousand tons in 2003 and in terms of produced area it passed from almost 80,000 hectares in 1986 to 10,000 hectares in 2000.

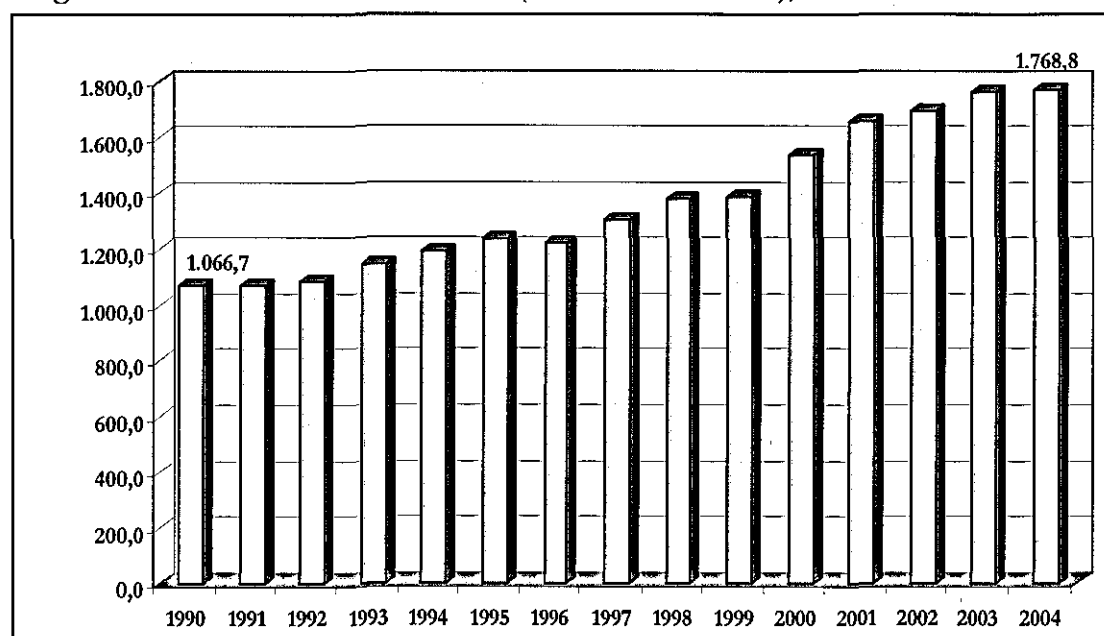
As pointed out before, these transformations in terms of production and land use also implied a dramatic social transformation in terms of changes in the mode of life of thousands of families. In some ways, the transformation of the rural world liberated labour for the expanded opportunities in the export agriculture, service and industrial sectors, however this rural to urban migration would not prove to be enough to fulfil the labour demand that the main export oriented activities would require, as is discussed in the next section.

7.1.2 The transformation of Costarican labour markets as a key factor for the production of a transnational space with Nicaragua

At this point of the chapter, it can legitimately be asked what the connection between all of these analyses and the transformation of Costa Rica into a migration-pulling country is? The answer is that the key element that helps to explain the transnational interpenetration between Costa Rica's new style of development and the Nicaraguan immigration towards its neighbour is the transformation that occurred in the labour markets of both countries as a consequence of the Neoliberal economic changes described up to this point. As signalled by Morales, the linkage between both countries is now so strong that it could be conceptualised as a transnational space, constitutive of a new inter-territoriality, particularly in some regions and within particular economic sectors (Morales, 2002: 51-52).

In a previous section of this chapter the production of an expelling population platform in Nicaragua was explained in detail. In the Costa Rican case, the economic transformations described thus far have had a significant impact in the country's labour markets.⁶⁸ Thus, as a correlate of the economic expansion witnessed by the country in the period 1990-2003, there was a significant growth in the labour force or economically active population, which grew from 1,066,700 workers in 1990 to 1,768,800 workers in 2004 (Figure 7.18), meaning the existence of an extra 702,100 workers by the end of the period, representing a percentage growth of 65.8 percent and an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent.

Figure 7.18: Costa Rican Labour Force (thousand of workers), 1990-2004.

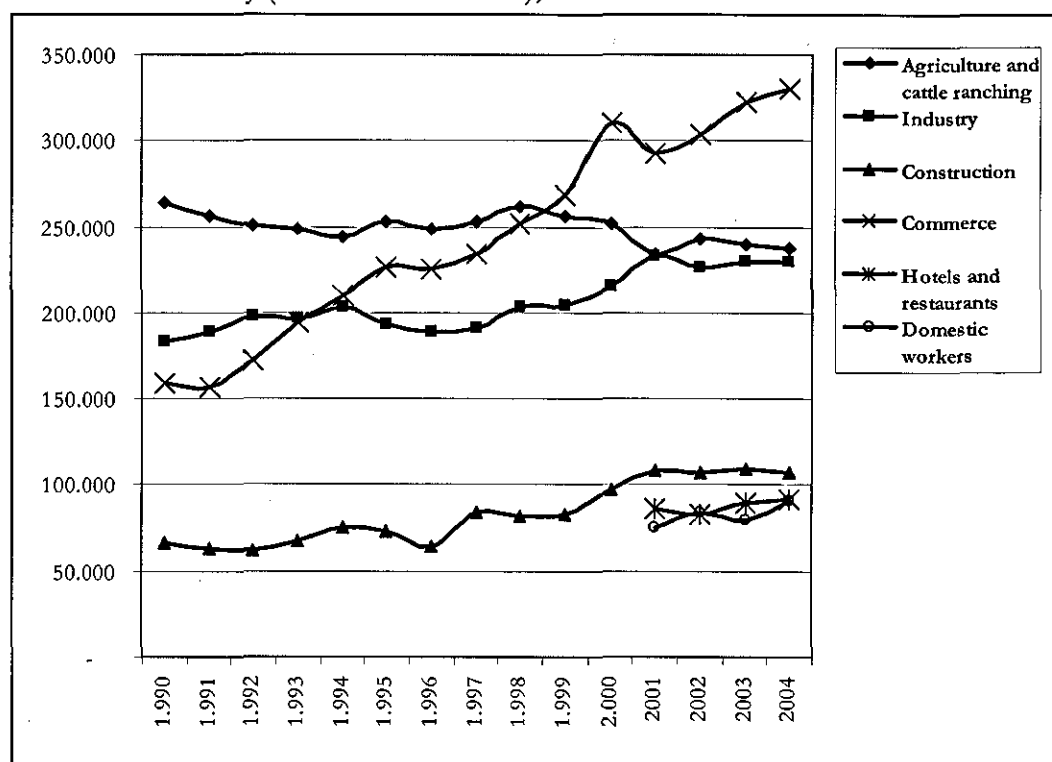


Source: Banco Central de Costa Rica. www.bccr.go.cr

⁶⁸ To this point is important to remind that, as pointed out in the chapter four, in the long durée Costa Rica has been a country with a relative scarcity of labour force since colonial periods.

When the labour market is disaggregated according to its main economic sectors, it becomes clear that the reorientation of the economic structure towards export markets was paralleled by the composition and evolution of the main employment activities of the economically active population as can be observed in from Figure 7.19. In terms of the main trends, the clearest is the absolute and relative decrease in the economically active population employed in the agricultural sector which fell from 263,713 workers in 1990 to 237,262 workers in 2004. In relative terms, for the same years it fell from 39.2 percent to 21.8 percent. In terms of those sectors that underwent expansion, the main examples were commerce, hotels and restaurants as well as domestic employment which together grew from 23.7 percent in 1990 to 46.2 percent in 2004. Employment in the industrial sector declined from 27.2 percent in 1990 to 21.1 percent in 2004. This decline was not only relative but also absolute passing from approximately 270,000 workers in 1990 to less than 250,000 workers in 2004. These trends confirmed that the Costa Rican economy is moving towards a service oriented productive system (Trejos, 2004).

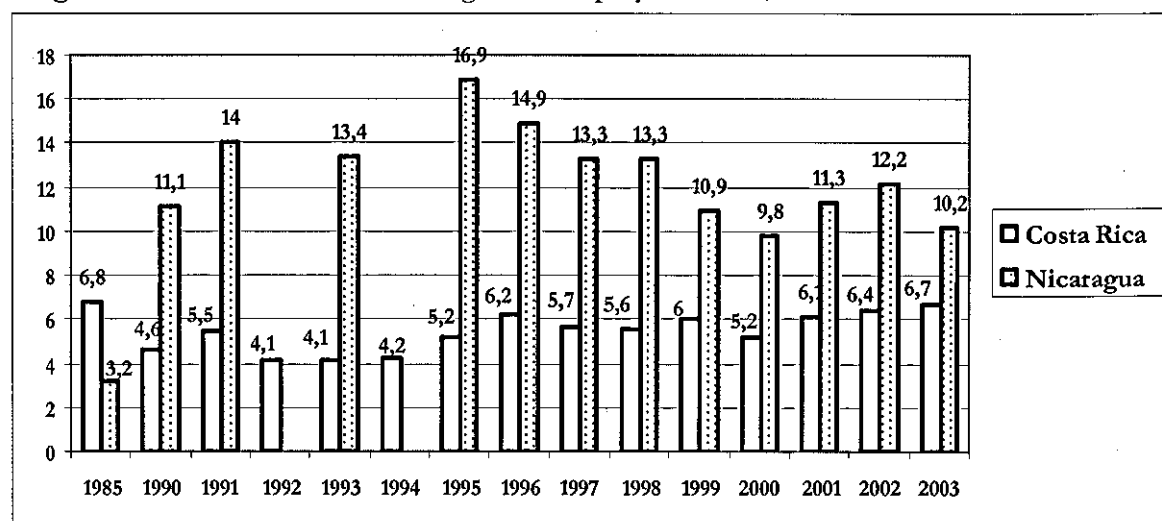
Figure 7.19: Costa Rica. Evolutions of the Active Economic Population by Economic Activity (thousand of workers), 1990-2004.



Source: Proyecto Estado de la Nación, 2005.

It is important to point out, however, that this transformation in the labour markets occurred with relatively low unemployment rates, particularly if compared with the same rates in Nicaragua (Figure 7.20),

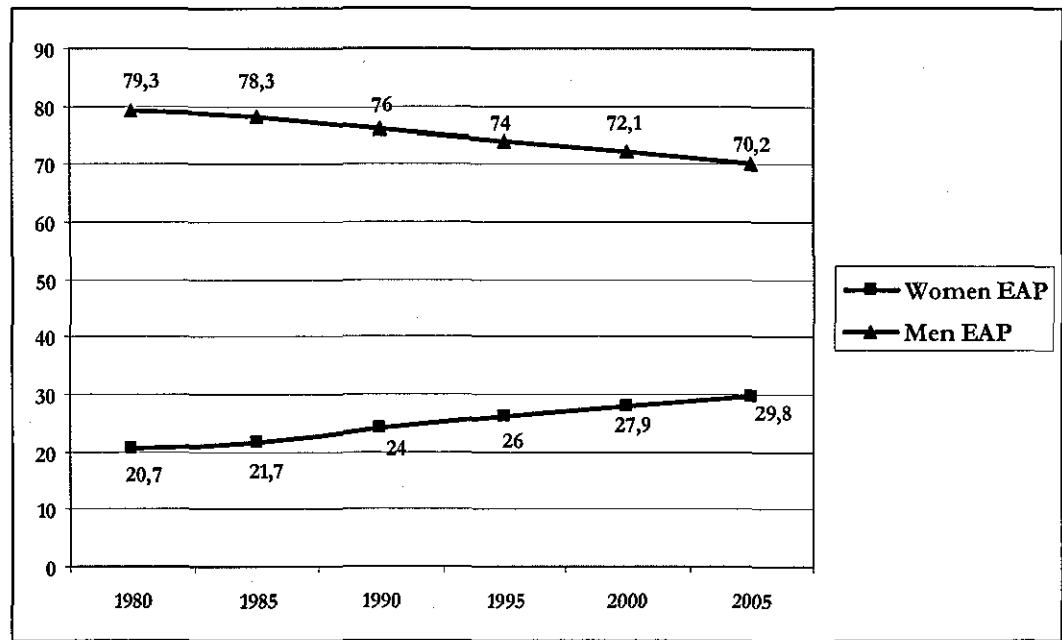
Figure 7.20: Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Unemployment rate, 1985-2003.



Source: Proyecto Estado de la Región, 2003.

Figure 7.20 indicates how the Costa Rican unemployment rate oscillated between 4.1 and less than 7 percent of the total economic active population, while in the Nicaraguan case in its most critical moments, the unemployment rate was above 15 percent. One feasible explanation of this relatively low rate of unemployment in the Costa Rican case is related to the fact that the economic expansion created a significant demand for labour. Hence, the critical question here is how did the economy solve this requirement? One factor that contributed to fulfilling the growing demand for labour was the growing incorporation of women into labour markets. In fact, in relative terms women's participation grew from 20.7 percent in 1980 to 29.8 percent in 2005. In absolute numbers this implies that the number of women in the labour market grew from 106,000 to 371,000 that is it more than tripled in that length of time.

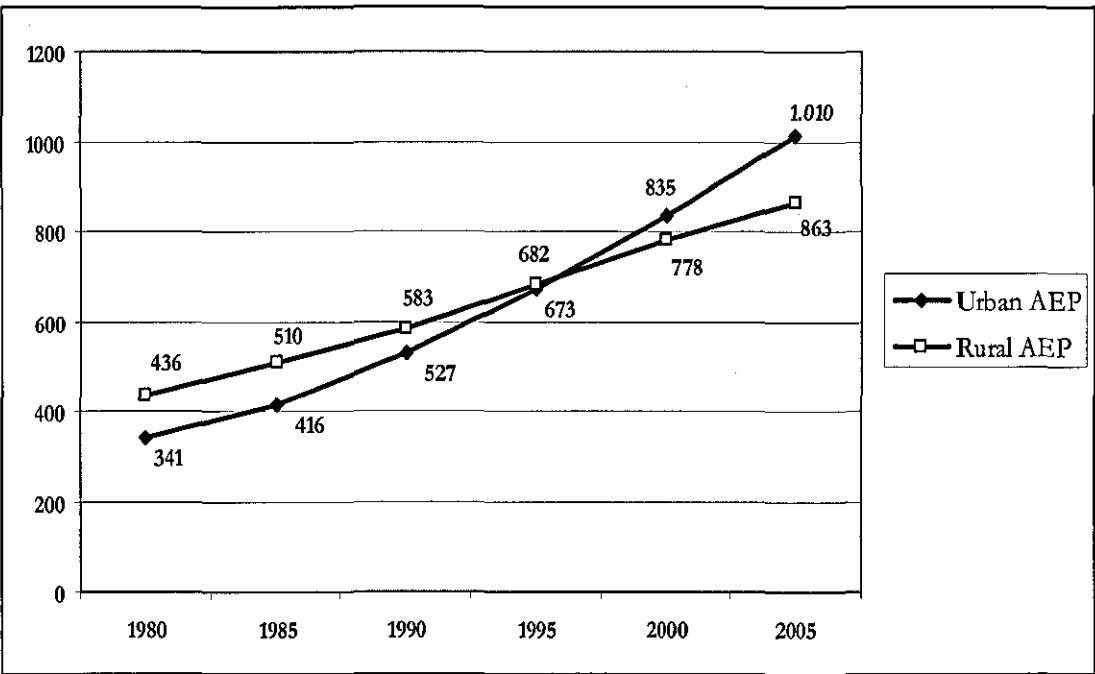
Figure 7.21: Costa Rica. Women and Men Economic Active Participation in the Labour Markets, 1980-1995.



Source: FLACSO, 2005.

There were also significant changes in the rural and urban composition of labour markets. As shown in Figure 7.22, the country was transformed from a situation in which rural workers were a majority (57 percent of the total economically active population in 1980) to the reverse situation in 2005, when the rural economically active population represented only 46.1 percent of the total.

Figure 7.22: Costa Rica. Urban and Rural Active Population, 1980-2005 (Thousands).



Source: FLACSO, 2005.

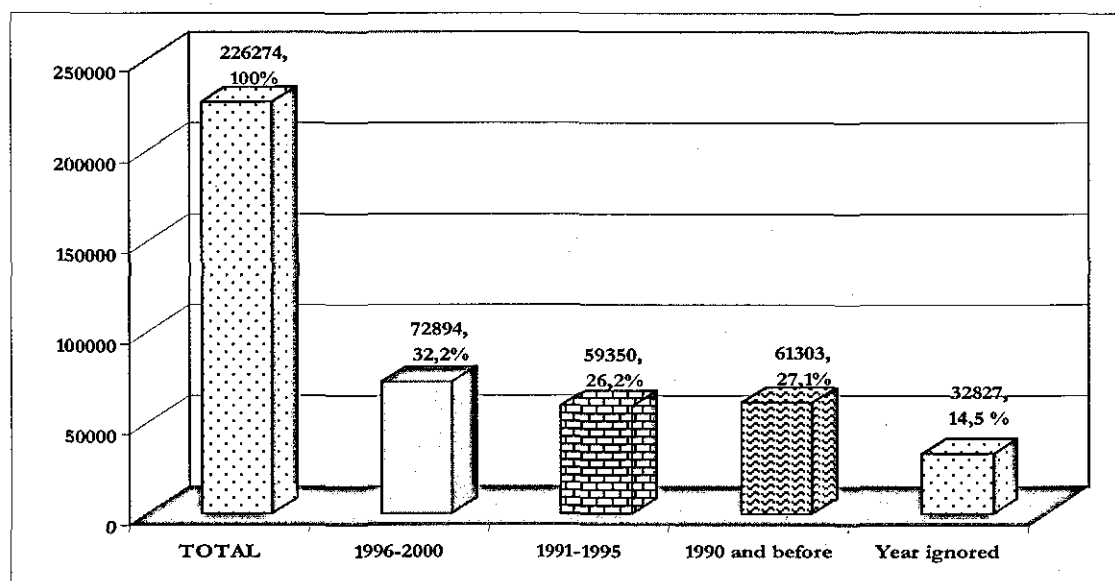
However, even taking into account the incorporation to the economic dynamics of both women and the rural active economic population that has been spelled from the rural countryside, the low population growth of Costa Rica in the 1970s (Rosero, 2005) was a structural limitation to satisfying the growing demand for labour generated by the growing needs of the new transnationally oriented style of development.

In fact, the numbers showed by the previous figures already contain immigrant populations in them. Thus, there are significant economic sectors that could not produce at current levels without immigrant labour (Morales, 2002; Unidad de Investigación en Fronteras Centroamericanas, 2005). As pointed out by Morales, the Nicaraguan labour insertion in Costa Rica has been linked to the activities of transnational accumulation processes, some of them traditional, such as in the cases of coffee and bananas, and others in less traditional areas such as sugar cane, and more recently orange, pineapple, rice, ginger, manioc, flowers and other tropical products for export. In the urban sector, Nicaraguan immigrants have occupied three main niches, construction and private security in the case of male migrants, and domestic employment in the case of female migrants. During the last few years, there has also been a growing presence of migrants in maquilas and commerce (Acuña, 2000; Morales, 2002). Hence, against the perception of some sectors of the Costa Rican population who have thought of Nicaraguan immigration as a negative burden or as a threat (Sandoval, 2001), the presence of Nicaraguan workers has contributed in a significant way to the Costa Rican economic expansion and change in the style of development of recent years.

7.1.3 Main dynamics within the migratory transnational space between Costa Rica and Nicaragua since mid-1990s

In the two previous sections the main structural cause that have contributed to the creation of a historical coincidence between Nicaragua as expelling society and Costa Rica as recipient society were explained. In this section the main dynamics and characteristics of the Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica in the 1990s are discussed. As was pointed out previously, a few years into that decade a new wave of emigration was underway towards Costa Rica.

Figure 7.23: Costa Rica Population Census of 2000. Nicaraguan Immigrant's Year of Arrival.



Source: CCCP-UCR, <http://www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr>

As can be observed in Figure 7.23, almost 60 percent of the total of Nicaraguan immigrants registered by the Population Census of 2000, arrived after 1990, confirming the fact there was a new migration wave from Nicaragua to Costa Rica going on at that time.

In fact, the flow of migrants was more complex than in prior periods of heavy migration, with different kinds of people coming for a greater mix of motives than before. This wave included rural-rural, urban-urban and rural-urban migration dynamics. As to the nature and period of their stay, the migrants can be roughly grouped into three categories:

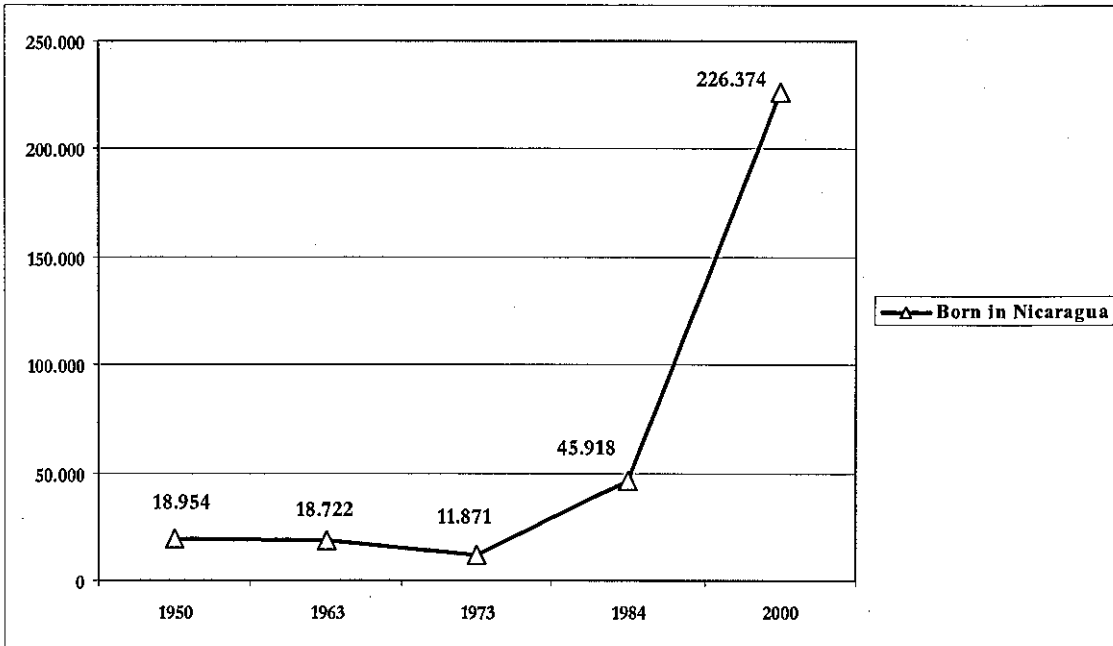
- Seasonal migrants, those who come for up to a year, mainly to harvest export crops.
- Semi-permanent migrants, those who leave part of their family behind and go back to Nicaragua for visits every year or two. They are mostly involved in economic activities that require a more prolonged stay: construction, private security, domestic labour, commerce and services.
- Permanent migrants, usually accompanied by their families, these migrants tend to hold the same kinds of jobs as semi-permanent migrants (Acuña, 2000; Morales, 2003; Cortés Ramos, 2003).

The answer to the question of how many Nicaraguan immigrants there are in Costa Rica is a difficult one. As tends to happen in immigration-recipient countries, the mass media and certain politicians like to throw around easy, round (and frightening) figures, such as the claim that there are a million Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica. The most commonly used figure has been 800,000. These figures were not neutral or scientific. They had the intention of capturing public attention in the case of the media and creating scapegoats in the case of politicians (Sandoval, 2003). Hence, these figures are not exactly accurate.

However, more useful information about the number of Nicaraguan immigrants living in Costa Rica was obtained from several different sources. The first of these was the Costa Rican General Immigration Amnesty that was made in 1999 which was passed as an act of solidarity with the suffering of the Nicaraguan population after the impacts of Hurricane Mitch. An interesting story about the Amnesty process is the fact that the government authorities, as well as sectors of the press, were expecting that at least 300 thousand non-regularized Nicaraguan immigrants would request this benefit. Ultimately, the number of beneficiaries under this scheme was significantly lower than the expected figure, namely 155,316 immigrants (Acuña, 2000; Morales, 2002).

In 2000 another important event occurred that contributed towards giving us a more accurate idea of how many people of foreign origin are living in Costa Rica and how many of them are Nicaraguan, namely the Population Census (2000). This source indicated that in that year there were 226,374 inhabitants of the country who were born in Nicaragua. In fact, this was the highest number of Nicaraguans ever registered in absolute and relative terms in any Costa Rican population census. However, even this figure was very far from the exaggerated numbers mentioned before. As can be observed in Figure 7.24, these figures suggest that in less than two decades the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica almost tripled. In relative terms, this immigration grew from representing 1.9 percent of Costa Rica's population in 1984 to 5.9 percent in 2000,

Figure 7.24: Costa Rica. Nicaraguan immigrants in the Population Census of 1950, 1963, 1973, 1984, 2000.



Source: CCCP-UCR. <http://www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr>

As was pointed out in Chapter 3, however, population censuses and most household living standard surveys have methodological limitations that limit the possibilities of their capturing the real volume of total immigration, including the fact that they do not register the non national population that has been living in the country for less than six months. This element implies that a very important dynamic of the migratory transnational space, namely seasonal rural migration, is systematically underestimated in official figures, despite the fact that, as has been discussed in previous sections, it is an important component of labour dynamics particularly in agriculture. Aside from that serious limitation, there are other factors that also make it difficult to determine the real immigrant population, including the fact that a significant part of the Nicaraguan immigrants are living and working in Costa Rica in non regularised circumstances or without any documentation. Obviously, these immigrants are reluctant to give any information about their situation,

creating a situation of formal under-registering. Clearly some of the official Costa Rican data about labour market composition in terms of the size of the economically active population is lower than the real size, particularly in the case of seasonal immigrant workers. The next chapters discuss the level of documentation of the migrants from the Nicaraguan communities studied in this thesis in much more detail.

In recent years, scholars and other analysts who research immigration have tried to make more serious projections and have estimated that there are around 350 to 450 thousand Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica between January and May, the time of year when the greatest number of Nicaraguans come to Costa Rica for seasonal work (Brenes, 1999; Rosero Bixby, 2004).

Although the Costa Rican Population Census has limitations that have already been pointed out here, it does have valuable information for understanding the main characteristics of Nicaraguan immigration. For example, it shows that in terms of geographical location, Nicaraguan immigrants tend to be concentrated in the greater metropolitan area and in the Northern and Caribbean regions of the country. According to the census, they more often live in urban than rural areas (60%-40%, respectively) (CCP, 2001). Figure 7.25 explains the geographical location of the Nicaraguan immigrant population, as well as urban and rural composition by province.

Figure 7.25: Costa Rican Population Census of 2001. Nicaraguan Immigrants geographical location in Costa Rican Provinces and in Urban and Rural Areas (absolute and relative terms).

	Urban		Rural	
	Absolute	Relative	Absolute	Relative
Total	108220	56.7	82743	43.3
San José	70837	90.9	7054	9.1
Alajuela	10267	21.5	37585	78.5
Cartago	4672	56.3	3621	43.7
Heredia	8892	49.3	9148	50.7
Puntarenas	3596	47.8	3934	52.2
Limón	5133	26.7	14101	73.3
Guanacaste	4823	39.8	7300	60.2

Source: CCCP-UCR. <http://www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr>

There are five provinces where rural migration prevailed, namely Alajuela, Limón, Guanacaste, Puntarenas, and, to a lesser extent, Alajuela. The first four provinces are where the production of traditional and non traditional export crops is concentrated. The main composition of the labour force for these crops is immigrants. The contrary trend is observed in San José, the capital, where most of the immigrants are employed in urban jobs such as construction and private security in the male case and domestic service and commerce in the female case.

In terms of the gender composition, there are virtually the same percentages of men and women among the Nicaraguan migrants, with a few more women (95,515) than men (95,448). Relevant information in this dimension is the fact that most female immigrants are located in urban areas and vice versa, which is a consequence of the type of insertion in the labour markets. With respect to education, there are differences between the migrant population and the Nicaraguan population in general. On average, migrants tend to have more years of education than most Nicaraguans, though less than Costa Ricans. Some 65% of the migrants interviewed in a recent study had at least completed some high school education. It is in part due to this factor that most Nicaraguan migrants do not compete with Costa Ricans for jobs, since the labour markets are clearly segmented. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, Nicaraguans fill niches in the economy that Costa Ricans do not want to fill anymore because they require less skill, have very low wages, involve greater risk or demand extreme physical efforts, for example largely seasonal agricultural activities, construction, domestic service, private security and, to a lesser extent, commerce (Acuña, 2000; Morales, 2002; Cortés Ramos, 2006). According to Costa Rica's 2001 census, the migrant population is also a young one: 58.6% are between 20 and 40 years old and 24.9% under 20. In rural areas, the share of the migrant population between 20 and 40 is even higher, at 64%. (INEC, 2000) This means that the Costa Rican economy is getting enriched by the arrival of thousands of workers in a very productive stage of their lives.

It is important to highlight something that has been pointed out before, which is the fact that of this complex set of dynamics that compose this migratory transnational space the particular dynamic that has deserved less attention or research is the seasonal rural migration, which is one of the key factors that explains its selection as study case in this thesis.

Conclusions

There are three important aspects to restate in the conclusions of this chapter, first, the fact that in the 1990s the Central American region as a whole was under a structural process of transformation in relation to the previous decade. One of the salient features of these transformations was a growing transnationalisation of their development process. This was a regional trend although every country was doing the transformation with particular rhythms, modes, styles and institutional arrangements. In that sense, it is possible to assert that the new wave of out-migration that started in Central America in the 1990s has been part of or expression of an ongoing wider regional transformation. In fact, this transformation has reinforced the asymmetrical linkage of the region with the United States, which is expressed in trade but also in other realms such as labour. It is not a coincidence that the main pulling node of Central American workers is the US.

However, and this is the second point to note from of this chapter, within this regional transnational social space there are other relationships and linkages between the countries. As has been explained in the chapter, one example of these kind of relationships is the intense bond that has been developed between Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Both countries have had an intense relationship as neighbouring countries, however a particular new dynamic started in the 1990s that has created what is defined in this thesis as a new migratory transnational space. This space includes several dynamics or forms of migration, including urban-urban, rural-urban, urban-rural and rural-rural dynamics. In terms of time length, there are different dynamics such as permanent, semi-permanent and seasonal migrations. An important point to highlight here is the intense meso-link or networks that have been built by the migrants between the community of origin and the community of reception, the importance of this feature differentiate this migratory space from previous ones between these two countries.

The third conclusion to note is that this articulation has been an outcome of what the author has named structural coincidence, which is the fact that, in the precise timing, Nicaraguan neoliberal transformations have been expelling population while Costa Rican Neoliberal productive transformations were demanding more workers than the national labour force could supply. This coincidence in the mid-1990s generated a growing process of transnationalisation and has progressively created a solid migratory transnational space between both countries that still going on.

As has been pointed out before, of this transnational space the less studied migration dynamic is the rural-rural seasonal migration. This is the main factor that explain the decision to take this as a case study. The following chapters are dedicated to analyse in detail the main characteristics of this kind of dynamic as well as the main characteristics of the migrants and their households in three departments of the North of Nicaragua, namely León, Chinandega and Estelí.

CHAPTER 8: Main rural socioeconomic structure and transformations in the rural world in Nicaragua during the 1990s

The previous chapter explains how by a sort of structural contingency, the development transformations ongoing in both Nicaragua and Costa Rica throughout the 1990s facilitated the articulation of a migratory transnational space between these countries, in fact, a process that was different from previous migration flows. In relation to this contingency, it is important to remember that in the Nicaraguan case, the political, economic and social transformations promoted by the new ruling elite produced an population expelling platform; and, in the Costa Rican case, to the contrary, the economic and political transformations produced a labour force pulling core in the same period. This process has been cumulative (Portes et al, 1999) and has created a very dense and complex set of linkages by mean of migration dynamics (urban-urban, rural-urban, urban-rural, and rural-rural; permanent, semi-permanent, and seasonal), intertwining labour markets, households, and economic structures of both countries, apart of the generation of new cultural practices, some of them related to identity construction that are not only complex but conflictive.

Chapter 7 characterised in general terms these new migration flows that started in the 1990s, giving information about the dynamics, networks, and some other features related to the migrants. At this point, it is important to remark that, as it was pointed out at the introduction, most of the information about this new migratory transnational space are focus upon the urban migration dynamics in the recipient node, namely Costa Rica.

One of the main challenges of this thesis, and possibly one of its main purposes is to give more information and criteriatio understand probably the less studied migration dynamic of this migratory transnational space, namely the seasonal rural migration dynamic and characteristics from North to South. As it was explained in the Chapter 3, because of its difficulty to apprehend this particular migration in the recipient country, the fieldwork was done in Nicaragua in selected rural communities of Estelí, Chinandega and León. In this line, both Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 are dedicated to explain in detail the main findings of the collected data, particularly oriented to shed light about dynamics and characteristics of the rural migrants and their households that participate and build this migratory transnational space throughout seasonal migration..

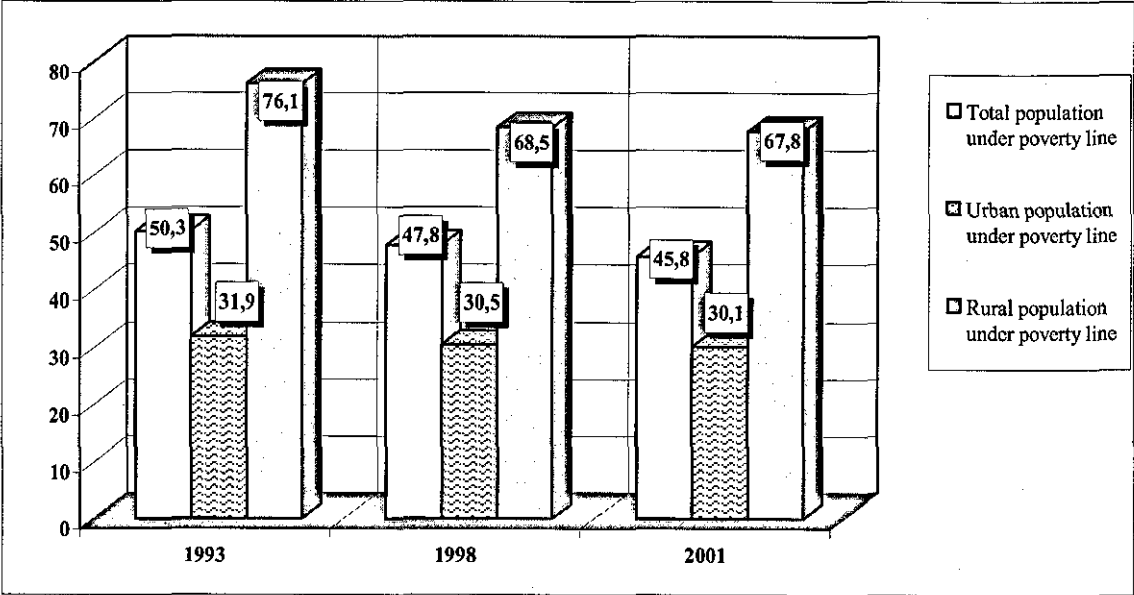
However, before to begin the data-oriented analysis it is necessary to give some additional information about two important contextual elements to enrich the comprehension of this study case, namely, more general information about the rural context in Nicaragua and also more information about the main characteristics of the social structure of the rural world in the selected departments, Estelí, Chinandega and León, as well the impact of the socio-economic transformations in rural population to have a better idea of the "structural field" where these migrants and their relatives are taking decisions to survive.

8.1 Main rural conditions and transformations during the 1990s

Nicaragua is a country with a significant part of the population living in the rural areas. Although there is a ongoing process of urbanisation, in 2001 this country still had 42,5 percent of its population living in the rural area (PNUD, 2002: 162). However, as Mالدیدیر and Marchetti (1996) points out, Nicaraguan society has a long history of social and institutional exclusion of the rural world, and, particularly, to the peasantry, first during the Somoza dynasty that favoured the big landownership; second, during the Sandinista Revolution, when the main political direction of the process decided to promote great State properties in the agrarian sector and an alliance with agrarian sectors of the oligarchy, as was highlighted in the Chapters 5 and 6; and, finally, during the ongoing liberal democratic period, when the power elite has liberalised the land market at the same time that is abandoning the small and medium producers.

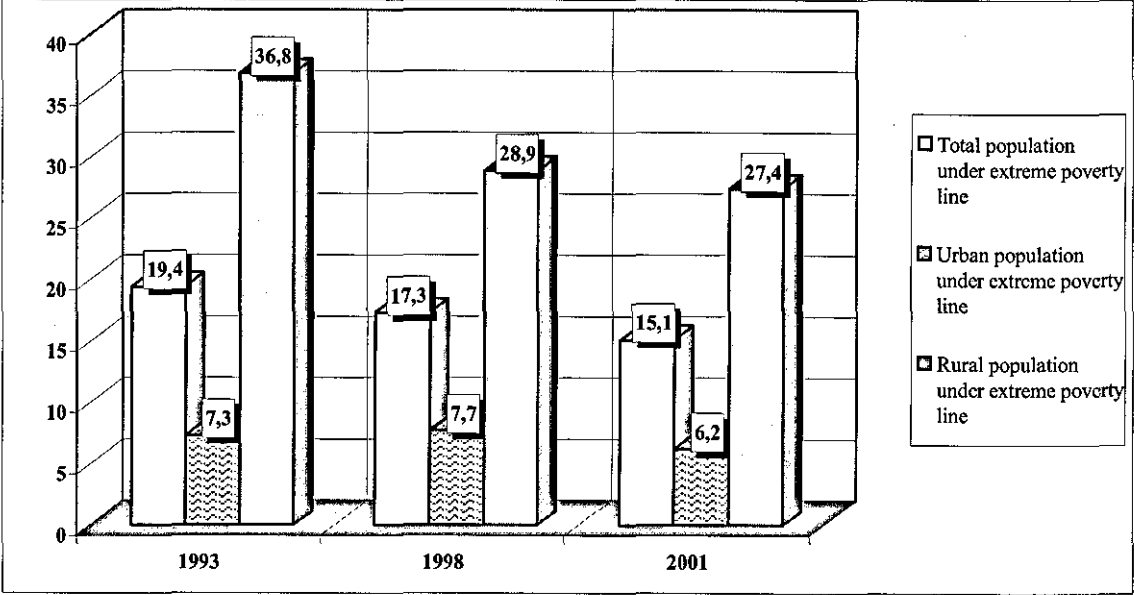
This historical state of neglect towards the rural world until present days is reflected in a dramatic gap between the urban and rural areas in many indicators. The first an most evident indicators of the existing gap between the rural and urban world in Nicaragua are related to the level of population living under the poverty line and under extreme poverty, as is shown in Figures 8.1 and 8.2,

Figure 8.1: Nicaragua. Population under poverty lines, general, urban and rural (1993, 1998, 2001).



Source: PNUD, 2002: 174.

Figure 8.2: Nicaragua. Population under extreme poverty lines, general, urban and rural (1993, 1998, 2001).



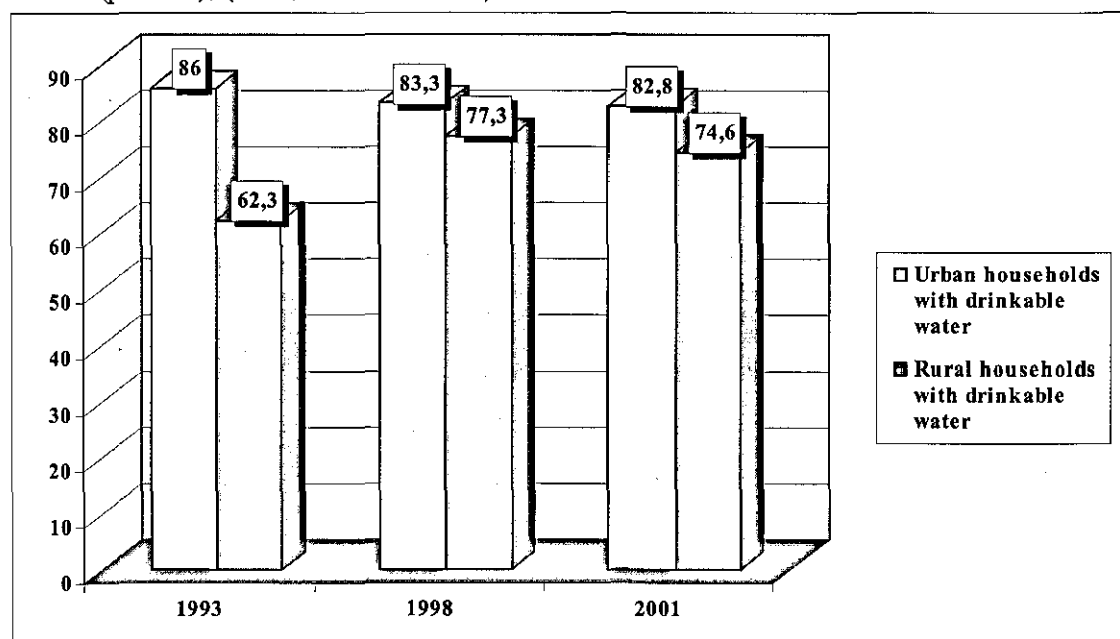
Source: PNUD, 2002: 174.

Although the figures indicates that during the analysed period, there has been a reduction in the percentage of people living in poverty and extreme poverty, it is evident that in poverty clearly has a rural dimension. In fact, in the case of number of people living under

poverty line, the relationship is a little bit more than two rural poor for every urban poor. However, in the case of extreme poverty, the relationship is approximately five rural persons for every urban person in such a condition, a dramatic contrast.

Two other important indicators of the contrasting conditions between rural and urban population in Nicaragua is households with access to drinkable or fresh water (Figure 8.3), and with access to electricity (Figure 8.4), which are services that should be fulfilled for the population in terms of basic needs or development.

Figure 8.3: Nicaragua. Level of rural and urban households with access to drinkable water (percent), (1993, 1998 and 2001).



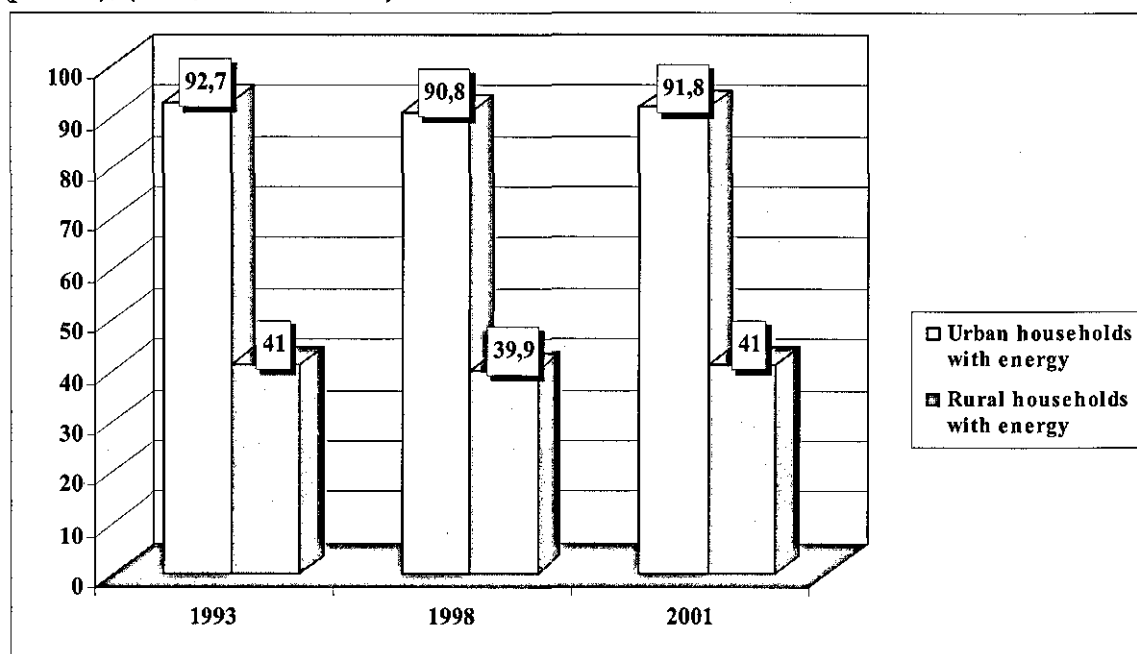
Source: PNUD, 2002: 174.

In this case, is important to point out that there has been an improvement to fresh water in rural households from 1993 to 1998, but went down from 1998 to 2001. The indicator includes any form of water access but rivers or others of this sort. An important factor that explains the water coverage augment is the expansion in the use of water rope pumps build by the rural families in their properties. As is pointed out by Alberts and van der Zee,

‘...by 1995 this technology became an integral part of rural water programmes implemented by NGOs and government agencies. Rural water supply coverage since then has doubled from approximately 27.5 percent to 54.8 percent. Of this 27.3 percentage point rise, handrope pumps account for 23.6 percent (or 85 percent of the total increase). (2001)

Although this has been a significant change, still one in every four rural households has no access to fresh water in rural areas. As is explain by these authors in their article, access to water make a significant difference in terms of productivity and, hence, in poverty reduction (Alberts and van der Zee, 2001). More critical is the situation of rural households in terms of access to electricity, as is shown in Figure 8.4,

Figure 8.4: Nicaragua. Level of rural and urban households with access to electricity (percent), (1993, 1998 and 2001).



Source: PNUD, 2002: 174.

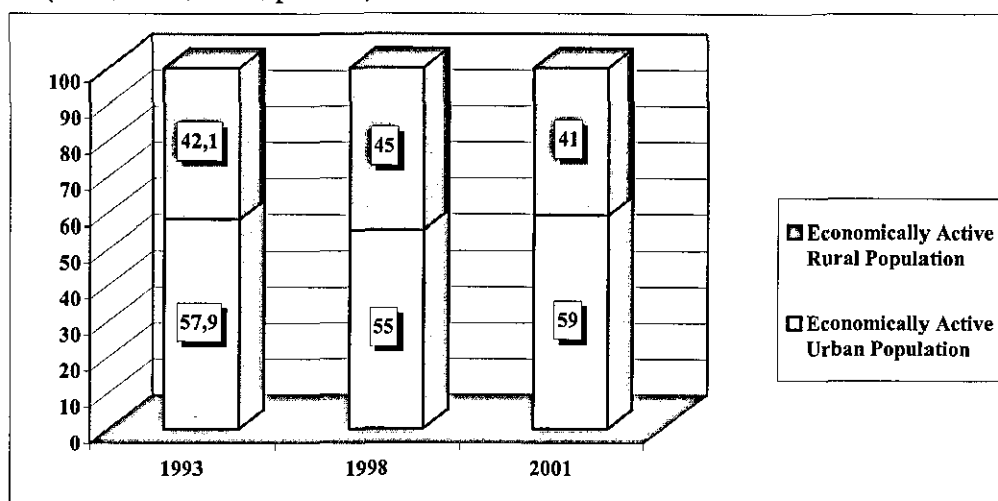
While more than 90 percent of urban households have access to electricity, only 40 percent of the rural households are covered by this service. This indicator practically did not improve throughout the studied period. These services are unevenly distributed not only in rural/urban terms but also among departments. For example, in 2001 the electricity access was Estelí, 91.6 percent; León, 59.4; and Chinandega, 53.7 percent. This data shadows the uneven distribution of the service within the departments. Thus, in the case of Estelí, the department with the highest rate of electricity access, no one of the rural communities selected in this research has it.

The lack or low access to basic services in rural areas have implications that goes from low productivity to health problems that are affecting rural population in a wider form than in

urban areas, making the livelihood conditions very vulnerable to economic, social or environmental crisis, as has happened in the last decade in Nicaragua. These dimensions of the Nicaraguan uneven development could be considered the structural basis for the configuration of that country as expelling population platform.

A last dimension to analyse of the structural conditions of the rural population in the country are related to production, employment and income. In economic terms, the point of departure is the fact that Nicaragua is a country largely dependent on the agriculture and livestock sector, sectors that share almost 30 percent of the GDP. Its significance in economic terms is also reflected in the participation of rural population in the economically active population (EAP), as shown in Figure 8.5,

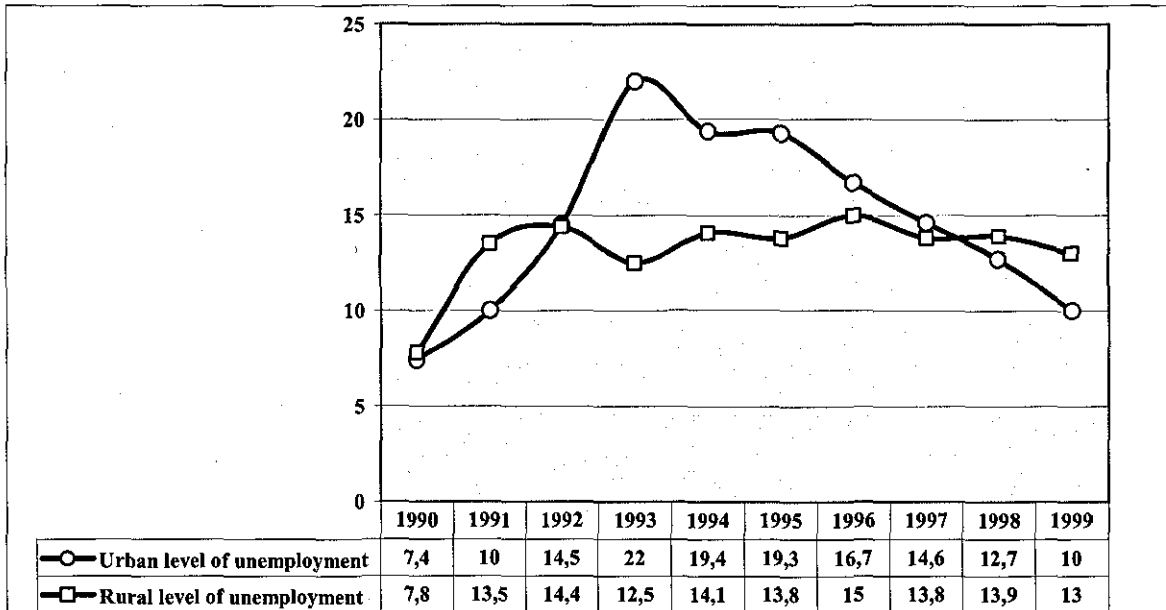
Figure 8.5: Nicaragua. Urban and Rural Economically Active Population (1993, 1998, 2001; percent).



Source: PNUD, 2002: 176.

Despite of the Neoliberal economic transformation did not significantly change the relationship between rural and urban percentages in the Economically Active Population, that process did have an impact on the rate of unemployment which showed a significant increase in both the rural and urban population in the mid-1990s to decrease with a slow pace at the end of the decade.. Figure 8.6 shows the unemployment levels for Nicaragua's rural population in the studied period,

Figure 8.6: Nicaragua. Urban and Rural level of unemployment, 1990-1999 (percent).

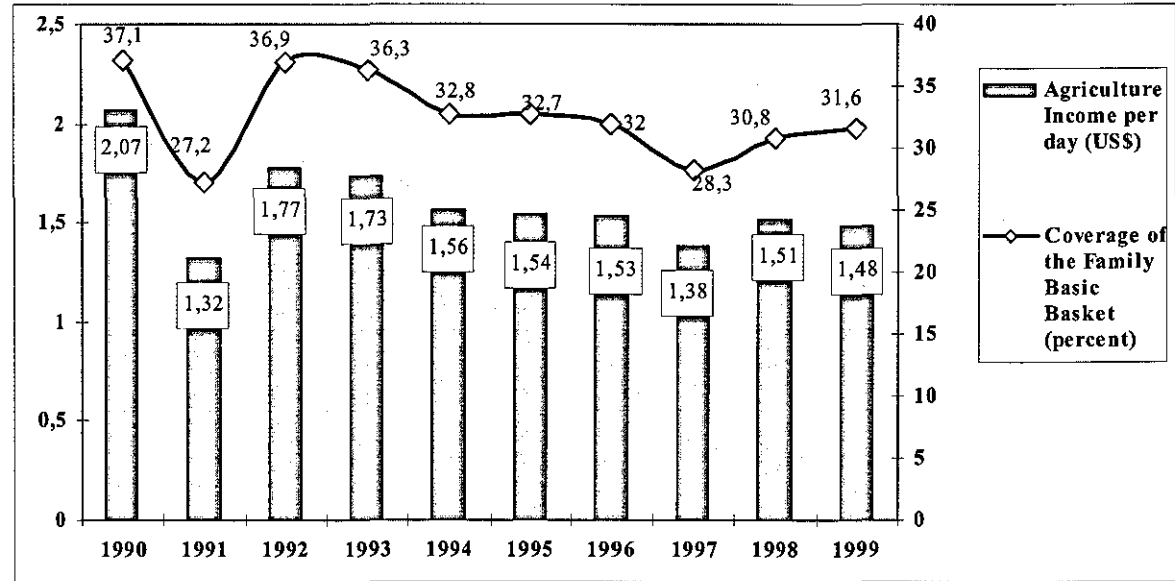


Source: PNUD, 2000: 166-167.

Morales and Castro (2002), as well as Sandoval (2001), have argued that the main flow of immigrant from Nicaragua to Costa Rica in the 1990s started at mid-90s. In that sense, these indicators contribute to confirm such affirmations and also shed light about the moment of the structural contingency that started the process of transnational articulation between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The increase in unemployment was accompanied by an informalisation of the labour markets or, to put it in another form, the number of formal jobs decreased in a significant way in this period. In fact, there was a general reduction of formal employment in at national scale, passing from 22 percent in 1990 to 14.4 percent in the lowest rate in 1995 to 16.6 percent in 1999. In the case of the formal employment in agriculture in relation to the total formal employment the situation has been very critical, while in 1990 these jobs represented 14.5 percent of the total formal employments, in 1999 they represented only 7 percent of the total formal employments (PNUD, 2000: 166-167). These trends have had negative social and economic implications, augmenting poverty and vulnerability in rural households, and hence, reinforcing the need for members of the rural households to search for different survival strategies. Two other important indicators that related to these issues are the income per day in the rural sector and its relation with the basic basket coverage (*cobertura de canasta básica*).

Figure 8.7: Nicaragua. Agriculture income per day (US\$) and Coverage of the Family Basic Basket (percent), 1990-1999.

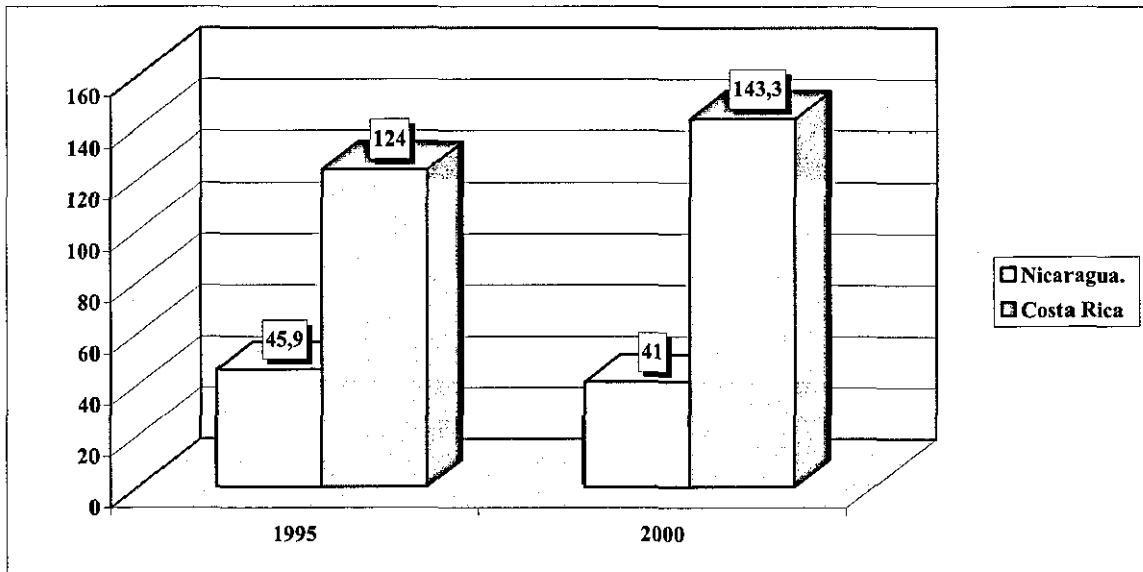


Source: PNUD, 2000: 167.

With some oscillation, there is a clear trend towards the reduction of agriculture income per day, passing from \$ 2.07 in 1990 to \$ 1.48 at the end of the decade. This reduction in income is also reflected in the declining ability of agricultural workers to meet the costs of the Family Basic Basket, meaning by that a reduction in such capacity. In fact, in 1990 the agriculture income covered 27 percent of the Family Basic Basket. In fact, in 1999 agricultural income covered 31.6 percent. In simple terms, this means that a household requires three agriculture incomes to cover the basket.

Another important element in understanding the economic functionality of migrating as part of the survival strategy of rural households is the income differential between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in general, but also in the agriculture sector in particular.

Figure 8.8: Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Relation between agriculture sector nominal income and the family basic basket (percent), 1995 and 2000.

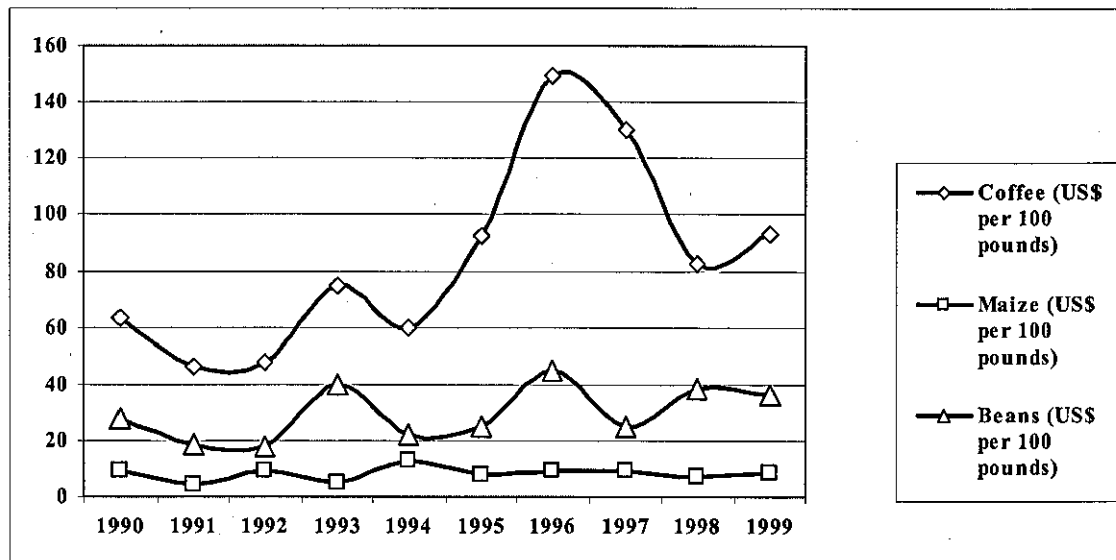


Source: Cepal, 2003: 51.

Although in the Costa Rican case is very probable that Nicaraguan immigrants' income average would be below the national average, it is clear that even in general terms, the ability of rural families to meet the costs of covering the basic basket of goods is much better in Costa Rica than in Nicaragua. This implies that, in theory, Nicaraguan immigrants have the possibility of saving part of their income to take it back to Nicaragua or send to their relatives in their community of origin.

The final point of this section is related to overall income in the rural sector. This can be derived from combining several variables, including size of property, productivity, and economic diversification, that is the number of activities that generate income for the household (Alberts and van deer Zee, 2001). The combination of the fact that a majority of rural families in Nicaragua have small farms (from 0,1 to 20 *Mzs*), and, the fact that they produce basic grains such as maize and beans, makes their situation vulnerable to price variation of their products, as has happened in recent years with coffee (1991-92, 1998-99) but also with maize and beans. The prices of these products have been very unstable, as can be seen in the Figure 8.9,

Figure 8.9: Prices of coffe, maize and beans; US\$ per hundred pounds, 1990-1999.



Source: PNUD, 2000: 167.

In summary, as has been showed in this section, the rural conditions in Nicaragua are very critical and as shown by some basic indicators, the situation of the rural populations has worsened with the Neoliberal transformation that was ongoing during the studied period. This is an structural factor that probably helps to explain an important part of the transformation of Nicaragua into an expelling population platform. However, it is also important to highlight that the rural world is not homogeneous. The next section discusses in the main socio-economic and regional characteristics of the communities of the three selected Nicaraguan departments, namely León, Chinandega and Estelí.

8.2 Main socioeconomic and geographic characteristics of rural communities of León, Chinandega and Estelí

In the previous section, the characteristics of Nicaragua's rural communities that help to explain the wide gap between the rural and the urban worlds of the country were described. However, Nicaragua has a very diverse geography, which is reflected in the existence of many agro-ecological regions or agrarian macro-regions. Maldidier and Marchetti (1996: 35-64) points out the existence of at least six macro-regions, namely 1) the new agriculture frontier (Atlantic or Caribbean region); 2) the old agricultural frontier (central region); 3) the large cattle and coffe ranches region; 4) the dry region; 5) the Pacific plain region; and, 6) the urban mini-smallholding region (Maldidier and Marchetti, 1996: 69). Each one of these regions has particular physical, climatic, ecological, and productive characteristics and

also hegemonic systems of production. To put it in other terms, the Nicaraguan rural world is quite diverse and hence, it is important to have an idea of which of these regions the selected communities belong to and what are their main socio-economic characteristics to understand the particular transnational dynamic they create in their seasonal labour trips to Costa Rica.

Using as base the typology developed by Maldidier and Marchetti, the location of the communities are as follows. The communities of the municipalities of La Paz Centro and Nagarote (Department of León), as well as the communities of the municipalities of Somotillo and Villanueva (Department of Chinandega) belong to the dry region. In the case of the communities of Condega (Department of Estelí), they belong to both the dry region and to the Pacific plains.

8.2.1 Main geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the dry macro region

The Dry macro region is characterised by a dry or semiarid climate. Its extension is approximately 16 thousand square kilometres and in the 1990s more than 60 thousand rural families were living there. It has two main sub-regions, one in the North that is mainly a peasant region, particularly the Western Segovias (*Segovias Occidentales*), which includes Condega. The other sub-region is characterised by a dual economic structure that combines more extensive agriculture characterised by a predominant sector of large ranches with a subordinate medium and poor peasant 'pockets'. In this sub-region are included La Paz Centro, Nagarote, Villanueva and Somotillo (Maldidier and Marchetti, 1993: 55).

In general terms, the macro-region has a dry or semiarid climate, with a short rainfall regime of 800 to 1100 millimeters per year or more but with a very bad distribution in the seven months of rainy season, which represents a serious limitation for the agriculture activity of this region (Maldidier and Marchetti, 1993: 55). This natural factor is combined with a human one, which is the fact that road infrastructure is unevenly distributed, with many locations having difficult access during the rainy season, which makes trade difficult for them. This is the case with many of the selected communities, particularly those of Condega, where it is not possible to access the communities by car or bus during half of the year, access during these periods is only by walking or using beasts such as horses, mules or donkeys. This is the case even for communities that are relatively close to the main urban centre of the departments. This is an important factor to take into account in

terms of the process of migration. Many of the peasants that engage a seasonal labour dynamic to Costa Rica come from relatively inaccessible regions of the countryside.

As was pointed out previously, this rural communities suffer from low access to freshwater, this also limit their productivity. In the driest locations of the macro-region, such as parts of León and Chinandega, this factor explains the importance of economic activities such as extensive cattle rearing. Cotton was important in this region in the past, but disappeared from the mid 80s, mainly due to international market factors. In any case, agriculture is a risky business in this macro-region. Currently, most of it is based on basic grains of short cycles such as maize and beans or resistant to drought, such as different varieties of sorghum.

In terms of social structure, the two sub-regions have significant differences, on the one hand, the Northean sub-region is mainly composed by small and medium peasants, while the social structure of the plain sub-region is mainly composed by big landowners, medium or rich peasants and small cattle-owners, and also a sement of poor peasants without land or with small farms (less than two *manzanas*). These peasants work for the rich peasants or the land-owners (Maldidier and Marchetti, 1993: 57-58).

8.2.2 Socioeconomic structure of the selected Municipalities in León, Chinandega and Esteli

A final element to analyse in this chapter is the main socio-economic characteristics of the rural families of the selected Municipalities. With that purpose, two main sources are consulted, first, in the case of La Paz Centro, Nagarote, Somotillo and Villa Nueva, the ICIDRI data-base (2000). In the case of Condega, the analysis is based upon the agri-socioeconomic diagnosis developed by OCTUPAN in 2003. Although not all indicators are comparable, together they give an idea of the socioeconomic conditions and characteristics of the rural households.

8.2.2.1 Somotillo and Villa Nueva in Chinandega

The first municipalities analysed are Somotillo and Villa Nueva. In terms of the economically active population, Somotillo had an unemployment rate of 25.4 percent. The main activity of the population with employment is agriculture (79 percent), followed by cattle ranching (13 percent). In the case of Villa Nueva, the rate of unemployment is 23

percent. Agriculture here is the main economic activity of the employed (61 percent), which is lower than in Somotillo. This activity is followed by cattle ranching (19 percent) and minery (7 percent) (ICIDRI, 2000). In synthesis, the main economic activities are related to agriculture, there is no significant level of diversification with most activity concentrated in grains such as beans and maize. Other important economic activities are related to 'backyard' economy (*economía de patio*) and cattle ranching.

In relation to the size of the farms, most have less than 20 *Mzs*. This is the case for 88 percent of the total number of farms in Somotillo and 86 percent in the case of Villanueva. However, a majority of 82.5 percent of the farms have less than 10 *Mzs*. This means that the selected communities in Chinandega have a social structure where mini, small and medium producers are a massive majority (ICIDRI, 2000).

A final point is related to household income generation, 34 percent of the household earn US\$ 3.00 or less per day, while 44 percent earn between US\$ 3.00 and US\$ 6.00, and 22 percent earn more than US\$ 6.00 per day. It is important to highlight that in the survey made by ICIDRI in 2000 in the selected communities in Chinandega, the income obtained outside the farm represented 27 percent of the total income of the rural households, more than the income generated by the sale of maize and beans together (20.1 percent of the total income) (ICIDRI, 2000). In an interview with the coordinator of that research, Jaap van der Zee (04/02/03), he pointed out that a significant part of the income generated outside the rural households was produced by remittances sent it by members of the family who have migrated, mainly to Costa Rica but also to El Salvador in the case of Chinandega.⁶⁹

8.2.2.2 La Paz Centro and Nagarote in León

In the case of León (La Paz Centro and Nagarote), the analysis of the survey was mainly focused upon land-owners that represented 95 percent of the households. In terms of the farm size, 54 percent of the farms had 20 *Mzs* or less. 24.7 percent of the farms had between 20 and 60 *Mzs*. 6.7 percent had between 60 and 100 *Mzs*, 8.7 percent of the farms had between 100 and 300 *Mzs*, and 6.1 percent had more than 300 *Mzs*. However, it is interesting to point out that the majority of farms were concentrated between 6 and 60

⁶⁹ It is important to remind that the ICIDRI survey did not ask about migration within the households, but the phenomenon came to the forefront as a research outcome.

Mzns, representing 45 percent of the total farms, meaning that in quantitative terms, there was a majority of small or medium peasants. However, in terms of land distribution, 60 percent of the land was owned by those farmers with more than 300 *Mzns*, representing a high level of land concentration. In relation to water, a significant number of the farms have access because 72.5 percent of the farms have a well and 32.4 percent hand rope pumps.

Economic activity, correlated to the significant number of mid and big farms, is diversified. Thus, the main activity in terms of income generation is milk (20 percent) followed by cattle (17%). Other important activities are tobacco (16 percent), peanuts (12 percent), sorghum (10 percent). Maize only generates 7 percent of the regional income, but is the most extensively cultivated crop, meaning that is not important as merchandise but as food (ICIDRI, 2000). However, it is important to point out that agriculture activities and other incomes are relatively more important in farms below 30 *Mzns*. Cattle and derivative products such as milk or cheese (*cuajada*) are relatively more important in farms above 60 *Mzns* and those between 30 and 60 *Mzns* combine agriculture with cattle and other incomes. Other income, as was mentioned before could be generated by migrant's remittances or by income earned by members of the family that work in other farms of the region, confirming the dual dynamic between small producers (*campesinos*) and land-owners that is described by Marchetti and Maldidier typology for this region.

Another important aspect is the relationship between household income per day (average) and farm seize. There is a high correlation between these two variables. Thus, the income per day of farms between 0-5 *Mzns* is US\$ 4.0; those between 5-15 *Mzns* obtain US\$ 6.0; farms between 15-30 *Mzns* earn US\$ 7 per day; between 30 and 50 *Mzns* earn US\$ 9.0; between 50 and 100 *Mzns* earn US\$ 11.0; between 100 and 250 *Mzns* US\$ 14.0; and above 250 *Mzns* US\$ 28.0. In terms of the poverty line, 48 percent of the household are living under the poverty line of which 22.7 are living in conditions of extreme poverty, meaning that 52 percent of the households are not poor, which could be a corollary of the social structure and economic activity diversification that was described above (ICIDRI, 2000).

8.2.2.3 Condega in Estelí

The last department is Estelí, particularly the Municipality of Condega. In this case, the information is based upon a study of the Comission of Production and Rural Development

of the Municipality of Condega (CPDR, 2003). Even though this study does not have the same categories as ICIDRI's database, it has information that could be compare with the Chinandega's and León's data.

The first indicator is about the seize of the farms, which corroborates the analysis that defines this as a 'peasant' region. In fact, 91.7 percent of the farms are bellow 10 *Mzns*, of which, 36.1 percent have 1 or less *Mzns*. 5.7 percent of the farms have between 11 and 20 *Mzns*; 2.3 percent of the farms have between 21 and 100 *Mzns* and only 0.3 percent of the farms have more than 100 *Mzns*. This research indicates that this level of land fragmentation increases the social vulnerability of the peasants as they calculate that a producer require at least 4 *Mzns* of land to obtain enough income to survive above the poverty line. Hence, the information they have obtained in the survey indicates that many peasants of these communities have different strategies to diversify their household income, including internal or transnational seasonal rural migration (CPDR, 2003).

In relation to the process of accumulation of the farmers, the research use two main categories, on the one hand, units of production that are only able to survive. Within this category there are five sub-categories. On the other hand, there are units of production that are able to accumulate.

In the survival category, the most important sub-category are those units that only produce basic grains such as maize and beans which in fact are the majority (47.3 percent). The second sub-category are the producers that combine basic grain with coffee (9 percent); the third sub-category are the producers that combine basic grains with cattle (2 percent); the fourth sub-category are those peasants that combine vegetables, and other fruits (pineapple, passion fruit and others) with basic grains (9.7 percent), and finally, those small producers that combine basic grains with migration, which represent 17.7 percent of the total of the units of production, meaning that in this particular region migration is a relevant strategy of income diversification.

In the accumulation category, there are two main sub-categories, namely those who accumulate combining basic grains with cattle (6.4 percent) and those who combine basic grains with productive diversification with vegetables, fruits, and so on (8.2 percent) (CPDR, 2003).

Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the situation of the Nicaraguan rural world in two different scales, first, at the national level. This was relevant to this thesis because, as was pointed out, there coexist two different Nicaraguas coexist in the country, the urban and the rural. The first section of the chapter aimed to explain the enormous divide that separate these two worlds. This effort was particular necessary because the analysis of next chapters is about rural-rural migration and, without any doubt, the structural conditions and rural transformation that have occurred in Nicaragua during the 1990s and up to the present day are part of the necessary background for grasping why and how Nicaragua's rural world has been converted into an expelling population platform, of mainly seasonal migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica.

However, and this was the second part of the chapter, rural development in Nicaragua is uneven. Hence, it was important to analyse the main socioeconomic characteristics of the selected departments, highlighting not only their main features but also their main differences. For that purpose, two main databases were used, one from ICIDRI (2000) for León and Chinandega and another from CPDR (2003) for Estelí. The main outcomes of this analysis confirmed that the studied communities respond to the more general conceptualisation of the Nicaraguan rural structure and agro-ecological geography made by Maldidier and Marchetti (1996). In fact, Estelí is the land of the small peasants with a great majority with farms of less than 10 *Mzns* and mainly dedicated to basic grains. At the other extreme is León, with many producers with farms between 20 and 60 *Mzns*, and with a significant diversification of their production. Finally, Chinandega, presents a sort of mixture between León and Estelí in terms of the agrarian structure and also in terms of production diversification. High levels of poverty and extreme poverty accompanied the the three departments, however, the more accute situation is located in Estelí.

In the following chapters, the data analysis of the selected communities will highlight the main articulations between these uneven rural dynamics and the production of a rural migratory space from Nicaragua to Costa Rica in the 1990s.

***Chapter 9. Transnational rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica.
Main characteristics of the households of rural communities from León,
Chinandega and Estelí.***

This chapter traces the main characteristics and dynamics of rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica from communities of three departments, León, Chinandega and Estelí, seeking to explain 'who are the rural migrants', by doing an analysis of their main demographic characteristics and the main socio-economic features of their households in the selected communities. Most of the explanations and analysis of this chapter are made on a general level (that is the analysis uses overall data drawn from the communities in all three departments), however, when it is relevant for the research and the data sample allows it, the analysis will include a comparison across the three departments.

The objective of the analysis is not only to provide a detailed description of these characteristics but also to analyse how different variables have influenced the decision to migrate to Costa Rica, by mean of the use of some statistical analysis such as cross-tabulation, chi-square⁷⁰ and t-student⁷¹ (Field, 2000). The idea is to try to determine which variables have a higher impact in the individual's decision to migrate to Costa Rica, without pretending to create a statistical model, but trying to go beyond a simple description. In this sense, this analysis could be considered exploratory.

The main levels of analysis included in the chapter are, first, the general level of migration in the communities; and second, the main socio-demographic characteristics of the households, such as size of the households, number of migrants, average age of the households, gender and education and their relationships with migration. In the economic sphere, the analysis includes annual gross income and poverty levels, annual net income, the type of occupation of the members of the households, and the main economic activities, type and size of the farms, as well as the origin of the owned land of the households and their relationship with migration.

⁷⁰ Chi-Square. This test detects whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables. However, it does not say anything about how strong the association might be (Field, 2000: 60).

⁷¹ The independent t-test is a regression equation, with both one independent variable and one dependent variable, in general terms, the migration level (Field, 2000: 239).

9.1 Level of rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica

In relation to the level of migration in the studied rural communities, the main finding is that 22.3 percent of their households have had some form of migration to Costa Rica during the period 1990-2003, as it is possible to observe in Figure 10.1,

Figure 9.1: Households with migration in Rural Communities of León, Estelí and Chinandega to Costa Rica.

	Frequency	Percent
Households without migration to CR	446	77.7
Households with Migration to CR	128	22.3
Total	574	100.0

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

This result is close to the national average, which is close to 20 percent (INEC, 2004) however, it is higher than national rural migration levels which are recorded at between 5 and 10 percent, according to official sources.⁷² This reminds us that this sample has no pretension of being representative of national trends, but only representative for the studied communities. This result indicates that transnational migration is a significant part of the socio-economic and cultural life of these communities, affecting one out of every five households. However, it is important to point out that there are significant differences among the three departments in terms of the level of migration, as is possible to observe in Figure 9.2,

Figure 9.2: Households with migration to Costa Rica by selected rural communities of the Departments (Percent).

	León	Estelí	Chinandega
Households without migration to CR	90.4	58.8	82.5
Households with migration to CR	9.6	41.2	17.5

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The rural communities from La Paz Centro and Nagarote in León have the lowest rate of rural migration to Costa Rica, namely 9.7 percent, very similar to the national percentage of 2001, and, at the opposite end of the scale is Estelí with the highest rate, an impressive

⁷² For example in the National Household Survey of 2001, the level of rural migration was 10 percent. In the same Survey of 2004, the level of rural migration was 4.8 percent, the difference between these values that could be an indication of a reduction in migration, as has been pointed out by some scholars in Costa Rica (INEC, 2001 and 2004; OIM, 2006).

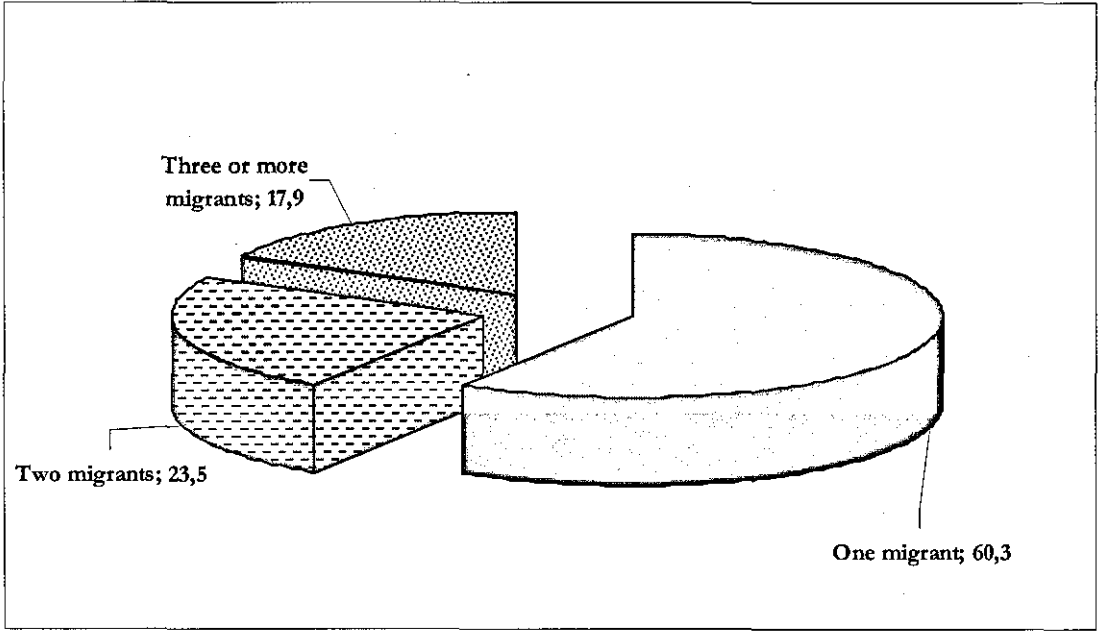
41.2 percent of households with migration to Costa Rica. Chinandega is in the middle of both extremes with 17.5 percent. In terms of the total number of households with migration, Estelí captured 58.6 percent of them, followed by Chinandega with 26.6% and León with 14.8%. The differences between the three departments could be explained by the interaction of a variety of factors. First, the existence of migration to other countries that were not studied. In this case, the case of rural migration from Chinandega to El Salvador is important. Another factor is the existence of internal migration within the department or the country; this seems to be particularly important in León's case. Finally, it is important to mention that, even within the department with the highest level of migration, that is Estelí, there are important differences between the communities in relation to their level of migration to Costa Rica. Some communities registered 90 percent of male migration in the harvest period (for example, San José de Pire), whilst other communities have practically no migration (Venecia).

In this case, it is interesting to point out that the semi-structured interviews as well as the s indicated that this important difference in the level of migration in rural communities is related to ideological dimensions as well as material conditions in the communities. Thus, in the communities with strong groups of Liberal sympathisers the level of migration is higher than in the communities where the Sandinistas are the biggest group. For the former, to leave is a practical issue (survival), for the latter to migrate is an action close to betrayal. For them, they have to stay and defend their land. Apart from that, the communities with a Sandinista majority tend to have more social organisation and, in some cases, they have developed cooperative projects apart from their individual farms. This is the case of Venecia, where the community managed 200 *Mzns* of land dedicated to forestry, an activity that generates an extra income for the members, reducing the pressure to migrate.

9.1.1 Number of migrants and their weight (percent) per households

The next variable to analyse is the number of migrants per households. As pointed out in Figure 9.3, 60.3 percent of the households with migration have only one migrant, followed by 23.5 percent of the households with two migrants. However, almost one household in every five has three or more migrants.

Figure 9.3: Number of migrants per household with rural migration to Costa Rica.

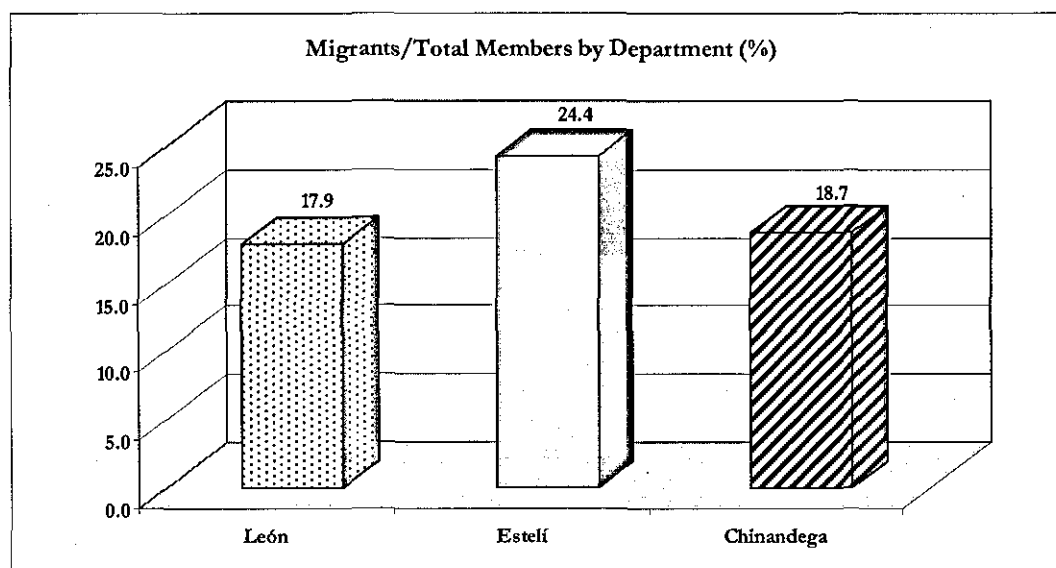


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The level of emigration showed in Figure 9.3, in which forty percent of household with migration have two or more of their members engaged in this dynamic, is an indication of the importance of migration within the survival strategies of households, which is confirmed by the fact that 20.1 percent of the members of these households have migrated to Costa Rica in the studied period.

When the analysis moves from the overall data to the department scale, some differences come between, on the one hand, national and department scales, and, on the other hand, among the three departments. In this particular case, the main differences are at the department level, where Estelí has a higher percent of members that migrate to Costa Rica in comparison with León and Chinandega, as shown in Figure 9.4.

Figure 9.4: Percent of Migrants to Costa Rica as percent of the total household members by Department.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Although more variables are analysed below, it is possible to correlate the high level of migration from Estelí with two main elements of this region, namely the highest level of poverty of the three departments and a much higher level of small peasants.

9.2 Main socio-demographic characteristics and migration experiences of the households

We now move onto look at the major socio-demographic characteristics of the households which comprise the studied communities and their relationship to the level of migration in each household. The first characteristic to be explored is the size of the household unit and its relationship with migration.

9.2.1 Household Composition and migration

A very important socio-demographic feature of the household is its composition, meaning by this the number of members per household. Figure 10.5 shows the data for the total sample, an average of 5.8 members per households. There are no significant differences between the departments.

Figure 9.5: Average Composition of Household (average) for the full sample and by Department.

Department	Mean
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Total	5.8
León	5.9
Estelí	5.5
Chinandega	6.0

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

However, when the average composition of the household is cross-tabulated with the migration variable (migration/no migration), the situation changes as observed in Figure 9.6.

Figure 9.6: Comparison of Average Household Composition with households with and without migration to Costa Rica.

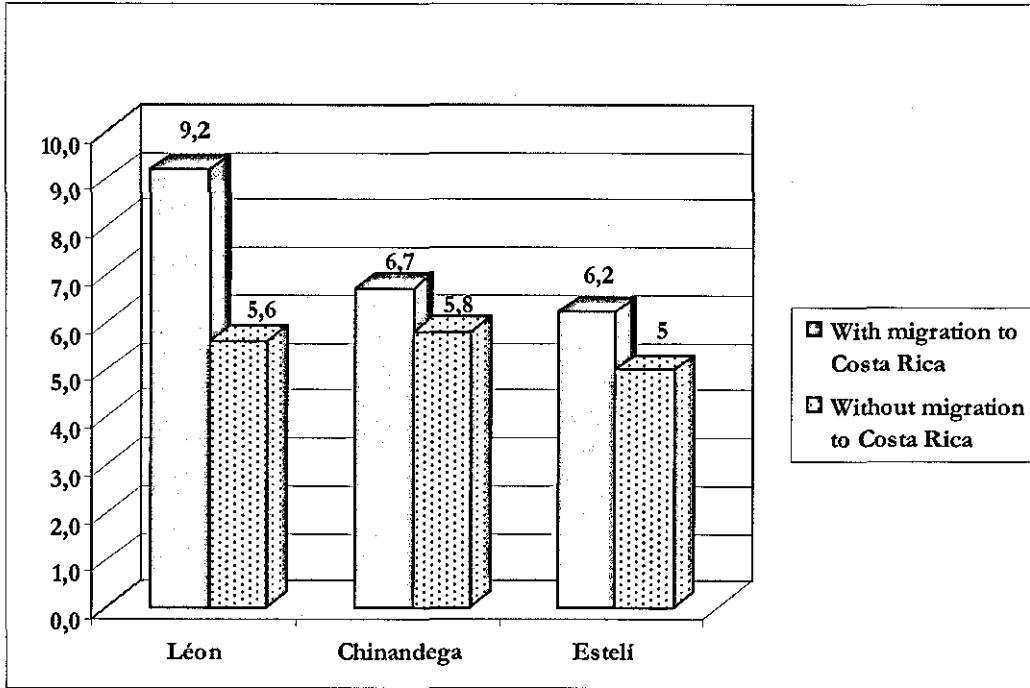
Households	Mean
With migration to Costa Rica	6.8
Without migration to Costa Rica	5.5

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The average size of household in the case of the migrant households is 6.8, a level which is higher than the case of non-migrant households (without migration), which have an average of 5.5 members. This difference is significant in statistical terms.⁷³ This difference in composition between households with and without migration is relevant within all three departments, although it is clearly higher in León where the households with migration have an average composition of 9.2 members, whilst those without migration have an average of 5.6 (Figure 9.7). This factor could help to explain the level of migration in this department. To put it in other words, in the case of León, the higher the number of members of the household, the higher the probabilities of the household having experienced some migration to Costa Rica. This is not a causal relationship, but the data indicates the existence of a significance correlation between these two variables in the case of this department.

⁷³ The Chi sq. is 0.000, meaning that there exist a significant statistical asociation between the household size and the level of migration.

Figure 9.7: Average number of Household Members per household of León, Chinandega and Estelí with and without migration to Costa Rica.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

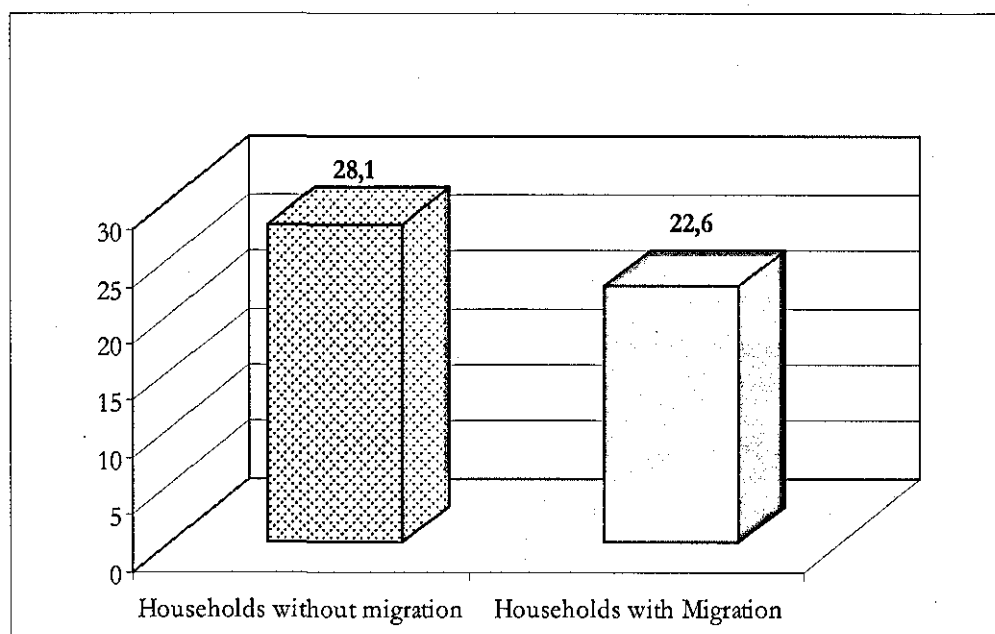
In the case of Chinandega and Estelí, whilst it is also true that there is a difference in the average composition of households with and without migration, it is not as salient as in León, suggesting that there are other more significant factors contributing towards the explanation of migration to Costa Rica, as will be explained in the following sections.

9.2.2 Household dependency ratio

This section analyses the dependency ratio, a figure which combines the size or composition of the household with the number of members that earn an income within the household. The idea is to find out the effect of this variable in the decision of members of the household to migrate to Costa Rica.

The database produced for this research has enough information within it that the number of members of each household that are working and earning income in relation to those that are not working can be calculated. Thus, this ratio was calculated by dividing the number of members of each household that are working (full time or temporarily) by the total number of members of the household. The key feature to define if someone is working is the income earning capacity. The outcome is shown in the Figure 9.8,

Figure 9.8: Dependency Ratio in Households with and without migration to Costa Rica.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The cross-tabulation of the dependency ratio with the migration level for each household indicates that there are more dependent members in households without migration (28.1 percent) than in those with it (22.6 percent). This difference is significant ($t = 0.008$), meaning that the households with a lower number of dependent members tend to have more migration than those with higher numbers of dependent members. This correlation could be explained by the fact that many of these households are conformed by young couples that use migration as a strategy to buy land or to expand their small farms. This is particularly clear in Estelí.

However, when the analysis moves from the general to the departmental scale, important differences arise. Chinandega, is the department with the highest percentage of dependent members in both households with migration (35.5 percent of members) and without (33.8 percent). Although it is the only department where the dependency ratio of households with migration is higher than those without migration, this variable does not explain the difference between the decision to migrate or stay. In other words, the relationship is not significant enough to explain the level of migration from this particular department. In the case of León, the dependency ratio makes no difference to the level of migration of households. Estelí is the only case where there is a significant difference between the households with and without migration in terms of this variable. To start with, there is an

important dissimilarity in the dependency ratio, with 25.3 percent for households with migration and only 15.6 percent for those without migration. This disparity has a very high statistical significance ($t. 0.001$), meaning that for this department the main trend is that the higher the number of dependent members of a household, the higher the probabilities of migration. Figure 9.9 gives complementary information that helps to explain this relationship,

Figure 9.9: Dependent members (percent) in households with and without migration to Costa Rica by department.

	LEÓN		ESTELÍ		CHINANDEGA	
	Households with Migration	Households without Migration	Households with Migration	Households without Migration	Households with Migration	Households without Migration
No dependents	26.0	35.0	44.0	35.0	14.0	23.0
One to two	32.0	42.0	43.0	41.0	43.0	34.0
Three and more	42.0	23.0	13.0	24.0	26.0	43.0

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

These results indicate that Estelí is the department with the highest number of households with no dependent members, and this is the department with the highest level of migration of the total sample, with 44 percent of these households with migration to Costa Rica.

In this case, analysis can be complemented by information obtained in the semi-structured interviews with migrants of Condega, Estelí, in which the interviewees made it clear that a significant proportion of the people that migrate are young men starting their independent life with no civil commitments who conceive of migration as an intelligent strategy to save money both for buying land and for getting married. However, another interesting element to mention is that they also expressed that the migration experience gave them a sense of 'freedom' and 'enjoyment' that they cannot obtain in their villages.

In cultural terms, for the young men migration is becoming an important ritual which is gone through in order to gain their passage to adulthood. This element generates concern in some of the adults, because they perceive that the young people are migrating even when they have good conditions for working within their own community, which is perceived as a sort of 'land abandonment' (Monge, SEI, 23/03/03).

9.2.2 Average age of household members

The average age of the household members is closely related to the previous factor. Again, the objective is to explore if this variable has relevance in the decision to migrate to Costa Rica. The following Figure 9.10 shows the results for the combined total households from all three departments.

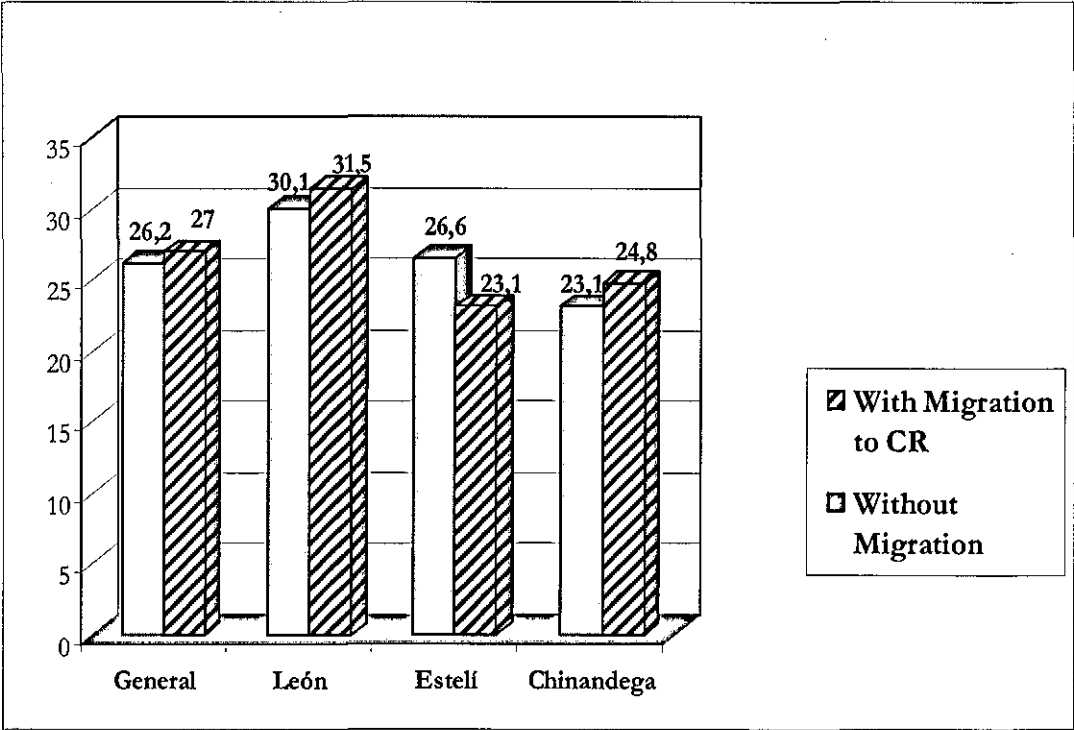
Figure 9.10: Average age of the members of households with and without migration.

	N	Mean
Households with migration	128	26.2
Households without migration	445	27.0

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In general terms, there is a small difference in average age between households with migration and those without. On average, the former households have younger members than the latter; although the relationship is not significant in statistical terms, suggesting that this variable makes no significant difference to migration level within the households. The situation changes when the same variable is analysed at the departmental level, as is shown in Figure 9.11.

Figure 9.11: Average age of household members for households with and without migration to Costa Rica.



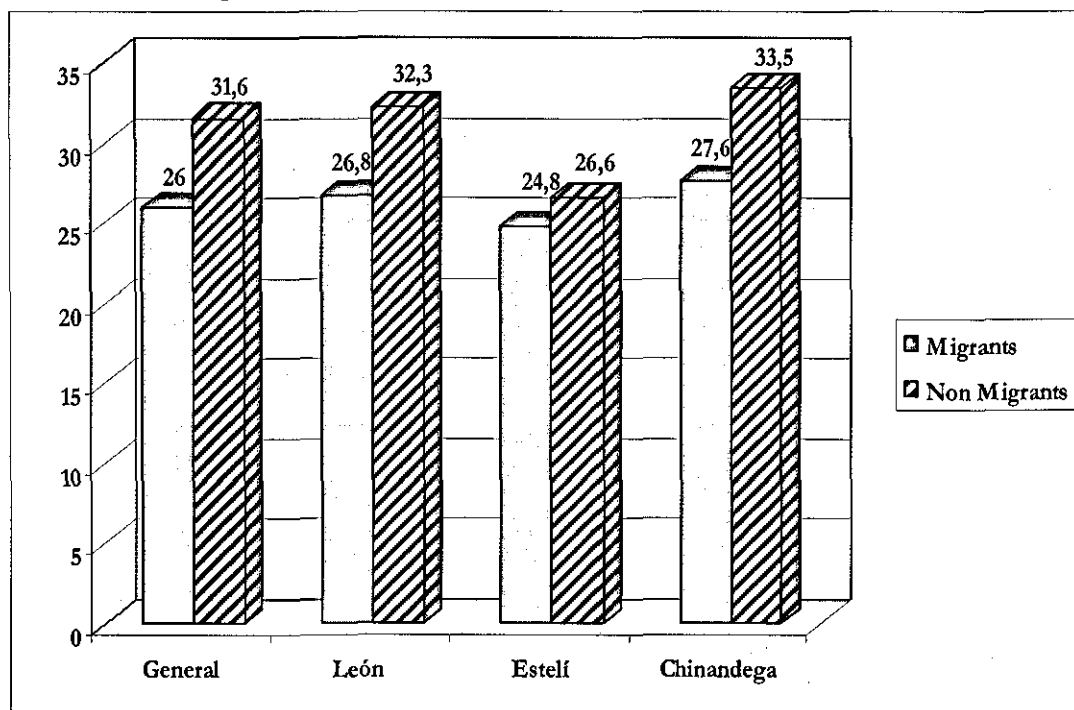
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 9.11 points out two important findings, on the one hand, the three departments each demonstrate important differences in the average age of households between those households with migration and those without. León has the highest average age, namely 30.1 years for households with migration and 31.5 years for those without; followed by Estelí, with an average age of 26.6 years for those households with migration and 23.1 years for those without. The lowest average ages are for households from Chinandega, with 23.1 years in the case of the households with migration and 24.8 years in those without.

The above figures also show that the only department with important differences between the average age of households with migration and those without is Estelí, where households with migration have a higher average age (26.6) than those without migration to Costa Rica (23.1). This is the only department where the age differences are significant in statistical terms (migrations cross by age, $t = 0.007$), which could imply that households with a higher average age tend to have more migration than those with a lower average, which is not related to the age of the migrant.

9.2.3 Age average of migrants

Continuing with this variable, another important dimension to analyse is the comparison of the average age between migrants and non migrants. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, in general terms, the migrants are younger than the non migrants. Hence, it is important to see the pattern of this variable in the case of rural migration in particular. The findings of this research confirm this trend. Figure 9.12 shows general outcomes and by department:

Figure 9.12: Age average of migrants and non migrants.

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In general terms, the findings indicate the existence of a significant difference in the average age of migrants and non migrants, the former are significantly younger (26 y.o. in average) than the latter (31.6 y.o. in average). This general difference is statistically significant and, hence, is a factor that can be considered to contribute towards explaining this particular rural migration process, meaning that the age is important in the migration decision process. In that sense, the younger people are, the higher the probabilities that they decide to migrate. However, it is important to highlight that when the same variable is disaggregated by department, in statistical terms this dimension is stronger in Chinandega's case ($t. 0.001$). In this department those who migrate have an average age of 27.6 and those who stay have an average age of 33.5.

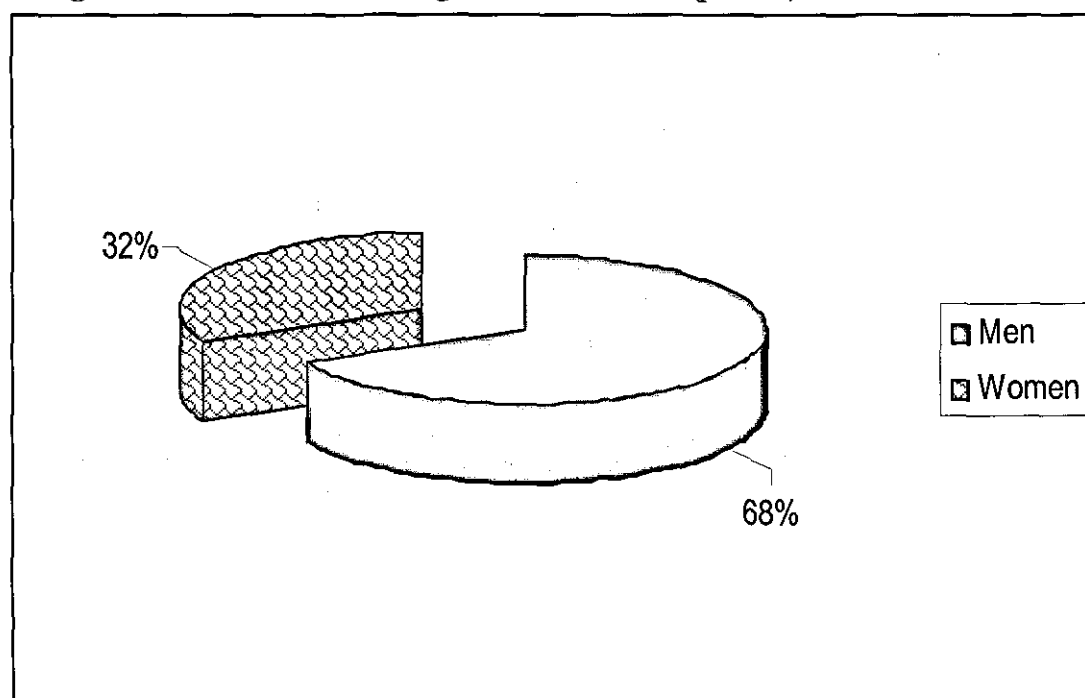
In general terms, the findings in this section coincide with the results of other studies about the demographic features of Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica (Rosales *et al*, 2001) which have indicated that on average migrants are younger than those who stay in Nicaragua or the national population in Costa Rica. Most of the migrants are between 17 and 45 years old, and for that reason could be considered to belong to the most productive sector in terms of the economically active population. From this perspective they could be considered a loss for the expelling country and a gain to the recipient country.

9.2.4 Gender of the migrants

Another very important characteristic to analyse is the gender of the migrants. Most of the literature indicates that rural migration is a more male oriented phenomenon than a female one. It is what Chant formulates as the spatial divisions of labour which arise between household members in these different aspects of survival closely correspond with gender divisions of labour: men form the bulk of seasonal labour migrants, while women tend to remain behind in the towns to manage domestic work and child-care (Chant, 1991).

This is also the case of the rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, as pointed out in the previous chapter 7. The findings of the survey in relation to this point were the following (Figure 9.13):

Figure 9.13: Gender of rural migrants to Costa Rica (percent).



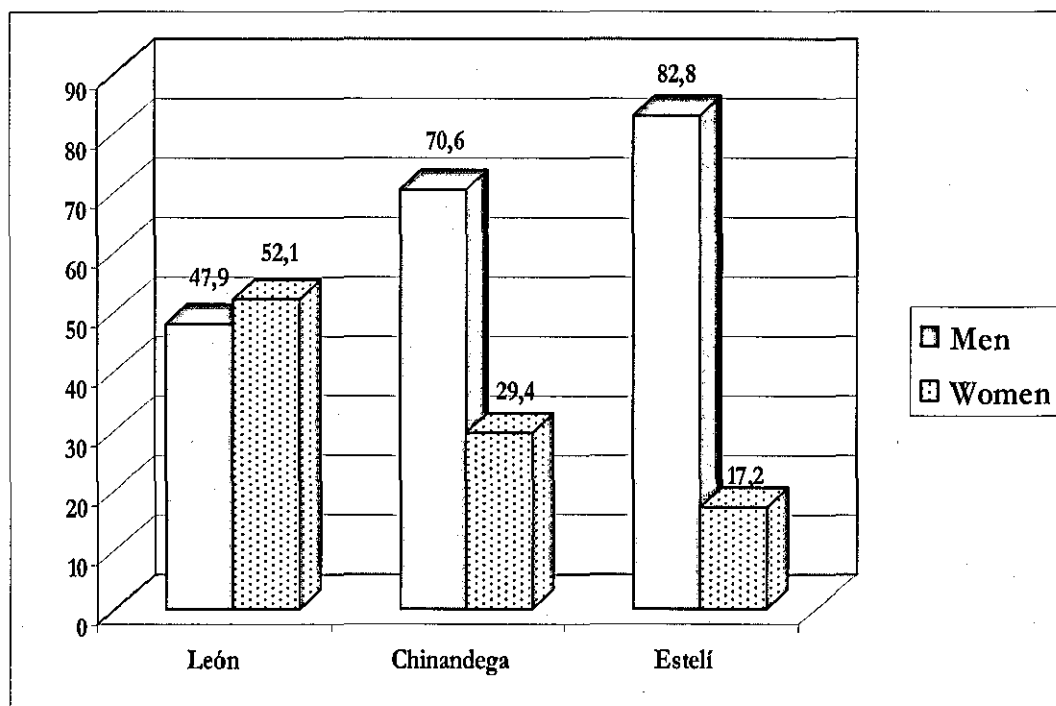
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The overall data confirms the previously mentioned trend, namely that rural migration counts with a higher presence of men with almost 70 percent of the total. This is not a minor point, it implies the existence of a clear division of labour within rural Nicaraguan households in which women are left in charge, not only of the reproductive realm by taking care of children, but also in assuming management of the 'domestic' economy [economía de patio] related to daily survival activities. Furthermore, in some cases women are in

charge of the first planting and harvesting of maize and beans. As was pointed out in one of the s with women (FG1, 25/04/03), this implies a significant increase in the amount and time of work for women with husbands or partners that migrate. Men are generally responsible for most of the involvement of the household in the productive realm, including their insertion in labour markets in order to generate income.

Another important element that was pointed out in the was that, in general terms, women suffered from the experience of migration within their families, not only because of the physical separation from their family members but also because they are constantly worried about the situation of their relatives in Costa Rica. It is important to bear in mind that most of these migrants are not documented and for that reason are vulnerable to abuse from contractors and the Costa Rican immigration authorities. However, an analysis of this variable at the departmental level, shows some important gender differences in migration patterns between the three departments, as is pointed out in Figure 9.14,

Figure 9.14: Distribution of migration by gender and by department (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In this case, León has a significant difference in relation to the other departments, showing a very high presence of female migration (52.1 percent), to the extent that female migration levels are even higher than those for male migration (47.9 percent). At the other extreme,

Estelí shows the highest level of masculine migration (82.8 percent) and, consequently, the lowest female migration of the three departments. Chinandega has a pattern closer to Estelí, with a higher rate of male migration (70.6%) in relation to female migration. This significant difference in the gender composition of migrants between León and the other two departments could be explained by a combination of factors. For example, León is the most urbanised department of the three, and rural households are more dependent on generating income to survive as was analysed earlier in this chapter. Hence, the participation of women in income generation activities has been more necessary than in the case of the other departments. Apart from this, León is also the least rural in cultural terms, levels of education are higher, the department has better infrastructure and has more travel facilities than Estelí and Chinandega. The migration of women to Costa Rica has other implications, apart from the fact that they are normally over-exploited in comparison with the Costa Rican labour force. The most painful part of this survival strategy is the separation of the families, particularly in the case of the mother and their children. A factor that worsens the psychological impact of this element is, not only the physical separation, but also the lack of communication because most of these communities lack even a basic public phone system through which they might be able to keep in contact with their family members in Costa Rica (Monge, SEI, 23/03/03).

9.2.5 Education level and migration

The database constructed for this research includes information about the level of education of household members. In line with the previous variables, it is important to explore the level of education in both migrants and non migrants in order to see if there are significant differences between them. The literature reviewed (Acuña, 2000; Rosero-Bixby, 2001 and 2004) shows that, both in general terms and in the specific case of Nicaragua's migration, on average migrants have a higher level of education than non migrants. However, these assertions are largely based upon observations from urban oriented research. This analysis provides information about whether this trend also prevails for rural migration, at least in the studied communities. Figure 9.16 shows the main categories in education levels based around the years that the individual has been studying in the formal systems of literacy.

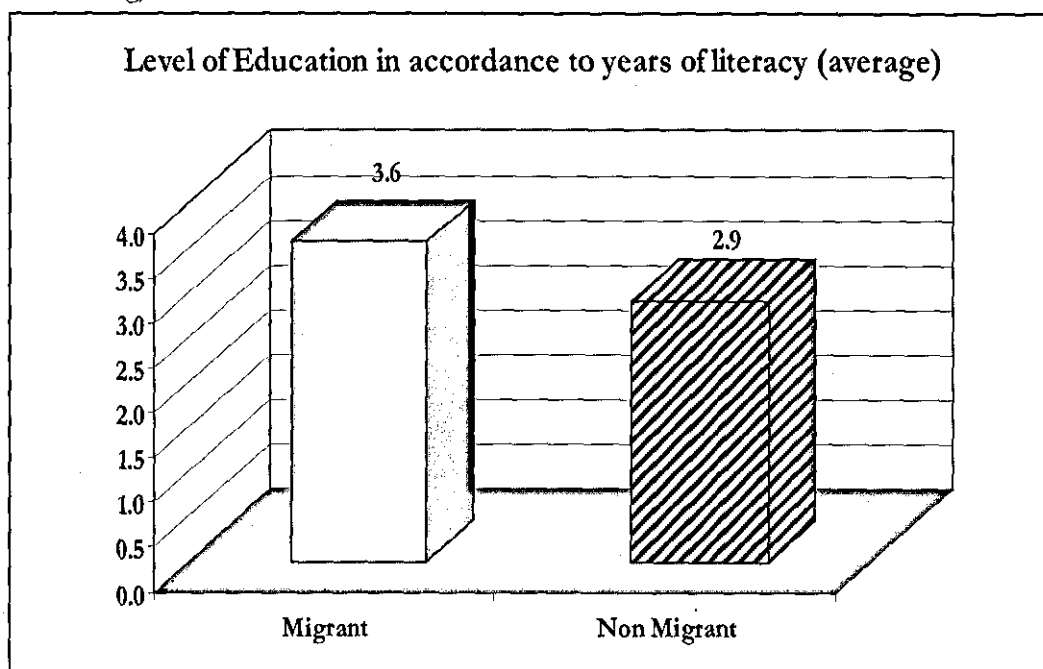
Figure 9.15: Education level in accordance to years of literacy.

Education Level	Years
Illiterate	0
Basic literacy	0,5
Incomplete Primary	3
Complete Primary	6
Incomplete Secondary	9
Complete Secondary	11
Technical education	10
Incomplete University	14
Complete University	16

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The outcome of analysis of this variable shows that, on average, migrants to Costa Rica have a higher level of education than those that stay, as is shown in Figure 9.16,

Figure 9.16: Level of Education in Migrants and Non Migrants (average years of schooling).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In statistical terms, this difference is significant (t.student 0,008), meaning that those who have completed more years of education show a greater tendency to migrate more than those with less years of education. We have to be careful about how we interpret this since this trend is related to the fact that young people (17-25 years old) have tended to complete more years in formal education, than those above that age. However, the data also illustrates the low level of schooling of all of the respondents, i.e. the high proportion of both migrants and non-migrants who had not completed even primary grade schooling. On this factor, there are no significant differences between the departments.

The generally low level of education is not the only factor, but it does help to explain the type of labour market insertion these migrants experience in Costa Rica, mainly in the famous three D jobs, dirty, dangerous and difficult, and also low-paid, most of these jobs are unskilled jobs in the agricultural sector.

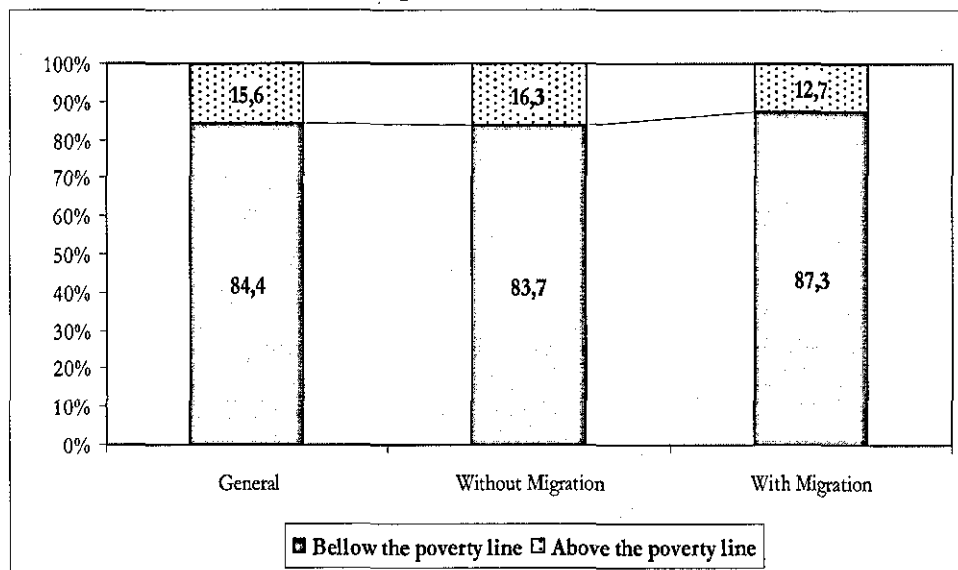
9.3 Main economic characteristics of the households with and without migration

This section analyses the main economic characteristics of the households with and without migration to Costa Rica, with the purpose of exploring which economic factors contribute to explaining their migration dynamics. The main analysed variables are type of economic activity, size of farm, type of property, income and expenses.

9.3.1 Annual gross and net income, poverty and migration

Household gross income is a very important variable for getting an idea of the economic situation of these rural communities, including their level of poverty, and how these characteristics have an effect on the decision of household members to migrate to Costa Rica. The official definition of the poverty line in Nicaragua is an income of US\$ 104.00 per month, meaning US\$ 1248.00 per year (INEC, 2001). The data gathered for this research allows us to calculate two different indicators, the first is the Annual Gross Income in US dollars, which means that is possible to define the percent of households below the poverty line that live in these communities, including those with and without migration. The other important indicator is the Annual Net Income, which is the result of the difference between the Annual Gross Income and the Annual Gross Expenditure, as is shown in the two following figures 9.17 and 9.18,

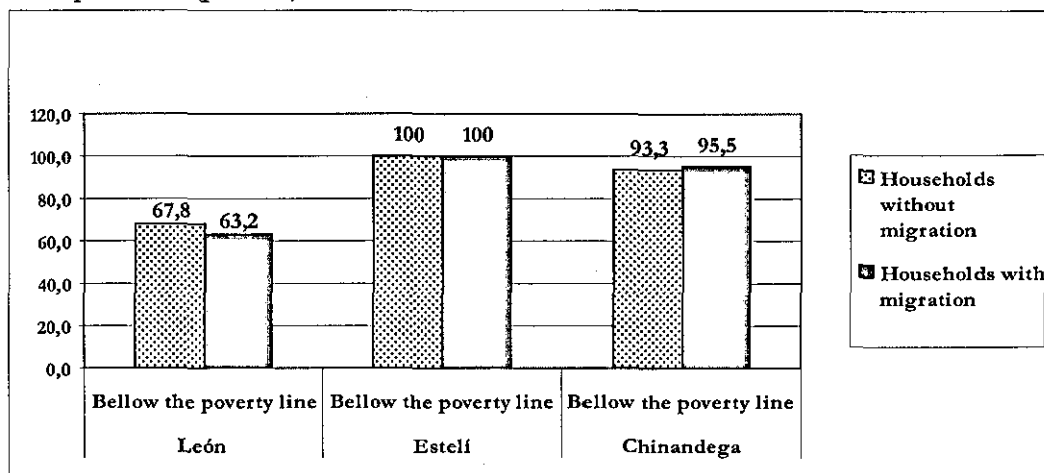
Figure 9.17: Households below and above the poverty line. General, with and without migration (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The first element to highlight from this figure is the sheer size of the rural poverty in the studied communities. Although the poverty is higher in households with migration, the gross income per year is not significant in statistical terms in relation to migration. To put it in different words, migration is a phenomenon that involves families that are above and below the poverty line. The following Figure 9.18 shows the poverty line for households with and without migration to Costa Rica by department.

Figure 9.18: Households with and without migration below the poverty line by department (percent).

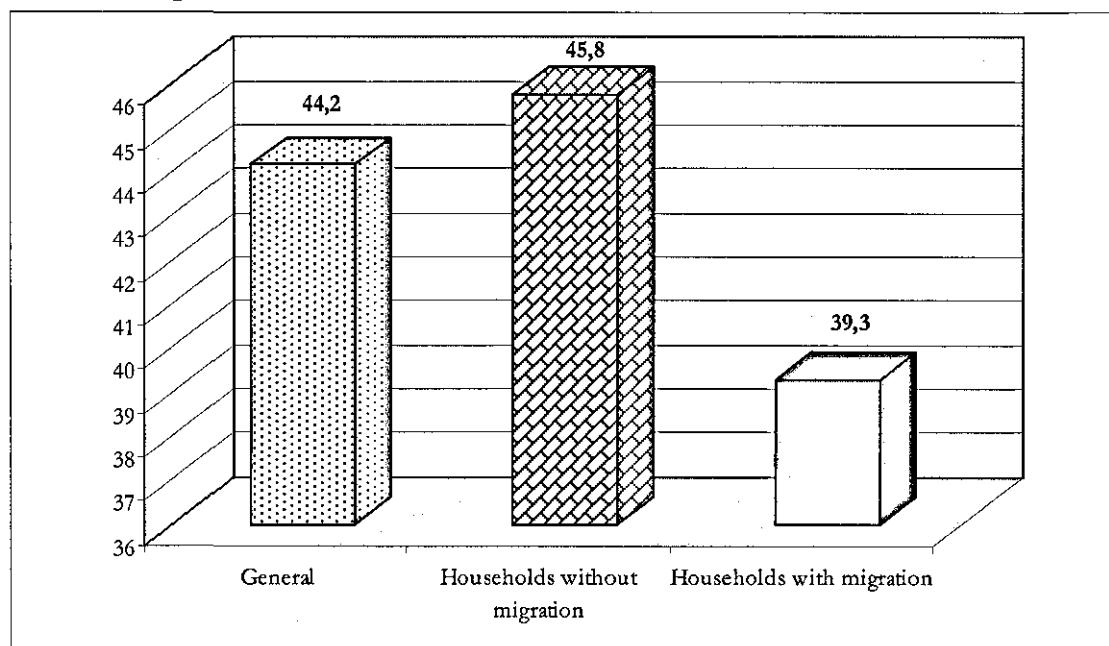


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Even taking into account the general massiveness of the poverty in these rural communities, Figure 9.18 highlights the existence of a very unequal distribution of poverty between the departments. León has the lowest rate of households below the poverty line of the three departments and is the only one close to the official Nicaraguan government data which suggests that national rural poverty is at a level of 67.8 percent (INEC, 2001: 8). In relation to migration, this is the only department where the number of poor families with migration (63.2 percent) is higher than those without it (67.8 percent). In Chinandega, the poverty level is very high, reaching in the case of the households with migration, 95.5 percent. However, the most dramatic cases are the communities of Estelí, where 100 percent of the households, regardless of whether they have experienced migration, are poor. This helps to explain why the income indicator is not significant in statistical terms for explaining the rural migration of these communities to Costa Rica and also shows the limitations of income as the main variable to define poverty.

In fact, this outcome also feeds doubts about the capacity of this indicator to capture the real living conditions of the households. The main limitation of this indicator is its serious difficulty in capturing those economic activities of the micro-economy of the family that are not driven by the monetary economy, and hence, by the household income. In the peasant economy it is quite common that the consumption capacity is higher than that shown by the income indicator, and that important activities are not articulated to the market but to the direct reproduction of the rural or peasant households (Maldidier and Marchetti, 1996: 3-40; Escobar, 1995: 154-182). Even within this reductionist approach it is possible to find elements to contradict this measure. In this case, the indicator proposed is the Net Income, which is the subtraction between the household's annual gross income and the annual gross expenditures. The results can be seen in Figure 9.19,

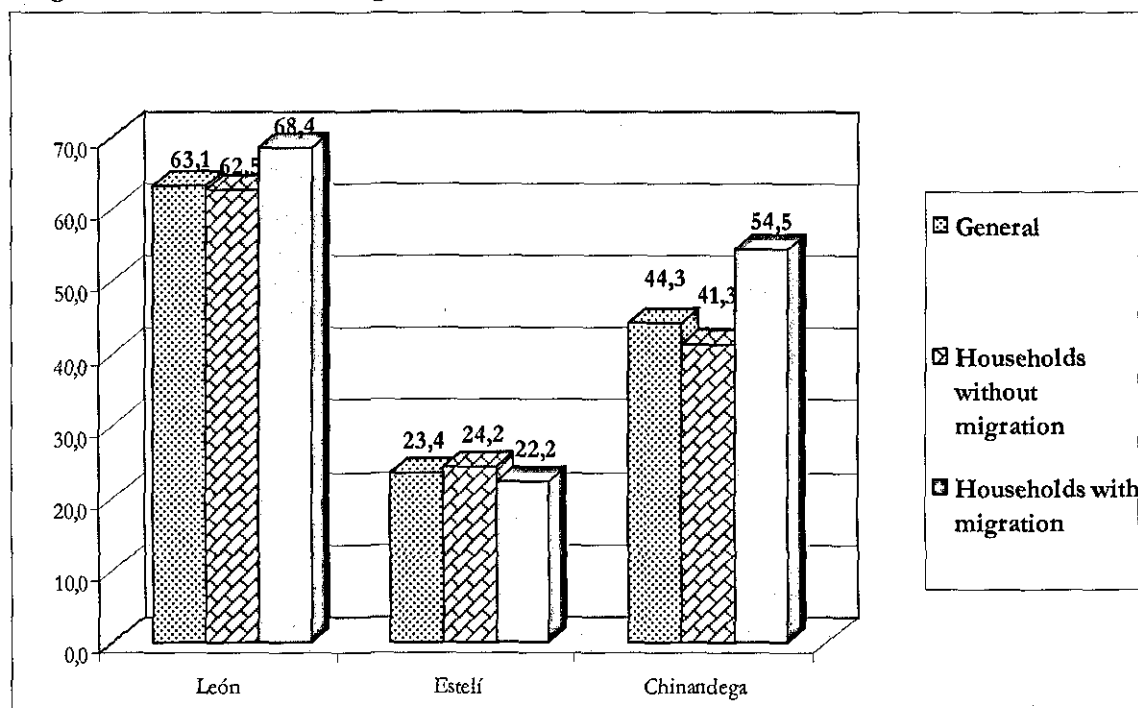
Figure 9.19: Households with Annual Income Surplus (percent). General, with and without migration.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

This indicator gives a very different picture of the poverty situation in the studied communities. Although there are still an important group of households that have a negative annual net income, the proportion of households with surplus is considerably greater than those that are calculated to be over the poverty line. In relation to migration, there are more households with negative annual net income amongst those with migration (39.3 percent) than in those without (45.8 percent), or to put it another way, the annual net income of the families without migration is higher than the families with migration and this relation is significant (chi sq. 0,042), but not very strong. Figure 103 shows the same variable by department. In this case, as was the case with the annual gross income, there are important differences between the three departments,

Figure 9.20: Households with Annual Surplus (percent). General, with and without migration in León, Chinandega and Estelí.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

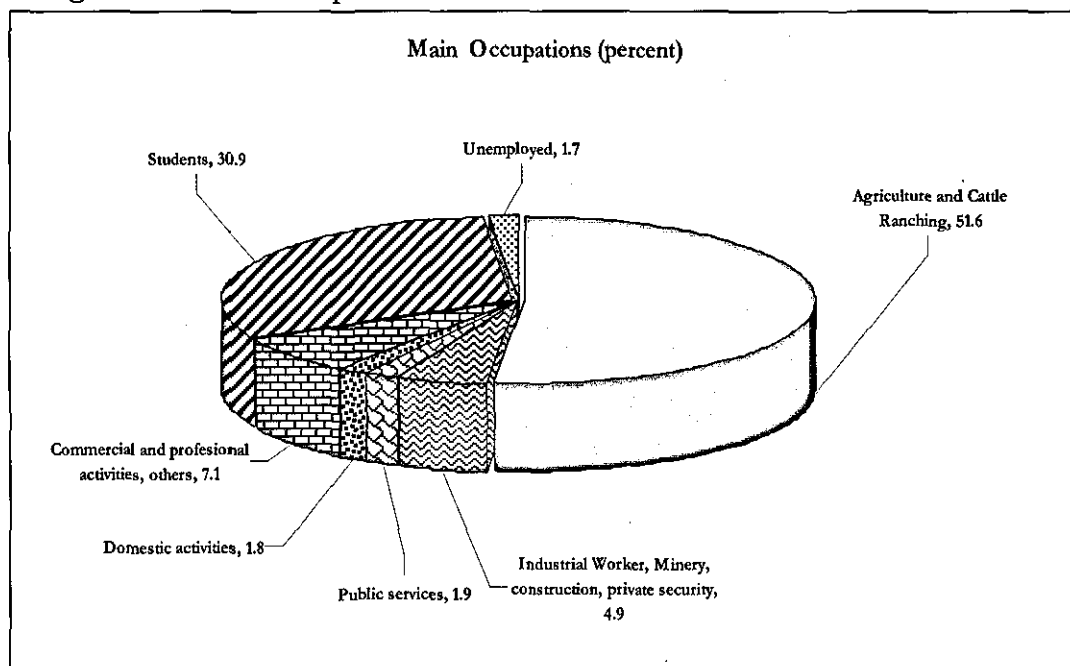
A general characteristic that catches the attention is the significant difference in terms of positive annual net income between the three departments, with León with the highest percent of households with surplus (an average of 63.1), Chinandega in a middle position (44.3 percent), and Estelí with the lowest percent of households with surplus (23.4 percent). The data shows that León and Chinandega have greater levels of migration in households with surplus than in those with negative annual net income, but when the Chi Square is applied this difference is not significant. In the case of Estelí there are no major differences in the levels of migration between those households with negative and positive annual net income. This outcome confirms the fact that it is not always the poorest who migrate. The process of migration requires a certain level of investment such as travel expenditure and, the first month of survival in the recipient country, expenditures which make it very

difficult for the poorest to travel. In the case of León and Chinandega the largest group of migrants belong to those households with positive net income.

9.3.2 Occupation and migration

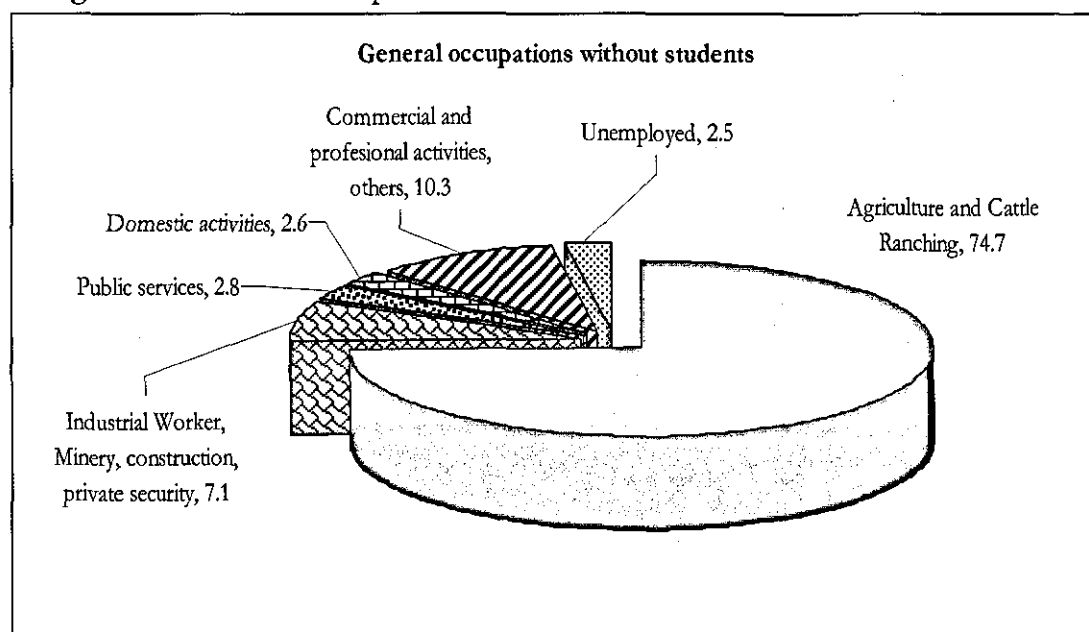
These are rural communities, in the sense that most of the members of the households work in agriculture or cattle ranching activities, this is true for all three departments. These activities are considered unskilled. Figure 9.21 gives a general idea of the main occupations of the members of the interviewed households, showing that almost 52 percent work in agriculture or cattle ranching, that the next highest ranked activity is studying, which is not an occupation in economic terms.

Figure 9.21: Main occupations in the interviewed rural households.



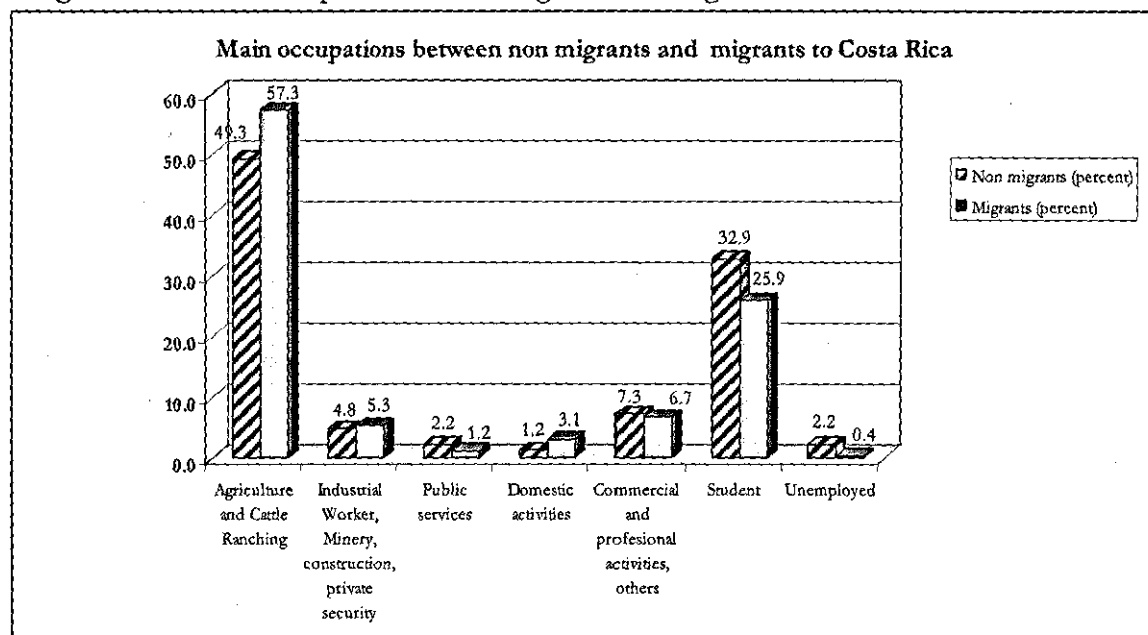
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 9.22: General occupation of the household members without students.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Almost 75 percent of the total members who are in employment (part-time and full-time) within the households work in activities related to agriculture and cattle ranching. The second most common category is occupation in commercial and professional activities with 10.3 percent. The third category is composed of industrial jobs, mining, construction and areas such as private security, with 7.1 percent. The low level of unemployment in the interviewed households is surprising. Maybe this is related to the fact that most of the households have their own farm and for that reason they do not consider themselves as unemployed when they have their land to work.

Figure 9.23: Main occupations in non migrants and migrants to Costa Rica.

Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Three main differences are evident in the occupation composition of those households with migration to Costa Rica and those without. First, a significantly higher presence of those working in agriculture and cattle ranching in the migrants (57.3 percent) in relation to the non migrants (49.3 percent); second, a lower presence of students in the migrants (25.9 percent) than in the non migrants (32.9 percent), but still a considerably higher level of migration for people still at school. A probable explanation for this phenomenon is the seasonal characteristic of some migration which could allow school children to migrate during their longest holidays (mid-December to beginning of March) and return just before the beginning of the school year. In this way, they could earn some income to help the family and also save some for their future plans, including buying land and getting married, as was discussed in the previous chapter.

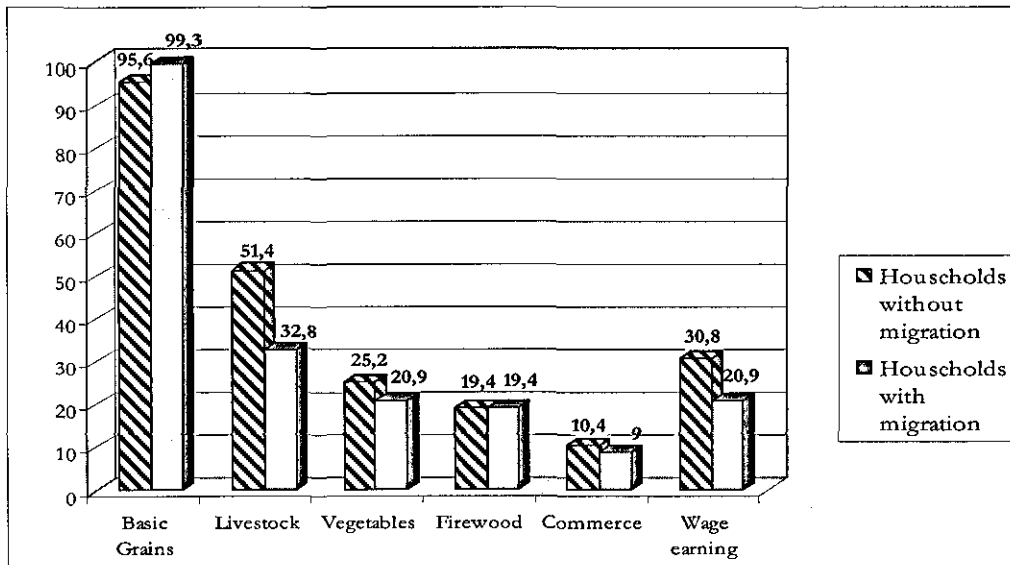
A final element to highlight is that although the rate of unemployment within the household members is very low, the figure is still lower in the case of household members that migrate to Costa Rica (0.4 percent). This is an interesting outcome for two reasons; first, the migrants are not the unemployed prior to leaving for Costa Rica or those in the worst economic circumstances, a very common stereotype in depictions of migrants in recipient countries. And, second, it gives a clue about what the migrants and their households are looking for in Costa Rica when they migrate, which is not a permanent job

but a source of extra-income to work their piece of land in Nicaragua. This is also an important difference from the urban migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. The migrants that go to the cities are generally seeking permanent or semi-permanent jobs and, in most cases, they are looking to stay for a longer period than the rural migrants.

9.3.3 Main economic activities of the households

Figure 9.24 shows the main economic activities of households with and without migration to Costa Rica. The first element to notice is that a very high proportion of the interviewed households are in fact basic grains producers, 95.6 percent of the households without migration, and 99.3 percent of the households with migration. This represents practically the totality of the members of the sample, meaning that this is a central economic activity and characteristic of these rural communities. In this case, there is no significant difference in statistical terms between the households with and without experience of migration.

Figure 9.24: Main economic activities of households with and without migration to Costa Rica.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Although there were a range of other economic activities developed by the households, two of them are particularly important in relation to this research. The first of these is the rearing of livestock. 51.4 percent of the households without migration include the rearing of cattle as one of their economic activities, whilst only 32.8 percent of the households with

migration are involved in this sector. When the chi sq is applied to this variable, this difference is calculated as significant in statistical terms (chi sq 0,000). This could be interpreted as suggesting that households with cattle have less migration than those without, or, alternatively, that cattle rearing reduces the economic pressure to migrate. This issue was explored further in the qualitative research conducted in Condega, in which some of the interviewed migrants explained that livestock (in this case, cattle or pigs), are conceived of as forms of capital that in emergency situations (including economic crisis), could be sold to generate resources. At the same time, livestock also give products, including milk and derivatives, that contribute to the household income.

The other important economic activity is the wage labour conducted by some member (or members) of the household, away from the economic activities of the farm. To a lesser degree than was the case with the previous variable (chi sq 0,028), this could contribute to reducing the pressure to migrate, or, to put it another way, households with wage earners have a lower migration rate than those households without this economic activity.

As with previous variables, when the household 'economic activity' is disaggregated by department, important differences from the general outcomes for this level come to the fore. Along these lines, contrary to the case with the total data, in the case of Chinandega there are no significant differences between households with and without migration to Costa Rica in terms of any of the different activities described in this section. In the case of León, an activity that was not significant in the general dimension is significant at this scale, vegetable production. The households that develop this activity tend to have less migration than those without it. In the case of Estelí, as well as León, there is one variable that is not significant at the general level but is at the department scale, namely forestry. In both departments, those households with involvement in forestry activities have a much lower tendency to migrate than those households without that involvement.

In this case, it is interesting to point out that Ligia Monge⁷⁴ (in an interview conducted on 23/03/03), highlighted the fact that the community of Venecia is part of a local region benefited by the Agrarian Reform during the Sandinista Revolution, and that they still have a cooperative that owns approximately two hundred *Mzs* of land, used for commercial forestry. The extra income that the community obtains from selling timber is an important

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Director of OCTUPAN, an NGO dedicated to promote rural development in Condega, Estelí.

income for those households, allowing them to avoid migration. Furthermore, in this case ideology is important, as many of the families in this region continue to be Sandinista and for many of them to migrate would be to abandon their land, so the majority of them have decided to stay and struggle against the policies that are pressurizing them to migrate to Costa Rica.

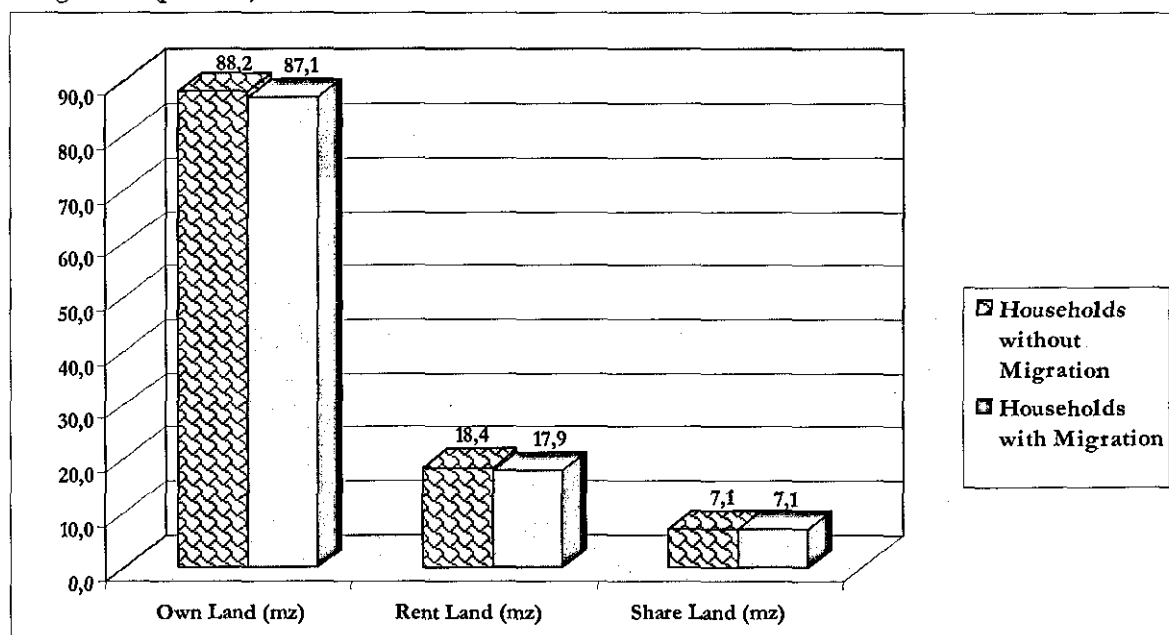
In summary, these findings confirm what is becoming one of the important findings of this research, that migration patterns differ according to the scale of analysis but also that rural communities with similar structural conditions can differ markedly in their migration outcomes.

9.3.4 Type of property, size of the land for production of the households and migration

This section analyses another important economic variable or factor, namely the type and size of the property of the household. The land could be partially rented, shared or could also be owned by the household. The other dimension of the variable is the size of the land that the household is using. The intention here is to explore if a relationship exists between these two dimensions of property size and ownership type and the presence of migration in the households.

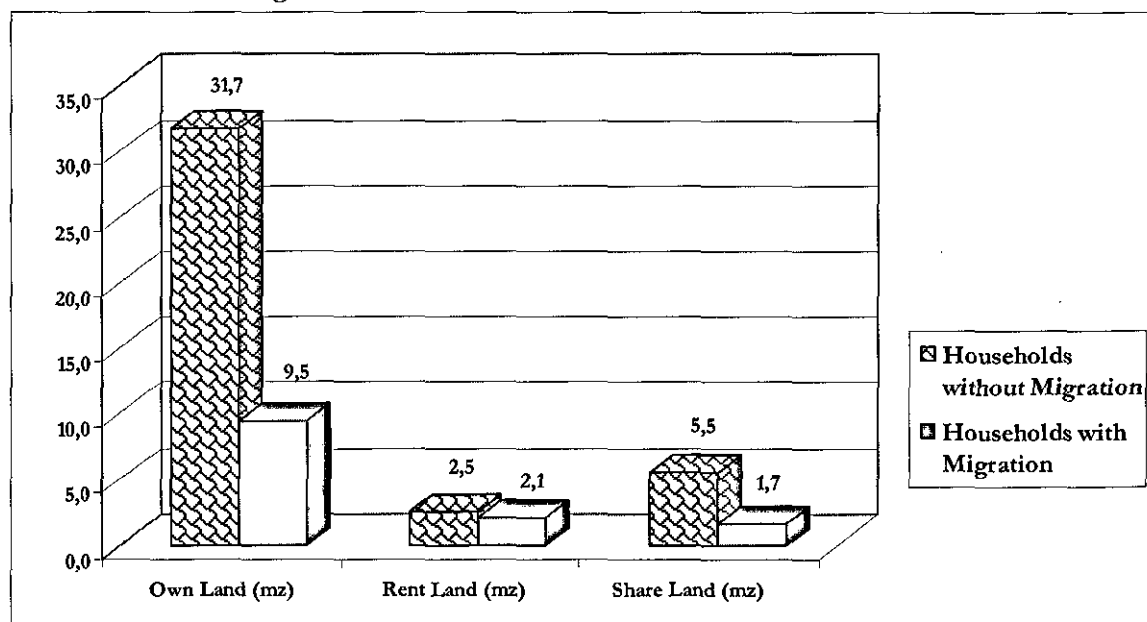
In relation to the first dimension, that is the type of property of each household, Figure 9.25 shows the main findings. The most important fact is that patterns of land use are very similar, with no significant differences between the households with and without migration. The other important finding is that practically all of the interviewed households have access to land, (via a range of different property types) and that the most important property type for all groups is land ownership, which accounts for 90 percent of the households surveyed in the sample. In this sense, this particular dimension makes no difference in relation to migration to Costa Rica.

Figure 9.25: Type of property of the land used by the households with and without migration (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 9.26: Type of property and size (*M_{ens}*, Mean) of Land used by the households with and without migration to Costa Rica.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The other important dimension to analyse in relation to this variable is the size of the land used by the households. Figure 9.26 summarises the main findings. There are significant differences between the size of land holdings of households with and without migration.

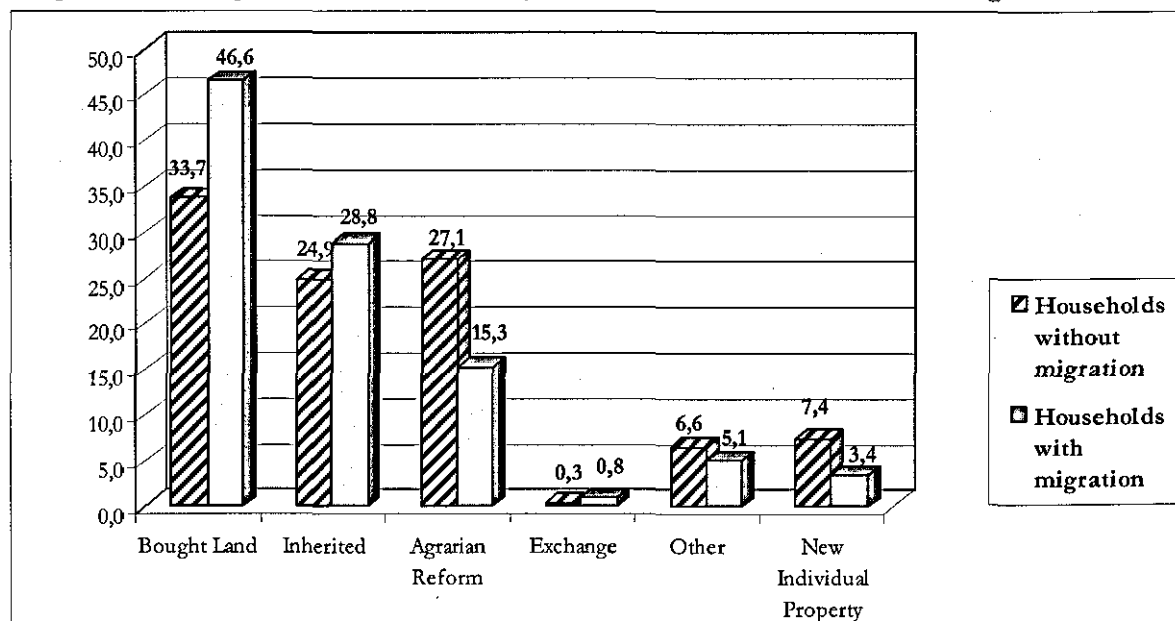
This difference is particularly important in the case of owned land. In the case of the household without migration, the average holding is 31.7 *Mzns* while in the households with migration to Costa Rica the average size is 9.5 *Mzns*, which is significant in statistical terms (Sig. 0,001). This could be interpreted as suggesting that those households with more land tend to migrate less than those households with less land. In this case, there are no significant differences in this relationship between the general and departmental levels.

9.3.5 Origin of property ownership and migration

The variable analysed in this section, the origin of the property owned by the households, is complementary to the variable analysed in the previous section. The intention is to explore if there is any relationship between migration and this variable. Nicaragua is a country with a very complex property system rooted in its history of dramatic social changes in political and economic regimes over the last three decades. In the case of the Nicaraguan countryside, this is a very important issue because during the 1980s, in the context of the revolutionary agrarian reform, approximately two million *manzanas* were distributed in a range of different property forms, as discussed in chapter 7. Then, with the change of regime, there was a massive transformation of land ownership, including the privatisation of hundreds of rural assets and properties that were state owned.

The findings analysed in this section are valid only for the households with their own land (84 percent of the total sample). As is shown in Figure 9.27, the data indicates some salient differences between the households with and without migration in relation to the origin of the land they own. There are two particularly significant differences. On the one hand, there is a higher percentage of households with migration that have bought their land (46.6 percent) in relation to those without migration with the same kind of property origin (33.7 percent). On the other hand, this pattern is inverted in the case of households with property obtained via the agrarian reform. In this case, households with migration have a lower percentage of this kind of property (15.3 percent) than those households without migration (27.1 percent). Both of these property types have a significant and contradictory effect on migration (chi sq. 0,019). In the former case, the households that have bought their land tend to have more migration than those had not. And in the case of the latter, the households with land obtained through the agrarian reform tend to migrate less than those that did not. In the other categories, the difference is not so relevant because the cases are few.

Figure 9.27: Origin of the land owned by the households with and without migration.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

When the analysis of this variable is conducted at the departmental level, the only department in which the variable continues to be significant, i.e. relevant in explaining the migration pattern of households, is Estelí (chi sq 0,004). In this case, it repeats the same pattern as the general level; households with 'bought land' tend to have more migration (53.1 percent of households with migration compared to 27.4 percent without). However, in the case of inherited land and land obtained through the agrarian reform, the pattern is the opposite with more households without migration than with it. In the case of Estelí, the interview with Ligia Monge, as well as the views expressed in the Community Workshop (19/05/03) with the social and political leadership of the studied communities, brings interesting information about why the households that were benefited by the agrarian reform have lower rates of migration than those without this kind of property. This is related to the agrarista ideology that most of the peasants benefited by the revolution still have. Along these lines, they have a negative perception of migration. For them, to migrate is a sort of betrayal of their agrarian roots. They feel that they have to stay and work the land, as well as to struggle against the conditions that are forcing them to migrate. At the same time, in the case of the communities of Estelí, most households not only have their small plot of land, but also a share in cooperative land turned over to forestry. This generates a complementary income that probably allows them to overcome

critical situations and to survive without recourse to migration. In contrast, in Pire most of the households bought their pieces of land, and for them, migration is a practical issue, a strategy that allows them to get enough income to enable them to continue to work their farm, so they do it. With the accumulative repetition of migration, other elements (in addition to the economic factor) start to play in the decision making, such as cultural elements that pressure young people to experience migration.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the interaction between twelve socio-demographic and economic variables and migration levels. In terms of the general outcome, the most salient element is the high level of migration to Costa Rica of the selected communities. However, it is also important to highlight the uneven distribution of this out-migration in the three departments, with León having the lowest rate of migration, and Estelí the highest, with more than 44 percent of the households of the selected communities.

Apart from this general statement, the main outcomes of this chapter can be summarised in two key conclusions. On the one hand, the fact that the production of migration in the studied households is a very complex process, which by no means can be understood through a single factor (such as argued in some demographic or neoclassical approaches) but it is rather a multi-factorial process. Thus, on the socio-demographic side, the dependency ratio, the age average of the migrant, and their educational level, were all found to be significant factors in explaining the production of migration at the household level. On the economic side, the main economic activities of the finca, particularly livestock and wage earning jobs, as well as the size and type of ownership of the land, are significant factors in explaining the decision to migrate or to stay. It is also important to note that seemingly very important variables, such as annual gross income or net income, were not found to be significant in determining which households contained migrants.

The other important finding is that analysis at the department level helps to illustrate the unevenness of this process. Important departmental differences included the general level of migration (with the massive difference between León (10 percent) and Estelí (44 percent)), but also the gender dimension, with León again demonstrating higher female than male migration in a process normally understood to be macho oriented, as confirmed by the migration trend in the other two departments. The departmental differences are also apparent in the composition of the households in which León and Estelí have opposite

results, and so on. Again, what is important to emphasise is that a massive national process such as rural migration, is, in the Nicaraguan case, not spread in an even manner across the different regions of the country. To properly understand migration dynamics requires detailed analysis of these regional differences.

A final reflection is that taking into account the statistical analysis and the qualitative research, it seems that migration could be conceptualised as part of a vulnerability reduction strategy of rural households in a context in which the environment (physical and social) has reduced the opportunities for survival. The change of the style of development has implied an abandonment of the countryside by the Nicaraguan state, as was discussed in the previous chapter and will be analysed in more depth in the next chapter. Along these lines, it is not a coincidence that the most significant variables in explaining the difference between those who migrate and those who chose not to are involvement in livestock rearing and wage-earning activities that allow rural families to diversify their strategies for reproduction and survival.

Chapter 10. Main characteristics of Rural Migration Dynamics within the migratory transnational space from Nicaragua to Costa Rica.

The objective of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, to analyse the main dynamics of rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica within the selected communities during the period from 1990 to 2003. Secondly, to analyse the connections between those dynamics and the contemporaneous transformation of the style of development in both countries which has created a migratory transnational space which includes, productive processes and territorial bi-national articulations by means of seasonal transnational labour dynamics.

To achieve this twofold objective, this chapter is focused on the specific dynamics of rural migration to Costa Rica from the studied communities, which includes the analysis of the following variables,

- the number of times the migrants have been sent to Costa Rica,
- the time length of their seasonal migration,
- the conditions and cost of travel,
- the process of decision making within the household,
- the social networks they have developed in Costa Rica,
- the occupation and location of the migrants in Costa Rica,
- remittances, including the means of transfer, the amount, the periodicity and how they are utilized by the households in Nicaragua.

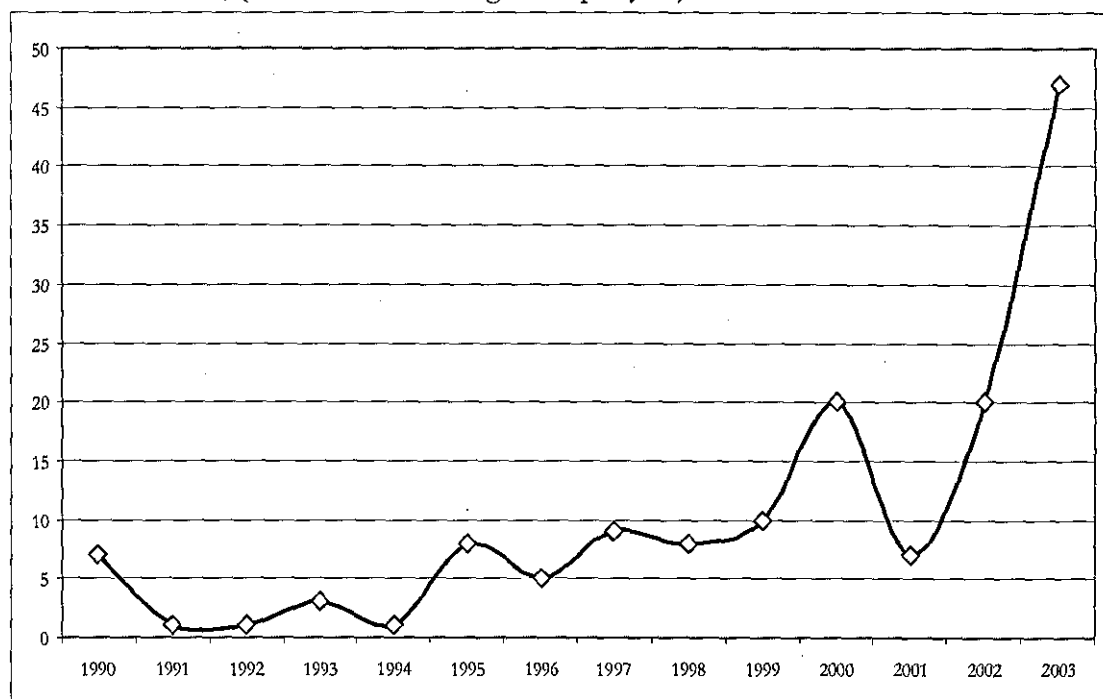
This analysis is for the period 1990-2003. Most of this analysis is developed both for the overall data and for each department.

10.1 Origin and development of rural seasonal migration to Costa Rica

One of the first findings about the rural seasonal migration studied in this research is that it started in the mid-1990s as is shown in Figure 10.1. This moment coincided with the deepening of the Neoliberal style of development in Nicaragua and the deepening of the transnational style of development in Costa Rica, as discussed in Chapter 7. This transnational migration has shown an cumulative pattern, involving two processes. On the one hand, the repetitive accumulation throughout time of the labour visits, and, on the other hand, the growing number of migrants who have become engaged in this dynamic. This is one of the characteristics of transnational migration which was discussed in the

theoretical chapter in relation to Portes' definition (Chapter 2). This pattern can be observed in Figure 10.1 below,

Figure 10.1: Pattern of Rural Seasonal Migration Frequencies from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, 1990-2003, (households with migration per year)



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Then, the seasonal migration started in 1993, and started to increase in 1995. The pattern has not been linear but cyclical or with oscillations of one year with migration decline and one year with migration growth. The growth of 2002-3 was explained by the participants in the Community Meeting in Condega (CMC, 19/05/03) as a consequence of the lack of employment and very low wages in the region, and the existence of higher wages in Costa Rica. However, they also mentioned the more-long term element of the critical general situation facing by agricultural producers in Nicaragua, pointing out that after the end of the Revolution the new governments have had no rural development policy, something that has been reflected in a lack of credit to finance production, as well as a lack of good infrastructure and marketing support to sell their production in the national markets with good prices and without intermediaries. These comments coincide with the structural analysis of chapter 7 and 8. This situation has generated a feeling of a lack of hope. As one of the participants expressed it: 'there is nothing more here to look for' (*aquí ya no hay nada*

más que buscar), an expression that reflects a lucid and negative reading of the new structural conditions generated by the Neoliberal style of development in Nicaragua.

It is important to indicate that the significant difference between the year 2003 and the previous years may have been affected by the fact that many of the questionnaires were not answered by the migrants but by their relatives that easily remembered the most recent migration but sometimes had problems remembering older ones. However, in the Community Meeting organised in Condega, it was also mentioned by some of the participants that there had been a significant increase in the migration level during the last few years because of the lack of public support and low prices in maize and beans (2001-2003) (CMC, 19/05/03).

In terms of the rural migration pattern to Costa Rica, it is important to note that some level of migration to Costa Rica already existed at the beginning of the decade, probably related to the political migration of the 1980s as explained in Chapter 6. After that, there was a significant reduction of seasonal rural migration in the sub-period 1991-1992 and a small rise in 1993, before decreasing again in 1994. The first year of the decade with an important increase in seasonal migration from these communities was 1995, which is coherent with the specialised literature on Nicaragua which describes this year as very critical in terms of the evolution of the economic and social crisis. Morales and Castro point out that this was the year when general migration levels to Costa Rica started to rise (Morales and Castro, 2002: 76-132). After that year, there was then a small decrease in migration in 1996, an electoral year, before continued annual growth until the year 2000. Migration levels then suffered a significant decrease in 2001, an electoral year, before growing again in 2002 and achieving its highest peak in 2003.

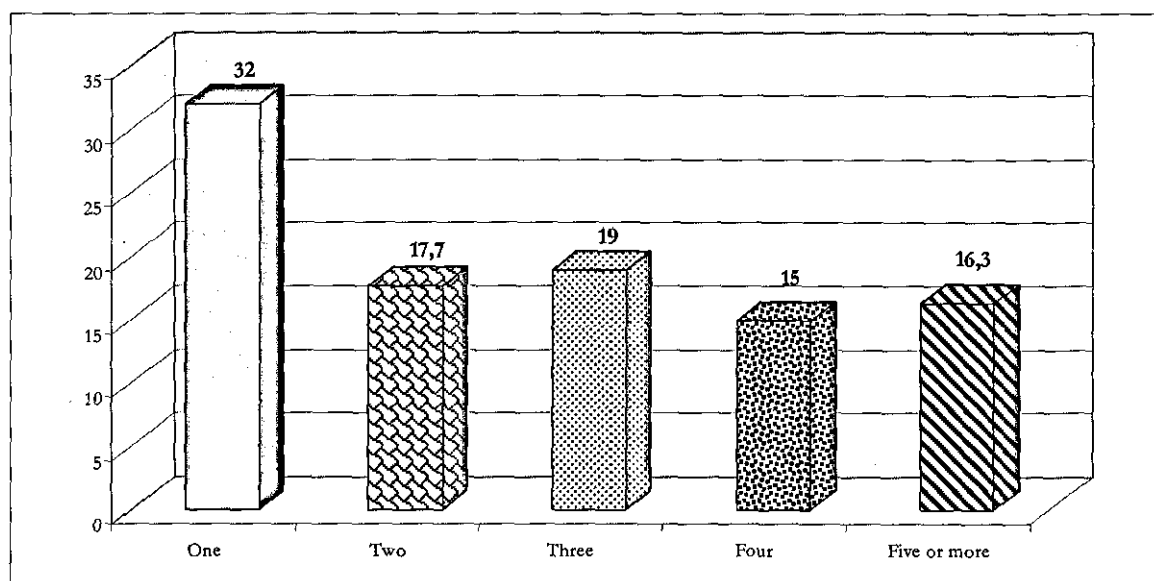
The mention of the electoral dimension is not a coincidence. As one of the migrants pointed out in an interview (Montalván, SEI, 07/06/2003), the national government allocates public resources and budget through their local governments as a part of the presidential contest, with the purpose of influencing the orientation of the vote. This allowed some households to obtain extra income and for that reason there is less financial pressure to migrate. In summary, the cumulative rise of seasonal rural migration is a result of the coincidence of the change in the style of development in both Nicaragua and Costa

Rica, and the political dynamic within Nicaragua that has directly affected access to resources for the peasantry.

10.2 Frequency of seasonal labour migrant visits to Costa Rica

The analysis in this section is focused on the frequency of the seasonal migrant visits to Costa Rica from the studied rural communities from León, Chinandega and Estelí. Frequency here is defined as the number of times the migrants have travelled to the neighbouring country for labour purposes during the period 1990-2003. This is one of the key elements that characterises the transnational dimension to this particular migration dynamic between the two countries. The results of this indicator are shown in Figure 9.2,

Figure 10.2. General Migration dynamics. Frequency of seasonal migration to Costa Rica, 1990-2003.



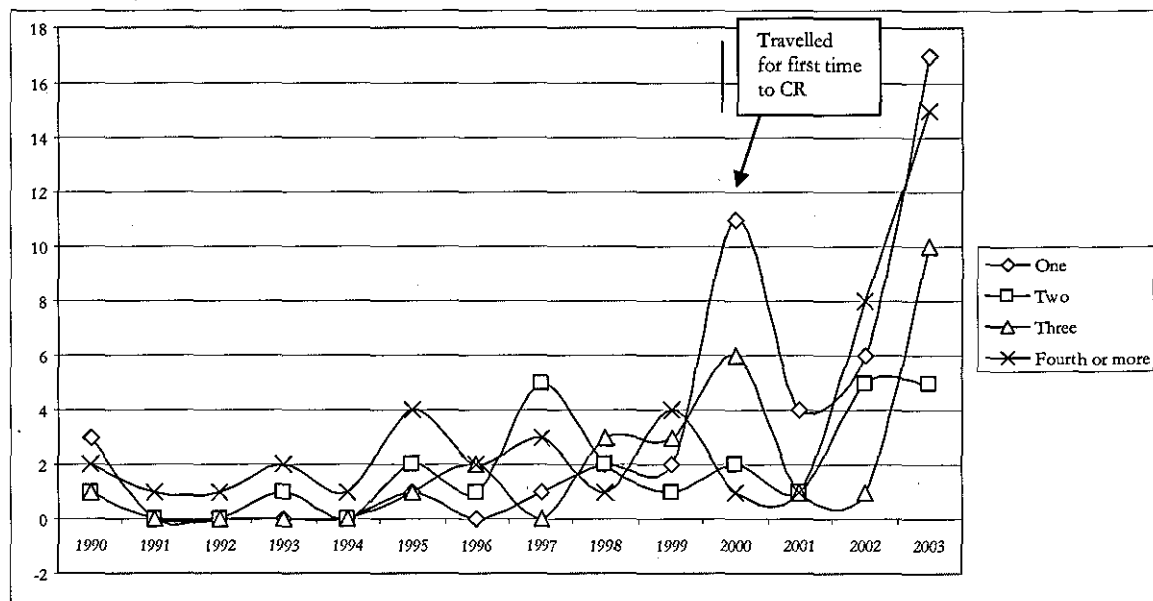
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Although the largest single group is made up of those migrants that have travelled to Costa Rica for temporal labour visits only once (32 percent) during the period 1990-2003, there are other significant groups of migrants that have been there twice (17.7 percent), three times (19 percent) and four times (15 percent). Furthermore, there are cases of migrants with five, six and eight migrations to their neighbouring country in the selected period (16.3 percent). This periodicity indicates the existence of a transnational dynamic connecting this Nicaraguan labour force to the economic activities where they work in Costa Rica, most of which are export-oriented activities. This could mean that Nicaraguan immigrants are

integrated into transnational circuits of production and exchange between the two countries (Robinson, 2001; Morales and Castro, 2002 ; Nowalski, 2002: 147-150).

The frequency of seasonal migration is possible, in part, because of the complementary timing between the harvest period of agro-export crops in Costa Rica between November-December and the end of May (such as coffee, oranges, pineapple, sugar cane, bananas, manioc, and vegetables, amongst others), and the second sowing and harvesting period for basic grains like beans and maize (*siembra de postrera*) between June and October in the migrants' farms in Nicaragua (Monge, SEI: 23/03/03). Figure 10.3 shows the frequency of migration pattern per year for the studied period, by disaggregating the previous figure. As it is possible to see, it gives an idea of how the seasonality of this migration is cumulative throughout time, but again, it is clear that the most important growth in the frequencies was developed after 1995.

Figure 10.3: General Rural Migration Dynamics. Frequency of the seasonal migration to Costa Rica, 1990-2003.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

An important element to highlight from this figure is the fact that even at the beginning of the studied period there were some migrants that had visited Costa Rica many times before 1990, meaning that they were engaged in the previous migration dynamic, more oriented by political than by labour reasons. However, the Figure reinforces the fact that a new migration dynamic started in the mid-1990s. An important peak occurred in 2000 with

many new migrants travelling for the first time to Costa Rica. This was a consequence of Hurricane Mitch (1998-1999), which had a dramatic and massive social and economic impact on all three departments, but particularly in Estelí and Chinandega.

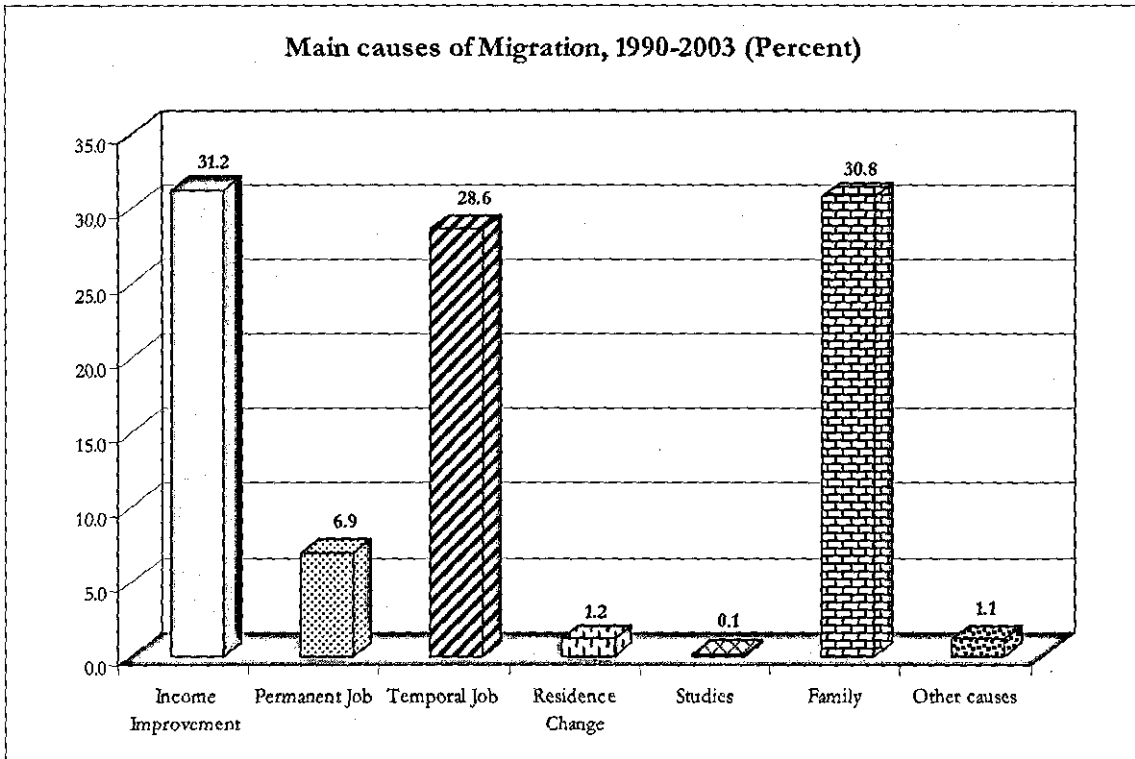
The outcome of disaggregating this variable by department highlights important differences for the studied period. Estelí appears as the department with not only the highest level of migration, but also with the widest variety in terms of number of times its migrants have travelled to Costa Rica, with some individuals recording eight journeys during the period 1990-2003. The principal categories are those migrants with one, two or three visits (20.9 percent, 23.1 percent, and 17.6 percent, respectively). In terms of their distribution pattern throughout time, 11 percent of the migrants first travelled between 1990 and 1995; 39.6 percent first migrated in the period 1996-2000 and a significant 48.4 percent first migrated in the years 2002-2003, meaning that this short period of two years contained almost 50 percent of the total migration of the studied period for Estelí. In the case of León, the issue that stands out is the fact that the largest single category of migrants visits was four (35.5 percent of all migrants from these communities) but, at the same time, there are no migrants from León with two visits to Costa Rica, whilst the same percentage (32.3 percent) have travelled once or three times. In terms of their distribution over time, most of the migration from these rural communities in León started after the year 1995 (90 percent of the total), which coincides with the deepening of the Neoliberal style of development in Nicaragua. Chinandega appears to have the newest rural migration dynamic to Costa Rica. Most of their migrants (70.8 percent) have only travelled once to this country, although 20.8 percent have travelled twice. In relation to the distribution of this Chinandega migration throughout time, the first element to point out is that it started in 1995, and most of it (87.5 percent) is concentrated in the period 1999-2003.

10.3 Main causes of rural migration to Costa Rica, an agency perspective.

This section is focused on the 'agency' of the migrants and the members of their households, meaning by this that analysis is focused on how the migrants as agents 'read' the structural conditions (in the sense that was explained in Chapter 2) and how they explain the rationale of their decision to migrate and their driving motivations. Figure 10.4

shows the main answers to the question ‘what were the principal causes of your decision to migrate?’

Figure 10.4: Main causes of Migration (total, percent), period 1990-2003.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

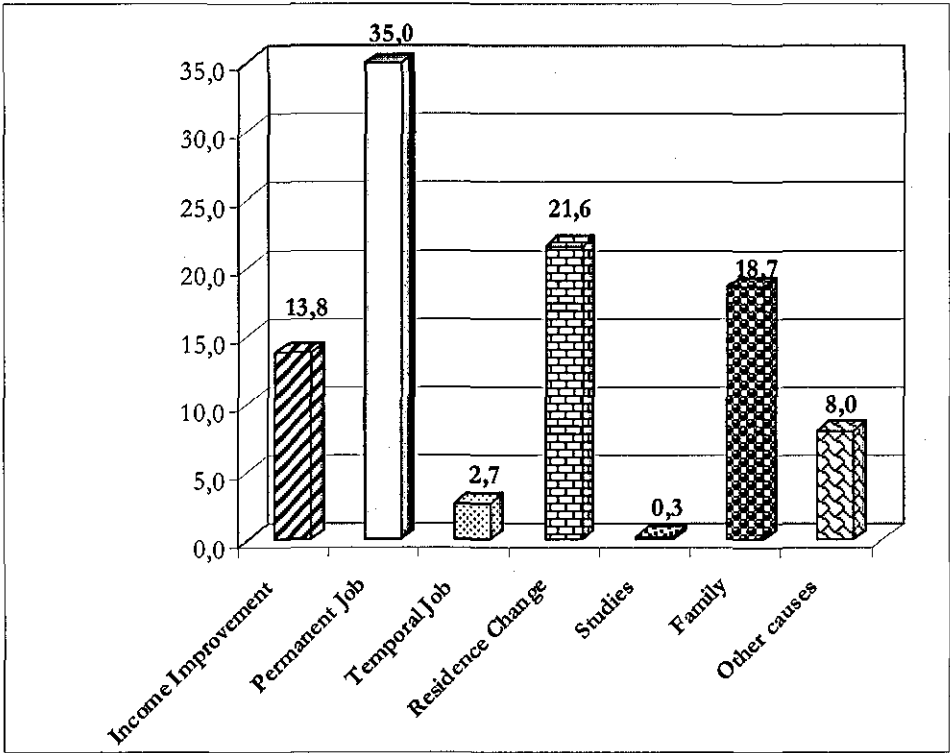
Although the answers were classified in to seven different categories, the three principal causes of migration in the studied rural communities were found to be the following,

1. Improving family income (31.2 percent).
2. Family reunification or to accompany the partner that migrates (30.8 percent).
3. Finding a temporary or seasonal job (28.6 percent).

These were the three principal causes of migration pointed to by the migrants surveyed, followed at a distance by responses such as looking for a permanent job (6.9 percent). These motivations are clearly not mutually exclusive because a migrant could find a seasonal job that improves their income at the same time as they are accompanying their respective partner or relatives.

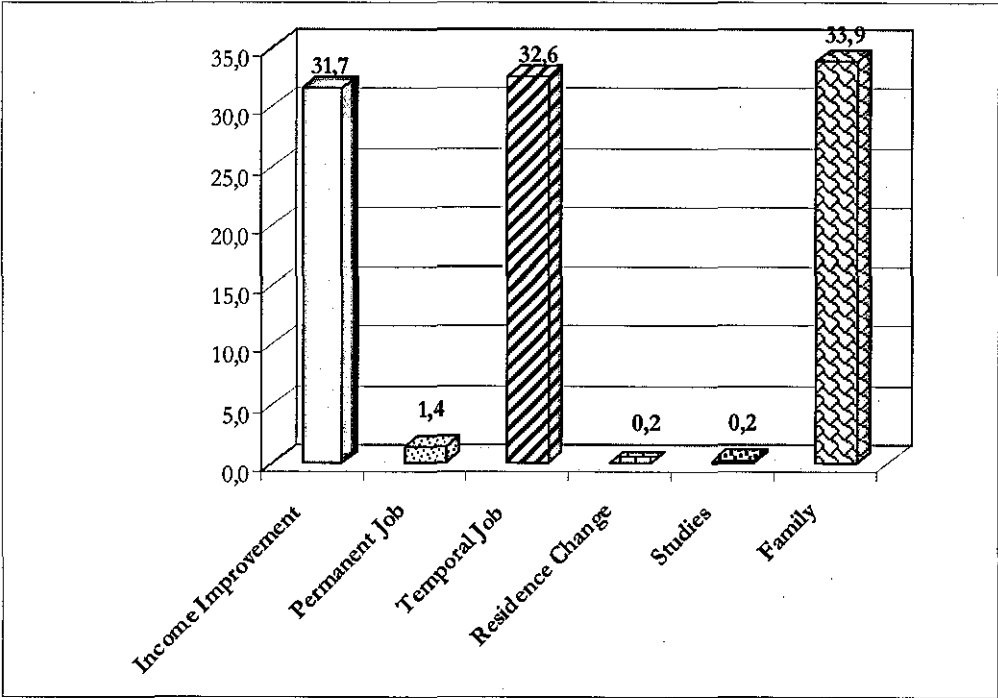
An important element that is confirmed by these answers is the fact that their decision to migrate is principally motivated by economic reasons, as part of their strategy to reduce their social and economic vulnerability. In fact, there is a high correlation in the pattern of the three main responses to the question about the factors provoking migration, namely family, income improvement and temporary job. The growth of migration provoked by the combination of these three correlated variables originated in 1995, had a small decrease in 1998 and increased again for the period 1999-2000, before a new decrease in 2001 and a significant increase over the period 2002-2003. The individual results for each department for this variable are indicated in Figures 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7,

Figure 10.5: León. Main causes of migration (percent), 1990-2003.



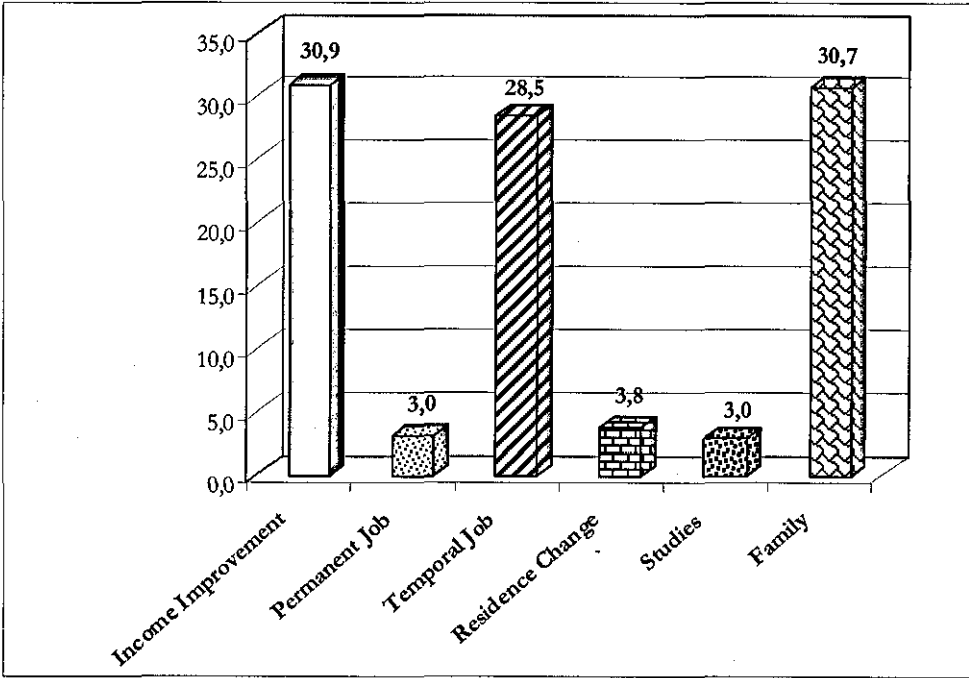
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 10.6: Estelí. Main causes of migration (percent), 1990-2003.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 10.7: Chinandega. Main causes of migration (percent), 1990-2003.



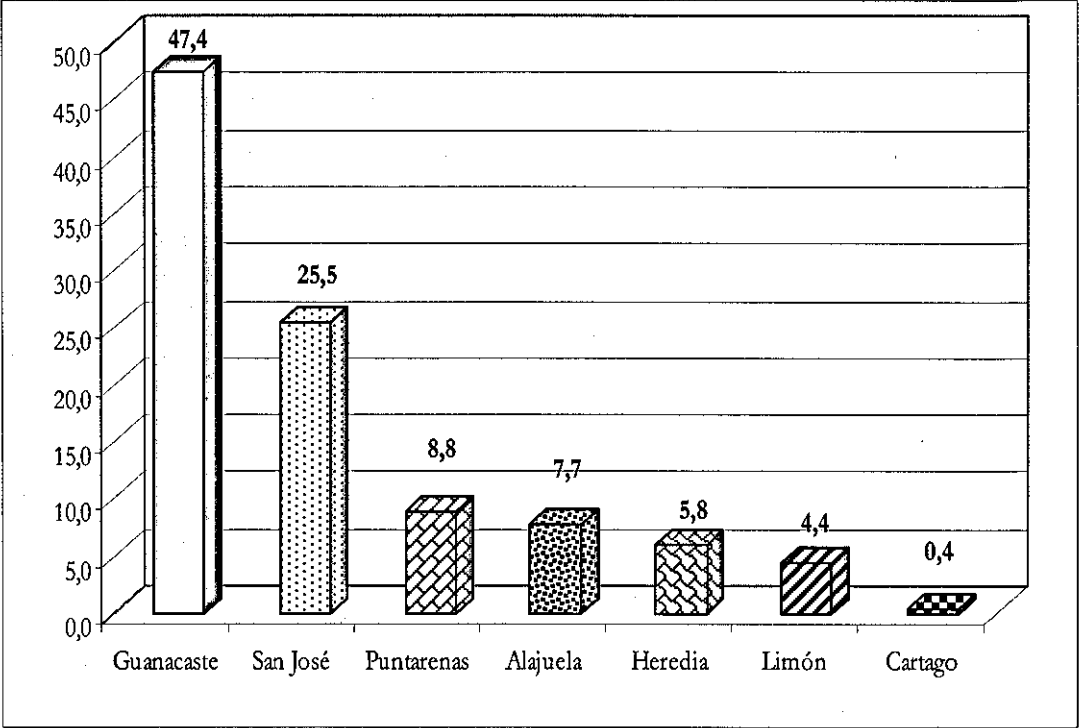
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The departmental level shows some differences from the general findings. There are similar causality patterns between Estelí and Chinandega in relation to the main causes that motivate their migrants to displace to Costa Rica; thus although they do demonstrate some minor differences (particularly in the order of the causes), they share the same three major motivations as the overall data, namely, income improvement, temporary job and family reasons. On the other hand, in the case of León, the causality pattern is totally different to the other two departments. To begin with, the principal cause of their decision to migrate is to look for a permanent job (35 percent), a factor that was only marginally mentioned in the other two departments, followed by residence change (21.6 percent) and family reasons (18.7 percent). Income improvement appears as the fourth cause of migration (13.8 percent) in this department. This difference between León and Chinandega and Estelí is probably related to the gender composition of the migration and the type of labour market insertion that they have in Costa Rica. As is shown in the next chapter, León is the only department with higher levels of female than male migration. The labour market insertion of female migrants is totally different to that of male migrants, including the fact that female migrants frequently look for a more permanent job (domestic work, commerce and other services). Another important difference is that reunification with partners or relatives is more significant for women than for men, in part because of the fact that they migrate for longer periods of time (more than a year) and the change of location is high.

10.4 Principal destinations of the rural migration in Costa Rica

This section analyses the main destinations in the Costa Rican provinces of the rural migrants from the studied communities in Nicaragua. Although Chapter 3 explained the limitations of the Costa Rican National Census for capturing seasonal migration because of the short length of time the migrants spend in Costa Rica as well as the highly mobile nature of their labour dynamic, it does highlight a clearly differentiated pattern of allocation between those migrants coming to work in the service sector and those coming to work in agriculture. In the former, the majority went to San José, and the latter, to Alajuela, Guanacaste, Limón and Heredia. Here, the idea is to explore the main trends in geographical distribution of the rural migration from the studied communities, as is shown in the following Figure 10.8

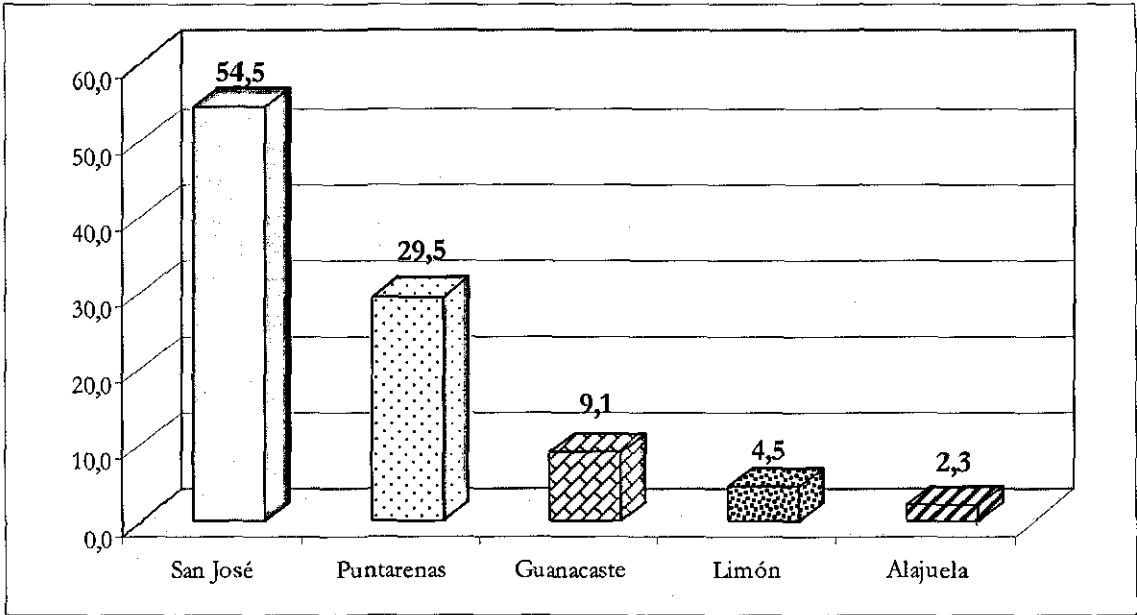
Figure 10.8: Principal destination of the rural migrants in Costa Rica (percent), 1990-2003.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The main pulling Costa Rican province is Guanacaste which is the main destination of 47.4 percent of the migrants; this is followed by the capital, San José, which 25.5 percent of the migrants chose as their main work destination. The other four provinces, namely Puntarenas, Alajuela, Heredia and Limón are the main destination of 26.7 percent of the migrants. The following Figures 10.9, 10.10, and 10.11 show the main destination of the migrants by their department of origin,

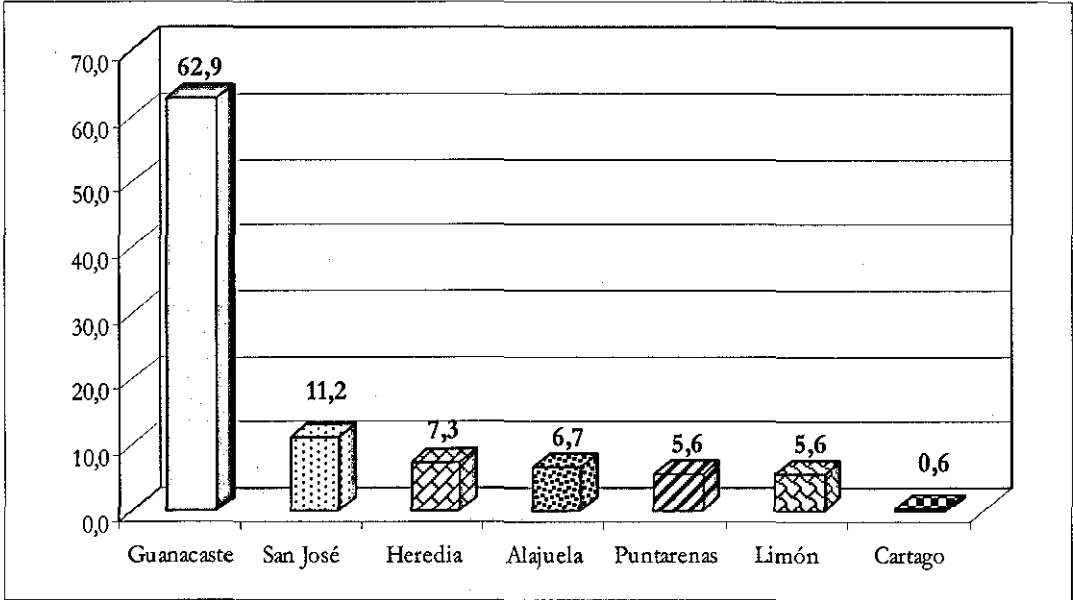
Figure 10.9: Principal destination in Costa Rica of the migrants from León (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Most of the migrants from León to Costa Rica go to San José, this is correlated to the fact that a majority of these migrants are women and the kind of jobs they are looking for, that is domestic work or commerce and other services, are easier to obtain in the capital or other urban areas of the recipient country. In fact, the migration from León to the provinces with significant development of export agriculture, such as Guanacaste, Limón, and Alajuela is relatively low, in comparison to the general pattern. Heredia and Cartago are not even mentioned as destinations by this category of migrants.

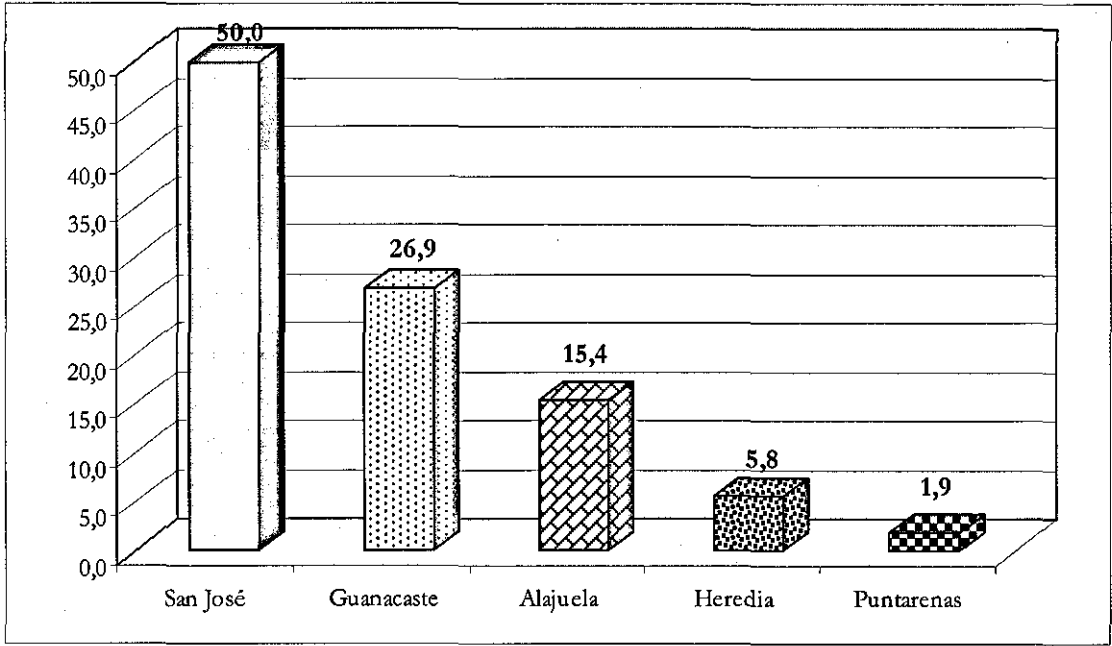
Figure 10.10: Principal destinations in Costa Rica of the migrants from Estelí (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The Estelí migrants' destinations in Costa Rica are the other end of the scale in relation to the pattern followed by the León migrants. In fact, 63.2 percent, which represents a significant majority of these migrants, have selected Guanacaste as their main destination, followed at a distant second by the 11.2 percent of those who selected San José. Heredia, Alajuela, Puntarenas and Limón together account for 25.2 percent of the migrants, whilst Cartago has less than 1.0 percent of the total. This geographical distribution of the Estelí migrants is not a coincidence. It is correlated to the fact that most of these migrants are looking for seasonal work in export agriculture in Costa Rica, and those are the provinces where those crops are cultivated.

Figure 10.11: Principal destinations in Costa Rica of the migrants from Chinandega (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

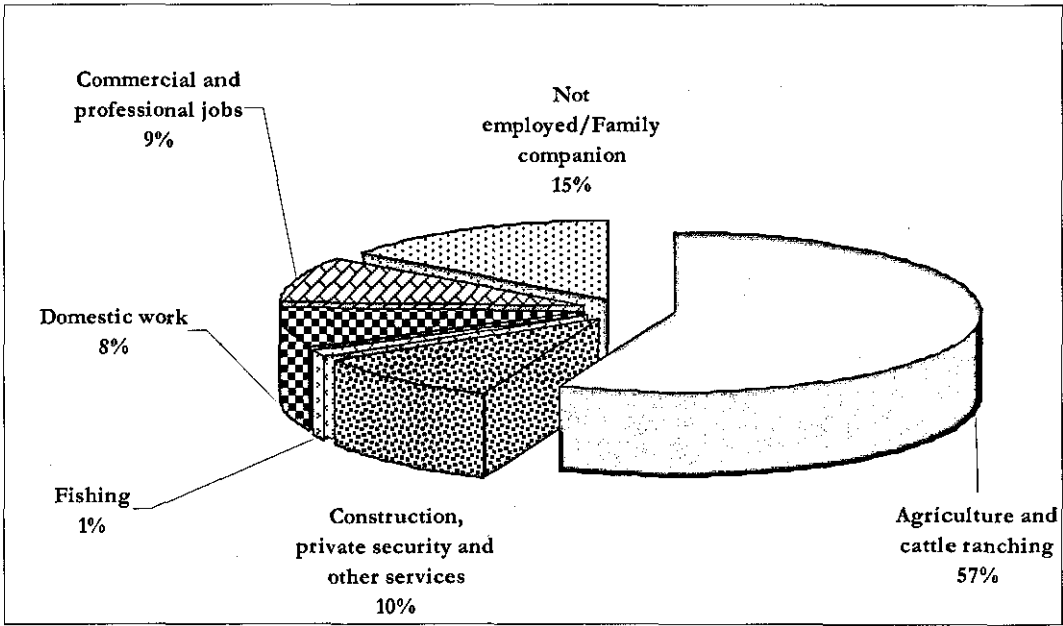
The geographical pattern of allocation of the migrants from Chinandega in Costa Rica is closer to the pattern of the migrants from León, in the sense that half of them select San José as their main destination. However, the second most popular destination is Guanacaste with 26.9 percent of these migrants going to that province, followed by Alajuela with 15.4 percent and more distantly Heredia with 5.8 percent of the migrants. Puntarenas received only 1.9 percent of these migrants, whilst Limón and Cartago have no migrants from the studied communities from Chinandega. These data confirmed how the migrant insertion is highly defined for export-agriculture activities, as could be derived of the province selection by the migrants.

An insightful outcome is related to gender. In general terms, these findings show a high correlation between the gender of the migrants, their economic activities and their destination. In the case of Estelí, with a majority of male migrants involved in rural activities, the main destinations are those provinces with significant agri-export activities, particularly important sugar cane in Guanacaste. The migrants from León in contrast, with more female than male migration and a concentration in service sector employment, tend to gravitate towards the major urban concentrations, above all the capital, San José.

10.5 Main economic activities of the migrants in Costa Rica

The answer of the migrants to this question confirms that most of them were doing temporal or seasonal jobs in Costa Rica, as can be observed in the following Figures 10.12, 10.13, 10.14 and 10.15. The first of these figures indicates that a majority of these migrants have an agricultural orientation to their economic activities in Costa Rica, with 57 percent dedicated to these kind of activities. The second largest group (15 percent) consists of individuals that have migrated to accompany a relative or a partner with 15 percent; the third largest group of migrants is composed of those that work in construction, private security and other jobs of this sort, with 10 percent, followed by those migrants working in commerce and professional services (9 percent), and domestic workers (8 percent). In agriculture, the main activity is to harvest.

Figure 10.12: Main activities of the migrants in Costa Rica (percent).

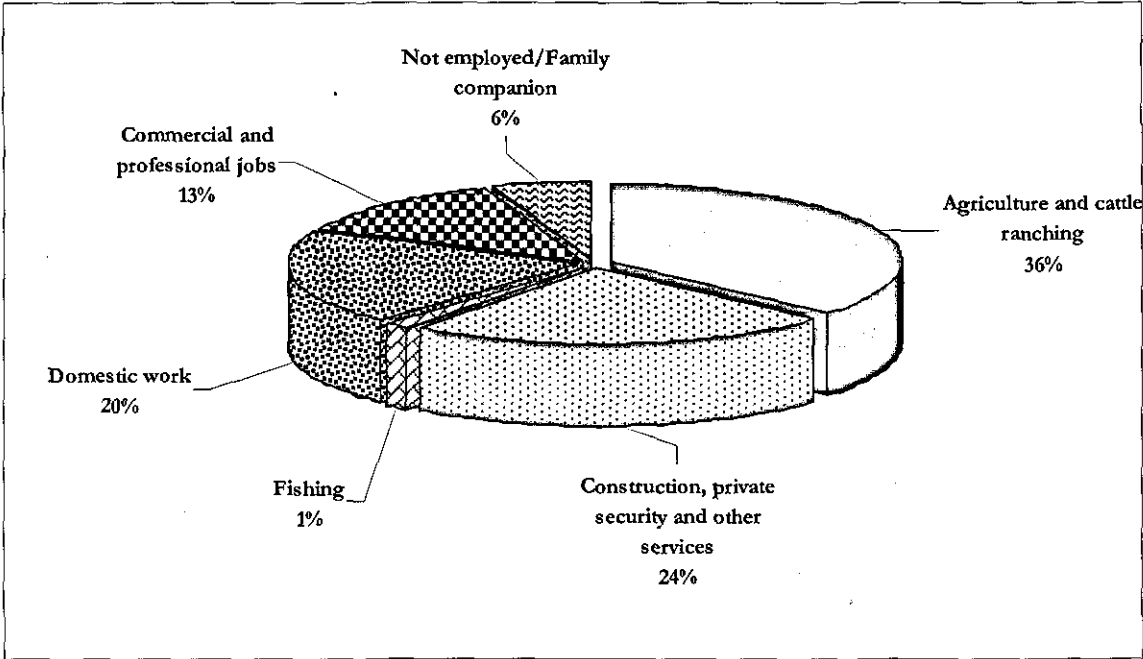


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 10.13 shows the results of this variable for the migrants of León in Costa Rica. Once again León demonstrates some particularities related to the economic activities of the migrants. For example, only 36 percent of migrants from León work in agriculture and

cattle ranching, which is very low in relation to the level of over 50 percent of the general sample. A significant 24 percent of this group work in construction, private security and other activities of this type, much higher than the 10 percent of the general sample that work in these areas, and more than 30 percent work as domestic workers (20 percent) or in commerce and other services (13 percent), which are mainly female economic activities. In the general sample, these two categories together constitute only 17 percent of migrants. In synthesis, it is very clear that the important female composition in the case of León's rural migration make a difference in relation to the type of economic activity they are involved in within Costa Rica.

Figure 10.13: Main activities of the migrants from León in Costa Rica (percent).

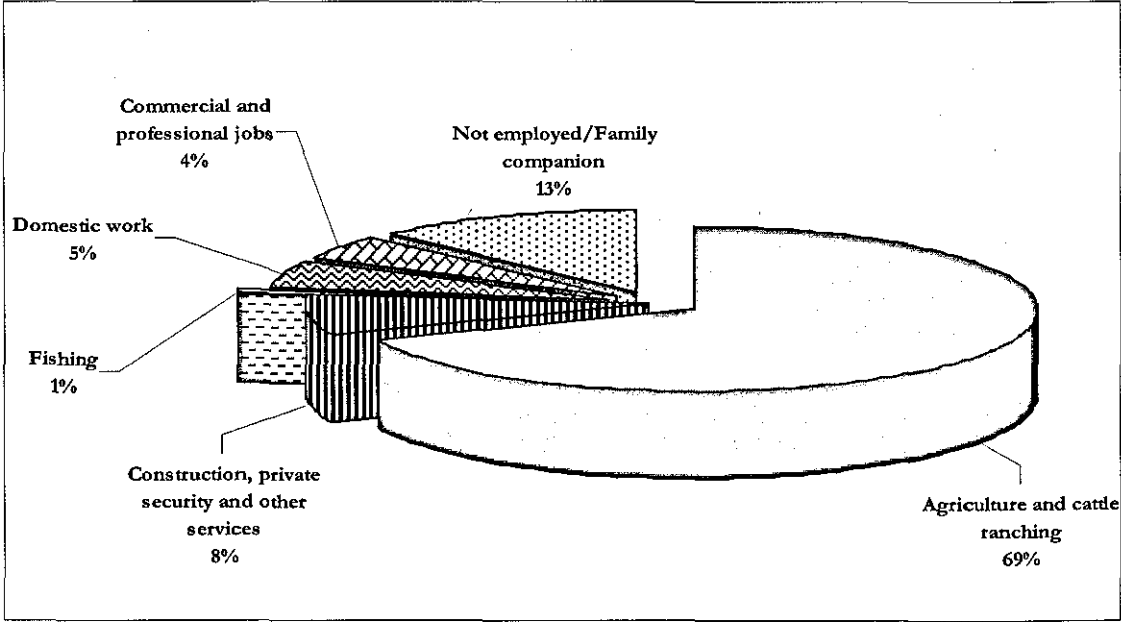


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 10.14 illustrates the economic activities of migrants from Estelí in Costa Rica, the data is very different to that of León. In this case, almost 70 percent of the migrants work in agriculture and cattle ranching activities, a figure which is almost 13 percent above the general average. The second most important group is composed of those accompanying

their relatives (13 percent), followed by those working in construction and private security (8 percent). Less than 10 percent work in the other categories.

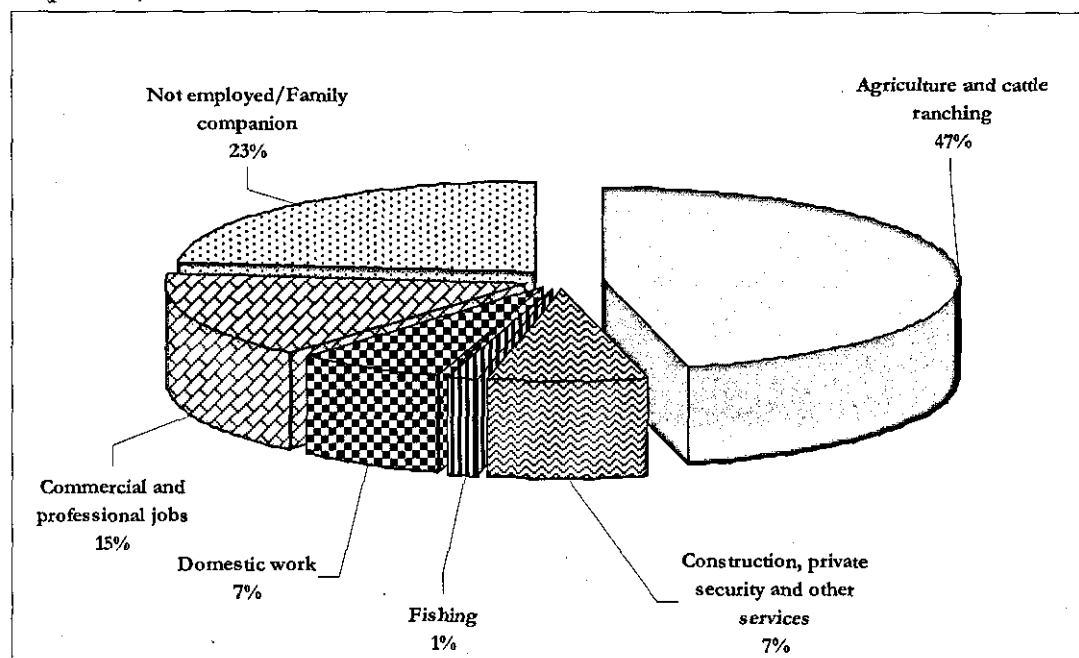
Figure 10.14: Main activities of the migrants from Estelí in Costa Rica (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

These characteristics of the rural migrants from Estelí are also related to the gender composition of these migrants. In fact, this is the department with the highest proportion of male migrants (80 percent), who mainly go to Guanacaste for the sugar cane harvest, a typical seasonal work.

Figure 10.15: Main activities of the migrants from Chinandega in Costa Rica (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In terms of the economic activities pattern of the migrants in Costa Rica, Chinandega is located between León and Estelí. The majority of migrants from Chinandega, namely 47 percent, work in agriculture and cattle ranching activities. The second largest group is those accompanying family members with 23 percent. In fact, this is the department with the highest numbers of this type of migrant. Then, there is the group of those migrants working in commerce or other service jobs with 15 percent. Another 14 percent are accounted for between those in domestic work (7 percent) and construction, private security and other sorts of services.

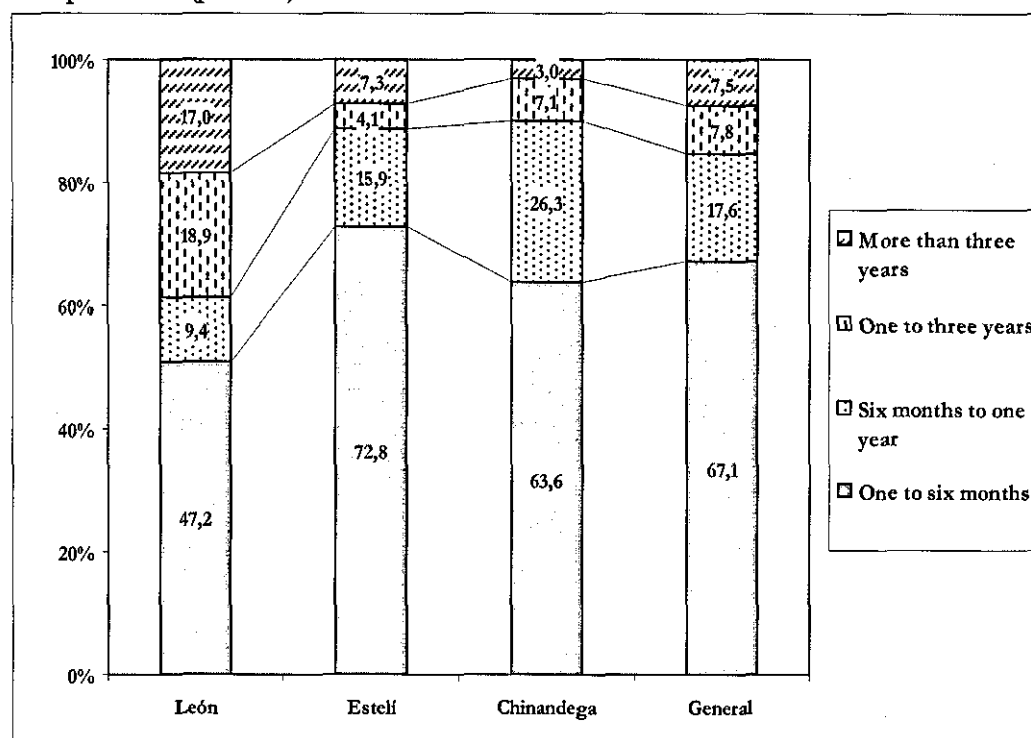
In summary, although there are some differences in the economic insertion pattern in Costa Rica according to the department of origin of the migrants, the migrants from each department also display some similar trends; first, the importance of agriculture which is the most important category in all departments; second, a consistent pattern of concentration in the less qualified jobs in Costa Rica, even in those cases related to services.

10.5 Time length of stay of the migrants in Costa Rica

A very important variable for explaining the rural migration dynamic from the studied rural communities to Costa Rica is the length of time that the migrants stay in Costa Rica. This variable is highly correlated to some of the variables already analysed, such as gender, age, destination and type of economic activity of the migrants in Costa Rica. Figure 9.16 illustrates the length of stay of the migrants in Costa Rica for the sample as a whole and by department. In general terms, a significant majority of the migrants (67.1 percent) go to work in Costa Rica for a period of between one and six months. Generally this reflects the period that the migrants have available before they need to go back to Nicaragua to work their farms in what they call the '*cosecha de postrera*' (second or late harvest).

As was explained by some of the migrants from Estelí who were interviewed by the researcher, many migrants go to Costa Rica in November or December and pick coffee until January (Heredia and San José), then they move to the sugar cane harvest (mainly in Guanacaste and Alajuela) until April or May for a total stay of four to six months. After this, a significant group of the migrants return to Nicaragua to work on their farms (SEI). In terms of the average number of months stayed in Costa Rica, the mean is 3.5 months.

Figure 10.16: Length of stay of the migrants in Costa Rica in general and by department (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The second most important group of migrants, comprising 17.6 percent of the total, stay in Costa Rica for a length of six months to one year. As was pointed out in some of the semi-structured interviews (SEI), those who stay for more than six months are mostly the ones who need to save money for more than simply working their farm, but also to buy land or get married. In general terms, at least in the case of Estelí, these migrants tend to be amongst the youngest people of the community. In terms of their dynamics in Costa Rica, they frequently carry out the same activities as the previous group, but after finishing with the sugar cane harvest, they move to work in orange and pineapple plantations (northern regions of Heredia and Alajuela), before finishing their crop-picking circuit in the bananas plantations of the Caribbean side of Costa Rica around November or December of that year. The mean length of stay in Costa Rica for the migrants in this category is 9.2 months.

The third category is comprises the 7.8 percent of the migrants who work in Costa Rica for a period of one to three years, with a mean stay of 24 months or two years. In the case of men, these migrants tend to be concentrated in activities such as construction or private security; whilst women, tend to work in commerce, services or as domestic workers. In

fact, these are generally urban rather than rural jobs, and they require a more permanent presence of the migrants throughout the year. This is why the migrants tend to stay more than twelve months (or even three and four years) in Costa Rica, frequently without visiting their families in Nicaragua. In these cases, the migrants tend to visit their families and communities at Christmas or Easter as was pointed out in the interviews to the migrants. The final group of migrants stay in Costa Rica for three years or more, with an average stay of 10.6 years. Some of them eventually remain constantly in Costa Rica.

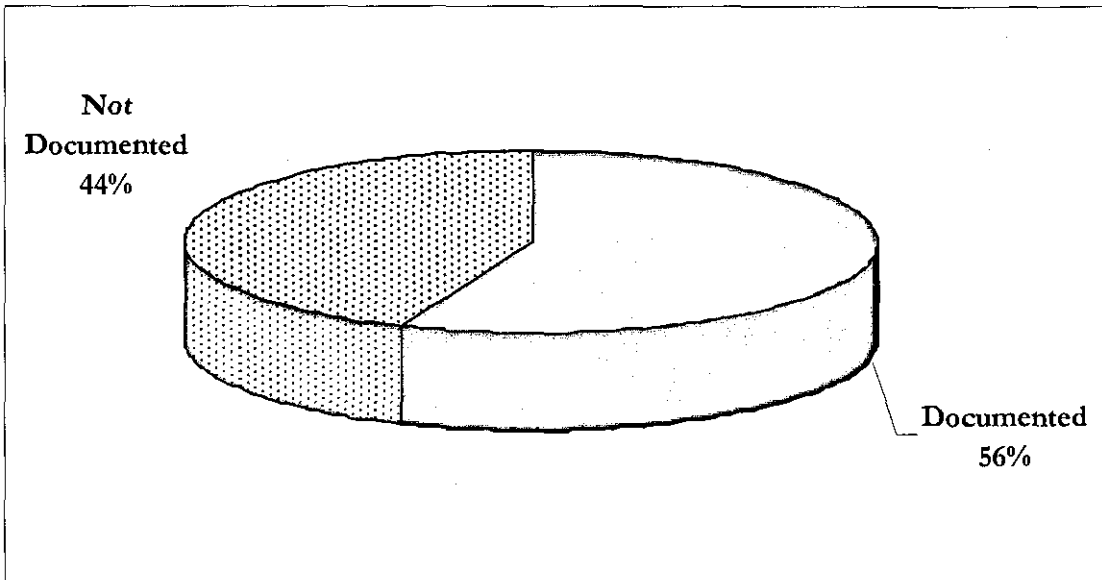
This discussion of the time that the migrants spend in Costa Rica makes it possible to highlight a very important human dimension of these processes. This is the very high price that migrants and their families have to pay in emotional terms, because, to be successful as an income diversification strategy, migration requires family separation, sometimes for a long period of time. This situation is perhaps most critical in those cases where the migrant is a woman and a mother, and the children have to stay in the country of origin (Barahona and Torres, 2003). This element was mentioned in the with the wives of the migrants (FG5, 25/04/03).

Returning to Figure 10.16, one final element worthy of comment relates to the differences between the departments in terms of the length of time that the migrants spend in Costa Rica. The migrants from León tend to stay for more time in Costa Rica than those from the other two departments, with almost 40 percent staying for one year or more. León also has the lower percent of migrants staying for less than six months (47 percent). In contrast, Estelí has the highest rate of migrants staying for only a short (or seasonal) period (with almost 73 percent staying for one to six months) and the lowest rate of migrants staying for more than one year (11.4 percent). Chinandega is the department which approximates most closely to the general pattern, with 63.6 percent of migrants staying for a short seasonal period (less than six months), and the highest proportion of migrants that work in Costa Rica for a period of between six months and one year (26.3 percent). Chinandega also has only a small percent of migrants (10.1 percent) that stay in Costa Rica for more permanent jobs (that is for more than a year). In synthesis, the differences between the departments are also confirmed in the findings for this variable.

10.6 Travelling conditions and the level of documentation of the migrants

This section has a twofold purpose, firstly, it seeks to determine the level of documentation of the migrants, whether the migrants are travelling with a passport or any other legal document etc. Secondly, in the case of those migrants that are documented, it analyses what kind of formal permission they have to work in Costa Rica and what percentage of the migrants have this permission. This is an important element to explore in understanding the migrants' insertion in the recipient country, because it contributes to defining their situation in relation to employers (their bargaining power) as well as their position in relation to the Costa Rican immigration authorities. Figure 10.17 illustrates the major findings of the research in relation to the travel conditions of the migrants.

Figure 10.17: Travelling conditions. Documented and Non Documented Migration (percent).



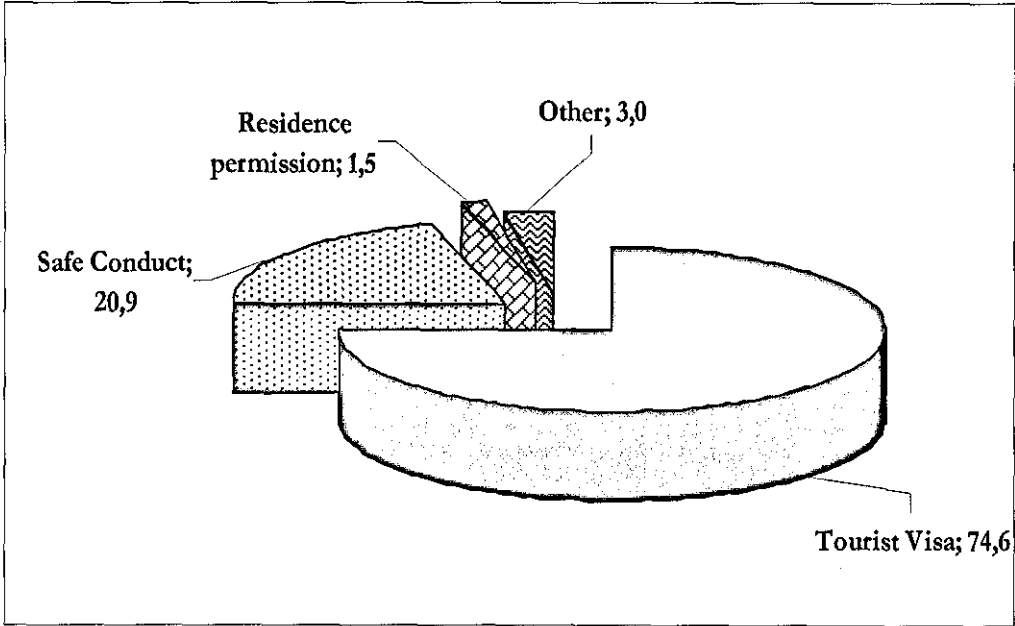
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Figure 10.17 presents the answers of the migrants to the question of whether they travel to Costa Rica with any sort of formal documentation, it shows that 56 percent say that they travel with documents, whilst 44 percent answer that they travel without any kind of document. This is clearly a very high level of undocumented travel. At the departmental level, Esteli has the highest level of undocumented migrants, with 80 percent of the total of undocumented migrants from all three departments, representing 60 percent of all migrants from Esteli. Undocumented migrants from León on the other hand represent less than 20 percent of all undocumented migrants travelling to Costa Rica; whilst undocumented

migrants from Chinandega represent 14 percent of the total and 23.3 percent of total Chinandegan migrants. But to have a passport or other official document could be misleading the perception about the level of formality of rural migration to Costa Rica.

The image portrayed by this indicator must be combined with a more important indicator in terms of formal or regular migration, namely if they have work permission or visa. In fact, their formal situation in Costa Rica (in terms of their right to work in Costa Rica) will depend upon their possession of a residential or explicit work visa issued by the Costa Rican government. To have a more accurate idea of the real situation of these rural migrants, therefore, the questionnaire asked for details about the type of document or permit possessed by each migrant. Figure 10.18 illustrates the responses to this question,

Figure 10.18: Regular Migrants. Type of permission or documentation.



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

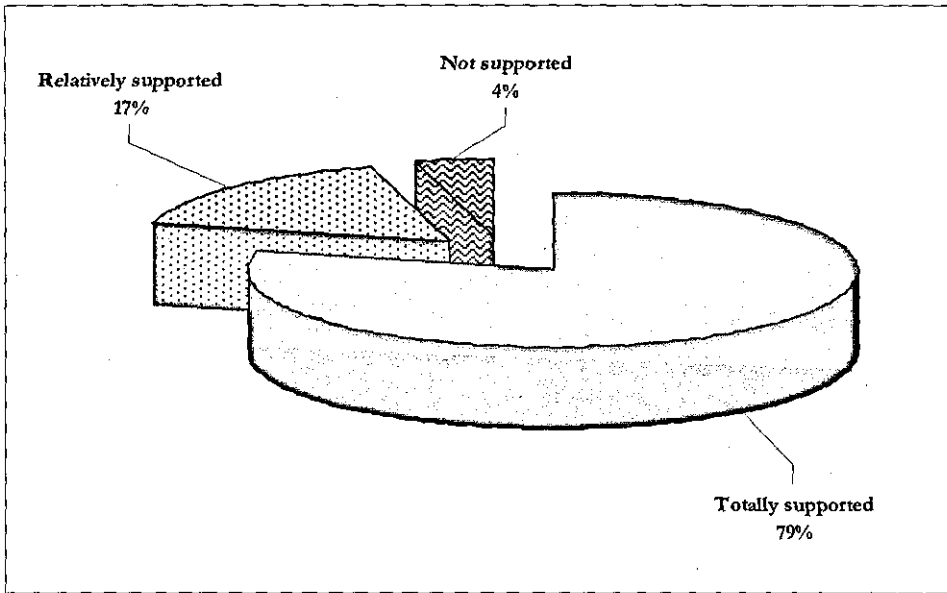
Figure 10.18 demonstrates that 74.6 percent of the documented migrants only travel with a tourist visa that lasts for three months and which cannot be used for working purposes. The second largest group, with 20.9 percent of the total, travels with a safe conduct document (*salvoconducto*), which is a document which grants temporary permission to travel and, as with the tourist visa, does not permit the traveller to work in the country. Only 1.5 percent of the migrants have permission for legal residence in Costa Rica.

The main conclusion about the travelling condition of the migrants is therefore that a very significant majority does not have legal documentation which allows them to work in Costa Rica which, as mentioned before, increases the vulnerability of this population and creates favourable conditions for their overexploitation in Costa Rica, as well as for abuses of their human rights not only by those who contract them, but also by the Costa Rican immigration authorities. From a more structural perspective and looking to the political economy this situation creates, this is a characteristic of seasonal rural migration from Nicaragua that has allowed Costa Rican export and agricultural producers, many of them transnational enterprises, to maintain high profits accentuating their competitiveness in relation to the other Central American economies, a spurious competitiveness (Morales and Castro, 2002).

10.7 Household decision making about migration to Costa Rica

The main intention of this section is to analyse how the household unit makes decisions in relation to migration. The most important question to answer here is what is the role of the family in the decision making about the migration of one or more of the members of their household to Costa Rica? In this case, only a little over half of the households with migration responded to the questions (70 cases), hence, the analysis is only general and not divided by department. Understanding the level of involvement of the family in the decision to migrate, in association with other variables like the sending and use of remittances, allows us to understand migration as part of a household reproduction strategy and not only as an individual 'escape' or strategy. Figure 9.19 demonstrates the level of support of household members to the decision to migrate,

Figure 10.19: Household support to the migration decision (percent).

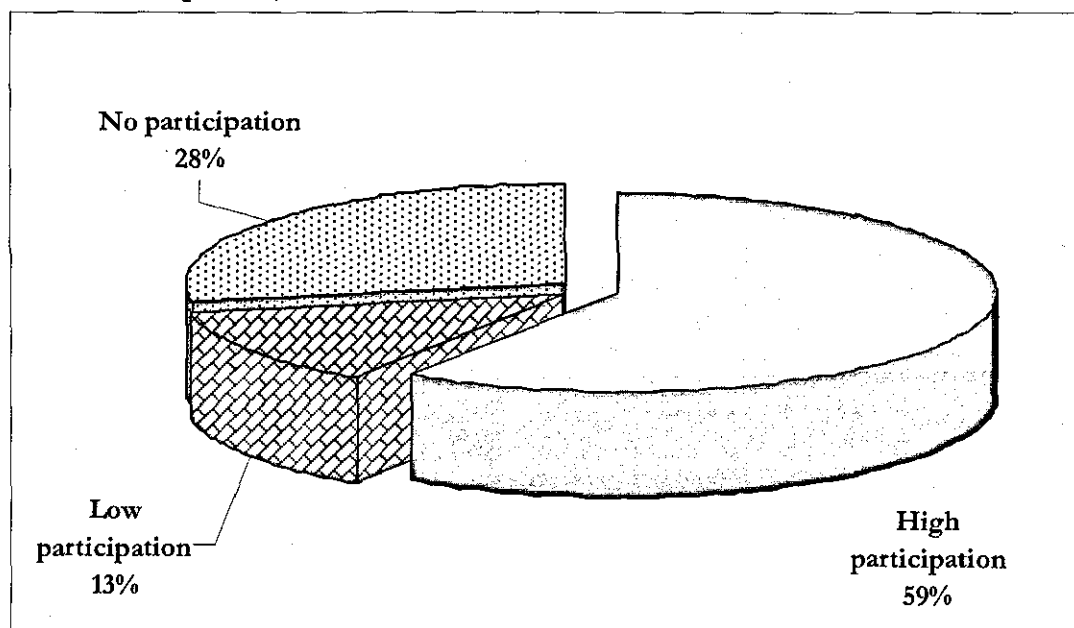


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

A significant majority (almost 80 percent) of the interviewed households suggested that they totally supported the decision to migrate of members of their household, followed by 17 percent of the households that indicated relative support, indicating that they were not totally convinced about the decision of some of their members to migrate. Only in 4 percent of cases did the households indicate a rejection or lack of support to the decision to migrate.

The other important dimension of decision making about migration in the household, is the level of involvement or participation of all the members of the household in the decision to migrate. The results are shown in Figure 10.20,

Figure 10.20: Level of participation of the Household in the decision to migrate to Costa Rica (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The answers to the question about the level of participation of the household's members confirms that in almost 60 percent of cases, there is a high level of participation in the decision making process. In another 13 percent of cases there is a low level of participation, whilst there is a significant 28 percent that indicated no participation of household members in decision making about migration.

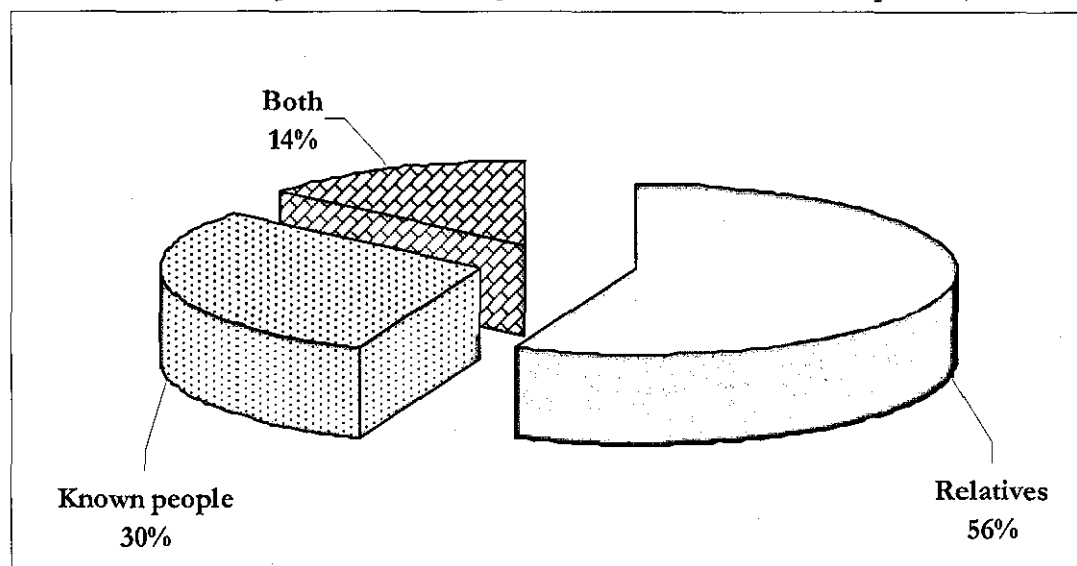
Taking into account the semi-structured interviews and some of the discussions in the s (FG), the lack of participation of the household members could be explained by two main reasons. In some cases it will relate to the fact that, the decision is taken by the head of the household, particularly if the person in this position is a male. In these cases, the fact that the decision is taken by the head of the family does not mean that it does not have the support of the rest of the family. In other cases, the decision to migrate is taken by young members of the household, particularly male teenagers, against the will of their parents. In these cases, they frequently do not allow their parents any participation in the decision to migrate and, furthermore, they travel to Costa Rica even against their parent's will. This suggests the importance of teenage rebellion and the exertion of freedom and independence from their parents' control in the decision-making processes in these particular cases. Despite pointing out these exceptions, it is possible to conclude that in

general terms the rural migration from the selected communities should be considered more as a collective decision of the household as part of a survival strategy than an individual decision of particular members of that household.

10.8 Social networks of the migrants in Costa Rica

This section analyses the existence of relatives, friends or known people in Costa Rica that the migrants contact before they go and also explores the kind of support they receive from these social networks. This is a very important indicator of the transnational character of the migration dynamic. In general terms, of the 140 households with migration to Costa Rica, 112 households indicated that they do have someone known in Costa Rica, which means 80 percent of this group has a contact in the country of destination, a significant percent. Figure 9.21 indicates the composition of the contacts the migrants have in Costa Rica in terms of relatives, known people (friends, neighbours of the communities, referenced people), or both categories of contacts.

Figure 10.21: Composition of the migrants' contacts in Costa Rica (percent).

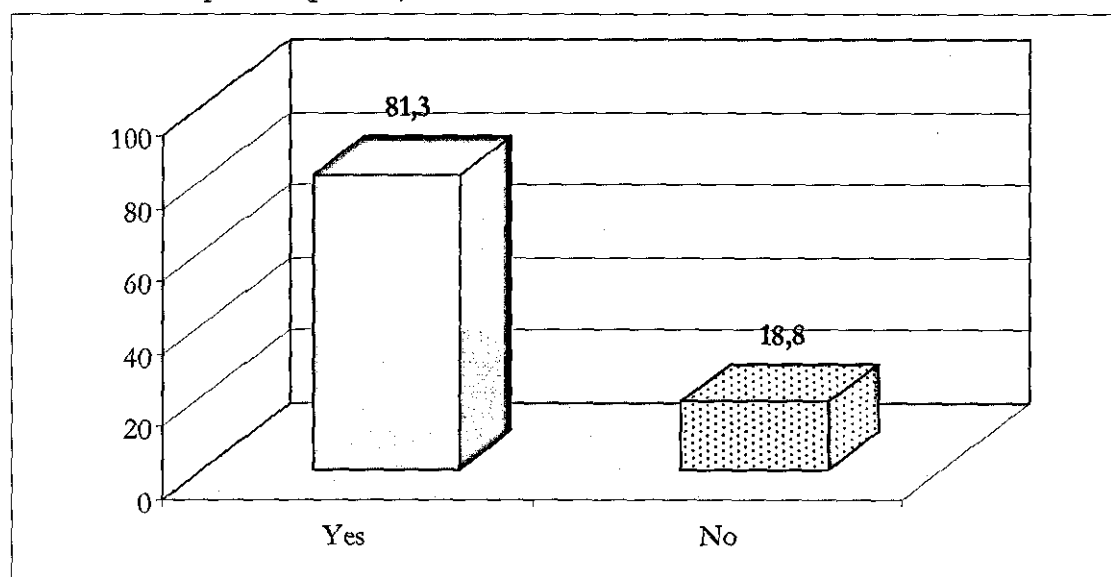


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

A significant part of the contacts in Costa Rica, namely 56 percent, are composed of the migrant's relatives, showing again the importance of the family in the different moments of the migration process, and in the case of the household with migration, how the members of the family are very involved in the different moments of the transnational dynamic. However, 30 percent of the migrants indicate that their contacts in Costa Rica are other

known people, whilst 14 percent have connections with both relatives and other known people, pointing to the fact that these transnational social networks are built upon solidarity bonds beyond those of familiar kinship, in the same sense as was indicated by Faist and Özveren (2004: 96-121). Another important question is whether the migrants actually make use of these connections. The answer is shown in Figure 10.22,

Figure 10.22: Contacts of the migrants with relatives and known people in Costa Rica before their departure (percent).

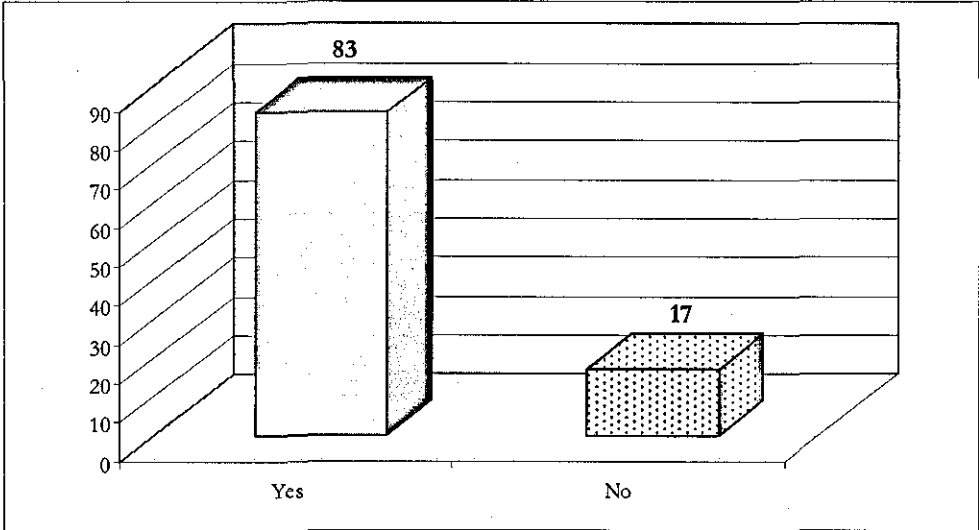


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

A very high percent (81.3 percent) of the migrants with contacts in Costa Rica make use of these contacts, indicating among other things, that this migration is not a 'blind' process where the migrants travel without any knowledge of the place they are going to. It also confirms that it is not an isolated process, but, on the contrary, is a socially or collectively constructed process in both the expelling and the recipient country where migrants belong to social networks that help them to survive and to reduce their own vulnerability. However, it is also important to explore the purpose of making contact before travelling and to see whether this contact is followed by the demonstration of some form of support or solidarity to the migrants. With this aim in mind, the survey asked the migrants if they

received some kind of support from their contacts in the neighbour country. The responses to this question are shown in Figure 10.23,

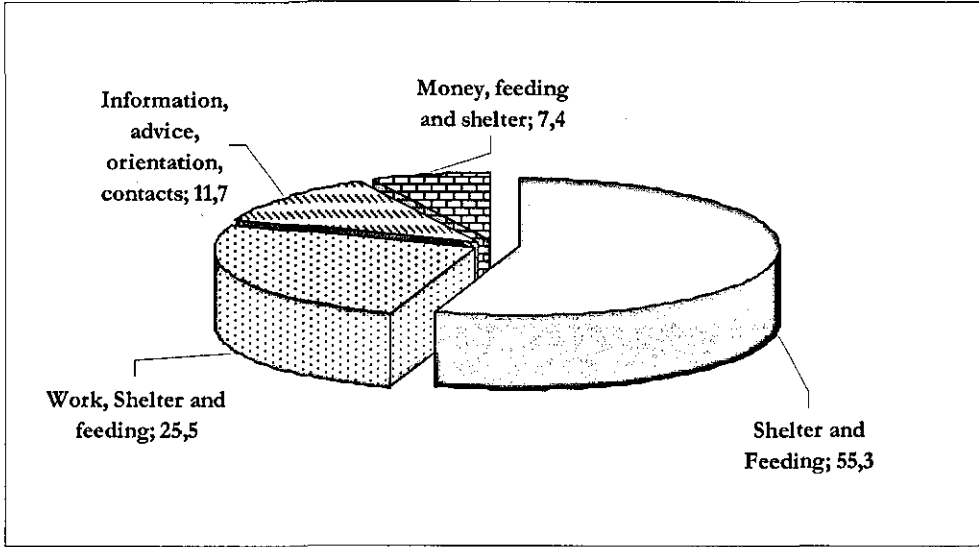
Figure 10.23: Support to the migrants from the relatives and known people in Costa Rica (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

A strong majority of the migrants, 83 percent, who made use of their contacts in Costa Rica received some kind of support from them when they arrived in the recipient country. The next Figure 10.24 describes the type of support the migrants received in Costa Rica,

Figure 10.24: Type of support the migrants received from their contacts in Costa Rica (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

The outcomes of this variable are grouped into four large categories which combine different type of support that contacts (be they family, friends or other known people) in Costa Rica gave to the migrants. The biggest group of migrants received shelter and food (55.3 percent), the next group (25.5 percent) received not only shelter and food, but also contacts for work or even a job. The third group was composed of those migrants that received information from the network about contacts, guidance and travel orientation making the journey easier. The final category is the group of migrants that received, apart from shelter and feeding, some sort of financial support (7,4 percent). In summary, the data output confirms the existence of transnational social networks that are used by the migrants to travel and survive. As it was explained in the interviews to the migrants, in general terms, the networks contribute to reduce their level of vulnerability in Costa Rica.

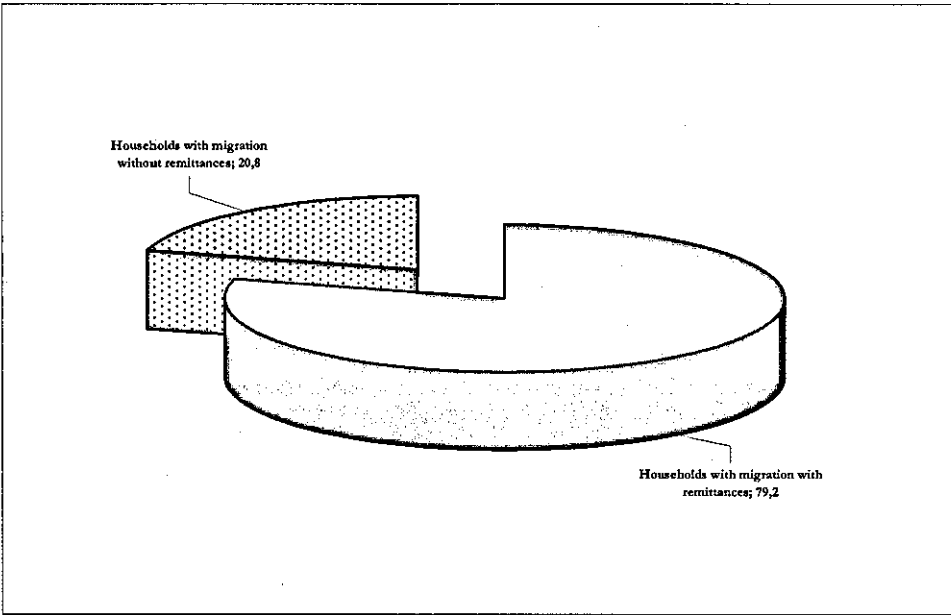
10.9 Periodicity, amount, mode of sending and use of remittances

Remittances are the last variable analysed in this chapter and they are a very important component for understanding the transnational rural migration jigsaw. This section will explore five main dimensions of remittances. First, the periodicity of transfer; second, the amount the migrants send; third, the mode of sending; fourth, their weight in relation to net income and gross income of the household, fifth and last, their use by the migrant's household back in Nicaragua. It is important to remark that this is one of the topics that has generated significant attention in the ongoing debate about migration, not only in the academic world, but also at the policy level, in national and international arenas. For example, many policy papers of the international financial institutions have argued for a more 'productive' use of the migrants' remittances, as well as highlighting the importance of these financial flows to the economic macro-equilibrium of remittance-recipient countries such as Nicaragua, as it was pointed out in chapter 7 (Orozco, 2003).

Most of the current literature about remittances is focused upon transfers from urban migration, in part because it is easier to monitor through banks and remittance agencies. However, these studies are not able to assess the remittances that travel by informal means, such as relatives, friends, and known people. These are the main means of transfer of rural migrants, which could help to explain why there are not many studies about remittances in the case of rural populations. Thus, it is hoped that this study, whilst exploratory in nature, could help to establish some basic information about remittance dynamics in the case of

Nicaraguan rural migration to Costa Rica. The analysis is developed at general and departmental levels.

Figure 10.25: Existence of remittances in households with migration (percent).

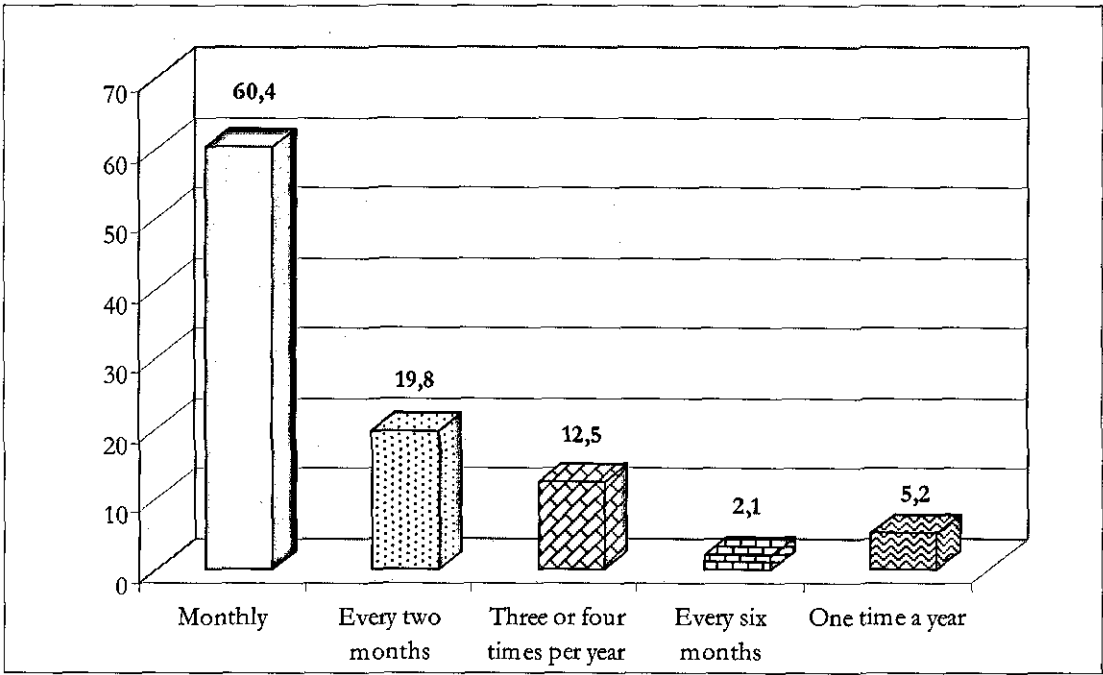


Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

For this particular topic, there were 20 migrant households (14.3 percent of these households) where the interviewee could not answer the question about remittances. Thus, there were 120 households with migration to Costa Rica that answered the questions about remittances. Of these, 96 households confirmed that their family members in Costa Rica send or come back with remittances, meaning 79.2 percent, and only 20.8 percent do not receive remittances. Putting this data in a wider context, this means that 68.6 percent of households with migration to Costa Rica, and 16.7 percent of the total sample, almost two out of every ten households, receive remittances. This means that a significant number of rural households in the studied communities use transnational migration as a source of income diversification.

A second point to analyse is the periodicity of the transfer of remittances. Figure 10.26 presents the data attained on this,

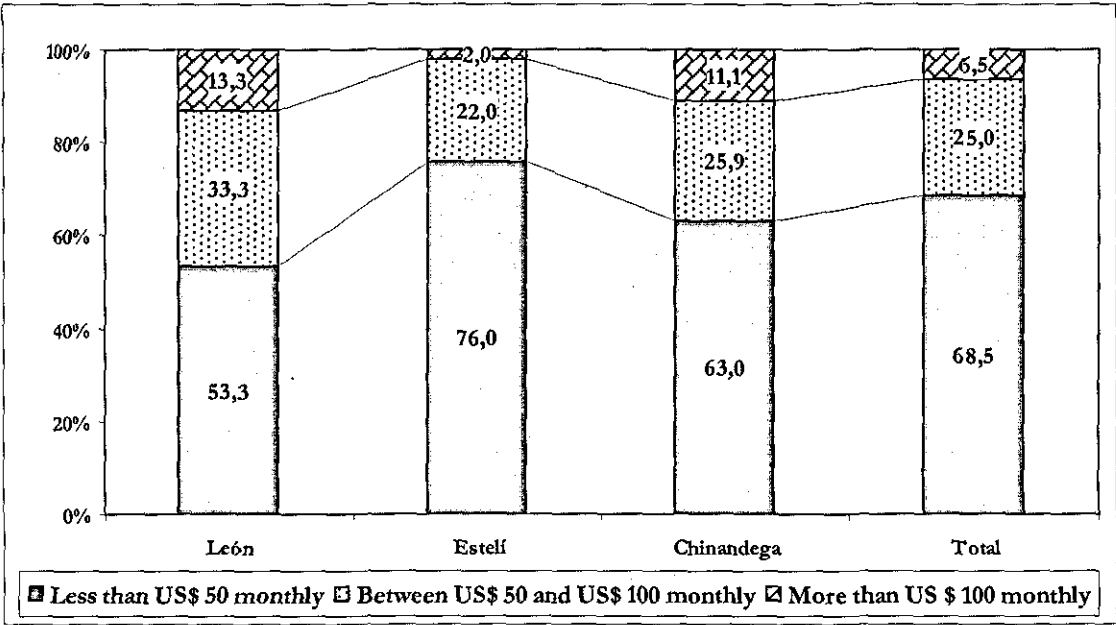
Figure 9.26: Periodicity of remittance transfer (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In general terms, the largest group of households receive remittances monthly. Another 19.8 percent of households receive remittances every two months and 12.5 percent receive them every three or four months. This leaves 2.1 percent of households who receive remittances every six months and 5.2 percent who receive them just once a year. In relation to the amount of the remittances they send, the main findings are presented in Figure 10.27, this time for both the overall data and by department,

Figure 10.27: Amount of remittances transferred by the migrants (amount in month average, percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

In general terms, a significant majority of these households, 68.5 percent, receive an average of US\$ 50 or less per month, followed by the 25 percent of households that receive an average of between US\$51 and US\$100 per month. The final 6.5 percent of households receive more than US\$100 per month. There are, however, some important differences amongst the departments in terms of the amount of the remittances. 76 percent of households in Estelí receive US\$50 or less per month, whilst only 53.3 percent of households in León are in this category. Conversely León is the department with the highest percentage of households receiving between US\$50 and US\$100 (33.3 percent) or more than US\$100 per month (13.3 percent). Chinandega falls between these two extremes, with 63 percent of remittance-recipient households receiving US\$50 or less per month, 25 percent receiving between US\$51 and US\$100 and 11.1 percent of their

households receiving more than US\$ 100. The overall monthly average of the remittances is US\$55.5.

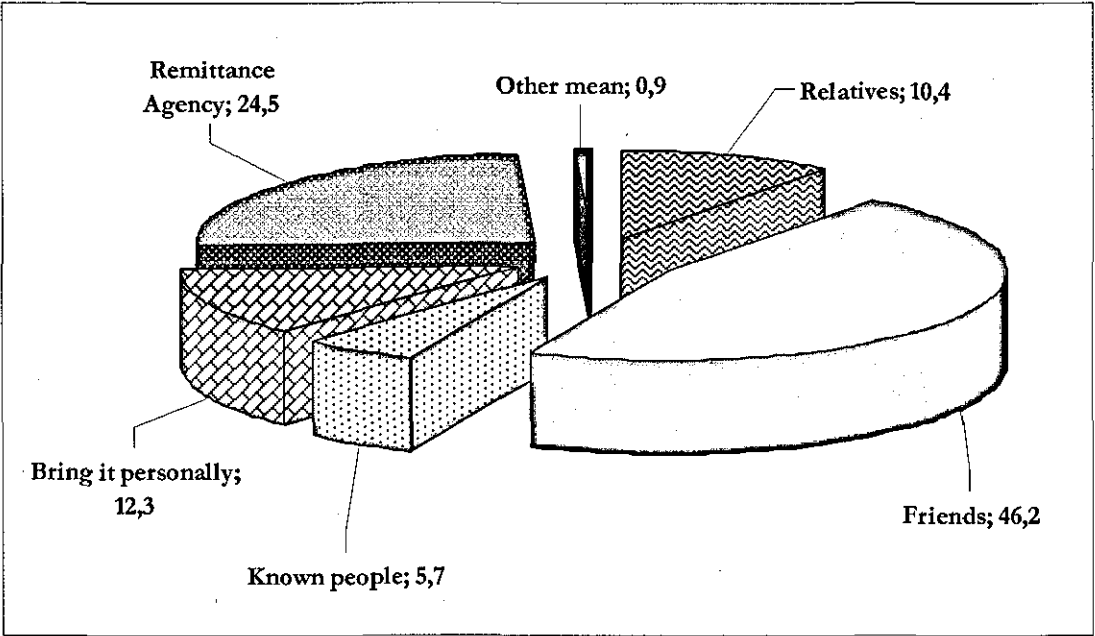
This data can give an idea of the income that the migrants generate by using migration as a strategy of income diversification taking into account that most of them stay in Costa Rica for a period that lasts from one to six months (67.1 percent of the total migrants). If we take the average stay of 3.5 months, this means that at the end of the seasonal period these migrants would have transferred a figure close to US\$192.5. In the case of those migrants that stay between six months and a year, their average is 9.2 months, which means that these migrants would generate an average income of US\$510.6.

These results can be related to the type of economic insertion of the migrants from each department. As was highlighted in the findings of the previous chapter, most of the migrants from Estelí work in non qualified agricultural jobs in Costa Rica that are very low paid, whilst León's migrants work in services such as domestic work, commerce, construction, and private security. These jobs are better paid than those in agriculture. In fact, to give an idea of the difference, the minimum wage for the agricultural sector in Costa Rica was US\$ 160.0 whilst in Nicaragua it was US\$ 40.0 in 2001. This gap has not disappeared (Nowalski, 2002: 147; CEPAL, 2003: 67).

Chinandega, again, appears between the two extremes of the other departments with their migrants having a better economic insertion in Costa Rica than those of Estelí, but worse than the migrants from León. Another important point to highlight is the gender component of the migration in explaining the income difference, León is the department with the highest proportion of female migrants who tend to find jobs that are better paid than those of male migrants.

Another important dimension of remittance dynamics is the main means or mechanisms of transferring money used by the migrants. Figure 10.28 shows the main findings about this dimension,

Figure 10.28: Main means of sending remittances from Costa Rica to Nicaragua (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

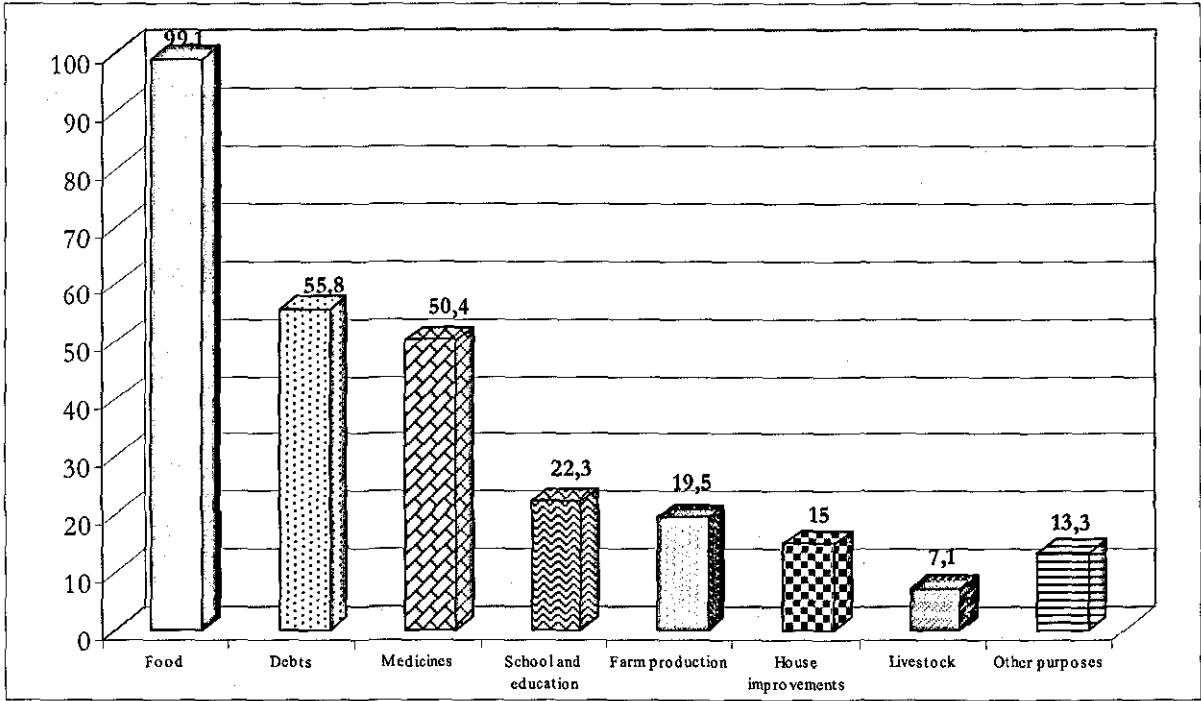
It is interesting that largest group of migrants, 46.2 percent, use their friends as the main mechanism to send remittances to their households back in Nicaragua, followed by 24.5 percent who use remittance agencies. 12.3 percent prefer to bring the money back to Nicaragua personally, 10.4 percent use their relatives, and 5.7 percent send the remittances through other known people. This particular aspect of the migration dynamic makes the functional importance of the transnational social networks very clear, because 60.2 percent⁷⁵ of the universe of migrants that send remittances make use of them.

The last dimension to analyse in this section is the use of the remittances by the household. This question allowed more than one answer from the interviewee, thus the findings give

⁷⁵ This is the result of the addition of migrants using relatives, known people and friends.

an idea of the multi-dimensional purposes of remittances, challenging the academic conventional academic wisdom about this issue, which tends to suggest that the use of remittances is limited to basic consumption. The main uses are illustrated in Figure 10.29.

Figure 10.29: Households' main uses of remittances (percent).



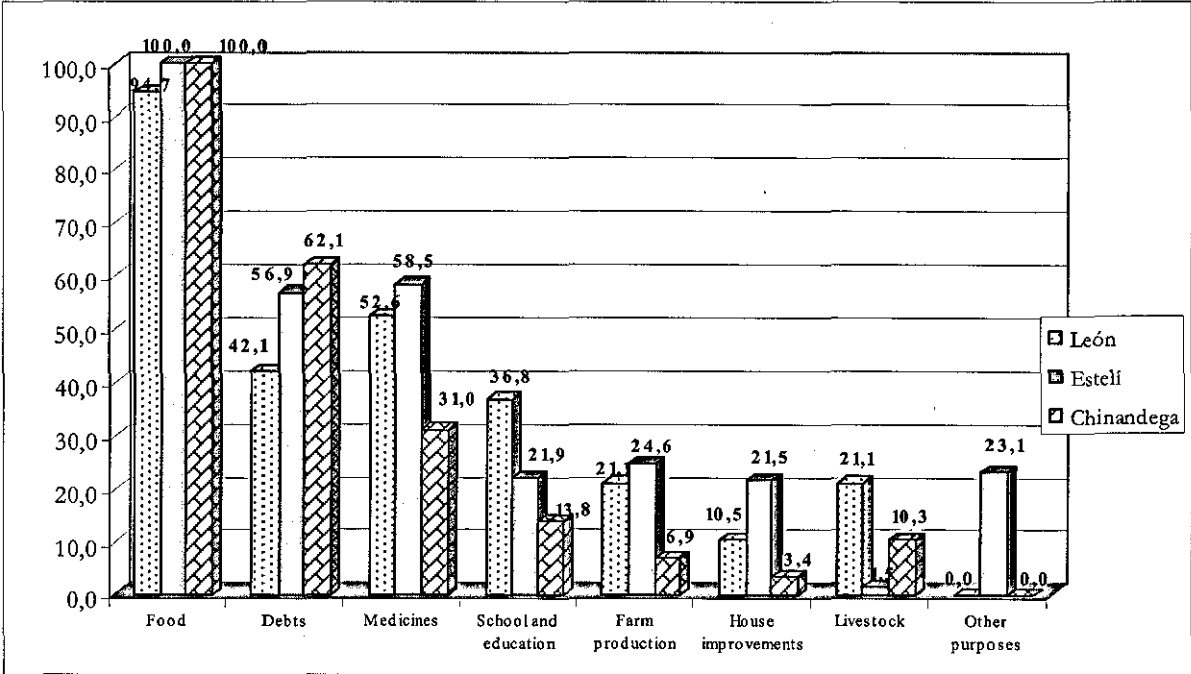
Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

Almost every single household (99.1 percent) use remittances to buy food, making it clear that this income is vital for the every-day survival of the household members. However, it is not the only use of remittances. Another major use is for debt payments (55.8 percent). This is a point that should be studied in future research that is the relation between migration and the debt level of the rural households. Part of the debt was use for production as was mentioned by the migrants in the semi-structure interviews.

These two most important ways in which remittances are used are followed by other uses such as: the buying of medicines (50.4 percent), paying for school or other educational costs of household members (22.3 percent) or home improvements (15.0 percent). In relation to what some scholars call the 'productive' use of remittances, the findings indicate that an important number of the households utilize part of the remittances for 'investment and farm production' (19.5 percent). Along the same lines, some of the households spend

part of them on buying livestock (7.1 percent). Another 13.3 percent of the households also use part of the remittances for other purposes. A majority of these households are from Estelí and the qualitative research done in the rural communities of this department suggests that in this context other purposes could mean buying land or saving up to get married, mainly in the case of the young male migrants. More information about remittance use at the department level is shown in Figure 10.30,

Figure 10.30: Household uses of remittances by department (percent).



Source: Cortés Ramos, Alberto. Rural Migration database.

When the data is split by department it demonstrates the major trends of the overall data, but also highlights some differences amongst the departments. For example, León has 6 percent of its households that do not make use of remittances for buying food. This might be associated with the fact that this department has the highest gross and net income of the three departments. In the case of both Estelí and Chinandega, every single household uses part of the remittances for buying food. León also has the lowest percentage (42.1 percent) and Chinandega the highest (62.1 percent) percentage of households using the remittances to pay debts (42,1 percent). Estelí meanwhile has the highest percentage of households using their remittances for basic needs such as buying medicines and paying for school or other educational costs (58.5 percent), León has a similar figure of 52.6 percent whilst

Chinandega has the lowest percentage of remittance usage for buying medicines (31 percent). In relation to remittance expenditure on education and schooling, León has the highest rate (36.8 percent), followed by Estelí (21.9 percent) whilst only 13.8 percent of Chinandegan households use part of their remittances to pay for education services. It is interesting to highlight the difference between León and the rest in terms of the use of remittances. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, is the department with the lowest level of poverty, which is reflected in the fact that is the only one in which not all households use the remittance to buy food. Apart from that, is the one with the lowest use of remittances to pay debts and, as is analysed below, a significant number of the households use the remittances to buy cattle or other livestock.

In relation to the 'productive' use of remittances, Estelí has the highest rate of remittance use for farm production (24.6 percent), followed by León (21 percent). In Chinandega, however, only 6.9 percent of households use remittances for this purpose, a very low percentage. This might be correlated to the fact that many of Chinandegan households use remittances to paying debts and for that reason have a lower space of manoeuvre for using remittances for production, as pointed out before. The other 'productive' use of remittances mentioned by the respondents was buying livestock. The department with the highest number of households using remittances in this way is León (21.1 percent), followed by Chinandega (10.3 percent); whilst there are practically no investments in livestock in Estelí where only 1.5 percent of households use part of their remittances for this purpose. These departmental differences might be associated with the fact that León is a department with a historical tradition of milk and milk-derived production (which Chinandega shares to a lesser extent). In the case of Estelí, however, there is no milk production tradition.

Estelí is the only department where the recipient households mention the use of remittances for other purposes (23.1 percent). As was pointed out in the analysis of the overall data, the qualitative research undertaken in this department suggests that the migrants are using part of their remittances to buy land or to save some capital for marriage. A final, but no less important, element is the use of remittances for household improvements. Again for this variable, Estelí is the department with the highest usage of remittances for this purpose (21.5 percent), followed by León with 10.5 percent, whilst in

the case of Chinandega only a very small number of households use part of their remittances for these kind of improvements (3.4 percent).

Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the different dimensions of rural migration to Costa Rica from Estelí, Chinandega and León. This analysis included discussion of the following variables: the number of times the migrants have travelled to Costa Rica, the length of their visits, the conditions and cost of travel, the process of decision making within the household, the social networks they make use of in Costa Rica, the occupation and location of the migrants in Costa Rica and finally remittances (including the means of transfer, the amount, the periodicity and the use made of them by the households in Nicaragua). The findings from the analysis of these elements confirms the existence of a very dense and complex transnational migratory space that is intertwined by the rural migrants and their households in Nicaragua and the economic activities that they develop in Costa Rica.

This transnational articulation is reflected in different dimensions, in the Nicaraguan side the use of the remittances is allowing many rural household not only to survive buying food, or improving their life quality by buying medicines, paying the school of their children or improving their houses, but also contributing to their economic reproduction in terms of debt payment or productive investments such as financing the *postrera* sowing and harvest, and also to buy cattle or other livestock. In the Costa Rican side, this chapter confirms the fact that the insertion of the seasonal migrants is productive. Most of them are working in agriculture and cattle ranching, but not exclusively. A significant part of the migrants work in services or industry activities, which confirms the definition of Costa Rica not as passive receiving country, but as a pulling node. The existence of a dense social network that contribute to orient the migrants but also helps to guarantee the reproduction of this kind of migration. To put it in a question, what would happened to the Costa Rican economy without this significant flow of seasonal immigrants?

This rural seasonal migration started in the mid-1990s coinciding with the change in the style of development from Revolutionary to Neoliberal in Nicaragua and the deepening of the transnational style of development in Costa Rica. This transnational migration has showed an cumulative pattern and has become fundamental for the survival of a significant group of the rural households in the studied departments in Nicaragua that have incorporated migration as part of their income diversification and survival strategies.

However, it is important to mention that this is a two-sided dynamic, in the sense that whilst it is true that many peasants need to migrate to survive, is also true that many Costa Rican economic activities would face severe problems without this kind of migration.

A final element to remark is the importance of the geographical dimension in the configuration of the processes. As was explained in the previous chapter, not all the rural is the same in Nicaragua, there exist different types of rurality. These differences are also present in the migratory dynamics as was shown in many of the variables that were discussed in this chapter.

11. Conclusions

Based on the initial questions of this research, this chapter synthesise three main group of conclusions of the thesis: first, main achievements and results; second, main theoretical contributions, and third, possible directions of future research.

11.1 Achievement of research aims

The main achievement of research aims are related to the research questions defined in the Introduction of the thesis. As was discussed in that chapter, there were two global aims of the research: on the one hand, to characterise the main migration dynamics and migration periods between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in a Central American context and, on the other hand, how these migrations dynamics were produced. To respond to these question, the analysis of the development process and different interacting factors were analysed, including the geopolitical, economic, political and social factors. In fact, the research stresses that the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican migration dynamic should not be seen as as isolated bilateral relationship but as part of a wider dynamic that involves the whole Central American region and that, in general terms, migration should be seen not as an isolated pattern but as a wider process of social transformation.

In relation to the historical production of migratory transnational spaces between Nicaragua to Costa Rica, there are some significant findings that are important to reflect upon at the end of this research process. A first conclusion is related to the concept of transnationality and its linkage to development and the production of migration dynamics in Central America and particularly between Nicaraguan and Costa Rica. Thus, it is important to emphasize how a regional transnational space that embraced migration started at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century with the creation of the Caribbean basin as a sort of transnational backyard of the emergent hegemonic power, that is the United States.

As was pointed out in chapter four, this transnational regional space emerged as the result of the interaction of geopolitical and economic variables, including the development of enclave economies that were present mainly in the Caribbean region and also in activities such as banana plantations and mining industry. This social space was characterised by its

asymmetric relationship between the United States as dominant power and the rest of the Central American countries. This relation was reflected in the orientation of the mode of development that was followed in practically all of the countries of the Caribbean basin and was also reflected in the growing presence of transnational activities promoted by US investors and economic agents. It was not a coincidence, therefore, that as was pointed out in Chapter 4, transnational economic development created an international labour dynamic that included immigration from abroad into the region, mainly from Asia (China and India) to Costa Rica and Panama; from the Antilles (mainly Jamaica and Barbados) to British Honduras (later Belize), Costa Rica and Panama, and within the region, important labour movements from El Salvador to Honduras and from Nicaragua to Costa Rica (104-105). In this particular case, a key role in the organisation of the immigration was played by the banana companies, reinforcing the condition of transnational activity of these migration at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

It is important to notice that the expelling of Nicaraguan population to Costa Rica at that time was related to the process of land privatisation (accumulation by dispossession) that was developed in most of the Central American countries at that time, including Nicaragua. In contrast, the only country in which this process was not deep enough for several factors such as relative lack of indigenous and white population was Costa Rica. In fact, the only way to develop the enclave economy was importing labour force and that was what the companies did. It is not a coincidence that in the Costa Rican Census of 1927 the two main groups of foreign population were Jamaicans, 3.7% of the total, and Nicaraguans, 2.3% of the total (102-105). It is important to highlight that the migration dynamics that started at this period, with up and downs related to world economy, lasted until 1950s, when a new mode of development was followed by the countries of the region.

In structural terms, this reflects what could be seen as the beginning of social production of a relative population surplus in Nicaragua and a relative labour scarcity in Costa Rica, a long term characteristic of the transnational relationship between the two countries. As was pointed out in chapter 3, this concept of relative population surplus or scarcity has nothing to do with the existence of more or less people in the two countries, but relates to the interaction between population and mode of production. Along these lines, Costa Rica has had, for long periods of its history, a form of economic development that could not be sustained exclusively by national workers.

The next period (1950-1975) was related to the Cold War era and the mode of development named 'developmentalist' (*desarrollista*). This was a period of growing authoritarian governments and increasing repression to population (109-112). It was also a period of deep social and economic structural transformation and regional integration. However, as was pointed out in Chapter 6, this was an impoverishing and polarising modernisation, particularly clear at the beginning of the period in the rural world of the whole region, where the process of agriculture modernisation was accompanied by a violent process of land tenure concentration (accumulation by dispossession again) and human displacements within the countries. Although in most of this period migration dynamics were internal, mainly rural to urban migration (121-122), there were some significant intra-regional trends, particularly from El Salvador to Honduras, that created a political tension that ended up in the 'football' war (1968-69).

After the mid-seventies, particularly between 1975-1980, repression growth and exile became an important factor of out-migration, mainly from Guatemala and El Salvador to Mexico, from the region to the United States, and from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. In fact, this short period illustrates well the impacts of geopolitical and political factors on migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica when repression forced thousands of Nicaraguans to move to Costa Rica mainly as political immigrants and refugees. There is no much data in this period because there was a political, economic and military crisis ongoing in the region in the 1970s, but an indicator of the high human mobility from Nicaragua to Costa Rica could be observed in the Costa Rican Censuses of 1973 and 1984. In the former the Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica represented 1.2% of the total population while in the latter they reached 3.7% of total population (128-129).

Later, in the 1980, a new wave of politically motivated out-migration was created as (together with the impacts of important internal political mistakes) the Sandinista revolutionary government struggled against military aggression from a counter-revolution that was financed by the US government. As was pointed out in Chapter 6, Costa Rica became the main provider of political asylum for anti-dictatorial politicians and also provided shelter for thousands of Nicaraguan who were literally escaping from military conflict, civil war and social crisis. In more general terms, the pronounced regional crisis which beset the whole of Central America at that time produced such levels of migration

within and outside the region that some of the current migration dynamics and networks of the region are related to the political displacements of that time (143-147).

The migration trend and dynamics of the period, that included Central America migration to the United States, and a significant mobility within the region was very massive in that period. There were more than one million people displaced within the countries and another million migrated within the region and to Mexico y Belize. There was also a massive displacement from Central American people to the United States taking advantage of the ideological context. Nicaragua became, together with El Salvador, one of the countries that expelled more population in that period and Costa Rica was the principal recipient country of Nicaraguan immigrants. It is possible to inferred that this period created social networks, linkages and experiences that were a base for the new migration dynamics of the 1990s, particularly for the case of Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica, as was pointed out in Chapter 7.

Particular attention deserves the findings of current migration. In the late eighties and early nineties, the political situation changed in a radical mode in the region, largely as a result of rapid changes in the international arena, including geopolitics (end of the Reagan period as well as the end of the Cold War. In Central America, the electoral defeat of the FSLN in Nicaragua) and economic transformations (the deepening of the Washington Consensus policy).

In the intra-regional political level, the agreements reached between governments and insurgent groups led to the deactivation of military conflicts in Nicaragua (1989), El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996). Peace created great expectations. Thus, in the early years of the nineties there was a significant return of those who emigrated, mainly Nicaraguans in Honduras, Costa Rica and the United States. To a lesser extent, Salvadorans and Guatemalans in Mexico.

However, Peace expectations were not met. In the economic dimension, since the middle of the eighties and in greater depth, in the nineties, the Central American countries, under the guidance of international financial institutions (OFIS), followed Structural Adjustment policies and the main outcome of this development strategy was economic growth without enough employment generation to absorb the annual increase of labour force and growing

unemployment created by privatisation of public institutions and enterprises. A new process of accumulation by dispossession was ongoing in these countries creating a new wave of labour surplus that fed an expelling population platform. Nicaragua was the country that prompted privatisation in a more radical way and Costa Rica the extreme opposite.

This migration contributed to the process of production of a growing transnational social space and development in the region. One of the best expressions of this space are remittances that migrants send to their families and communities in their countries of origin. In the Nicaraguan case, a significant part of its remittances are coming from their immigrants in Costa Rica.

As has been showed in Chapter 7, Costa Rica was not privatising its main public institutions but also was transforming the economic structure expanding traditional activities, such as coffee and bananas, but generating new ones, such as tourism, non traditional agriculture crops to export, *maquilas*, new services, and so on. Hence, the country was not expelling labour force but, to the contrary, required to attract labour in a moment that Nicaragua was generating unemployment in a massive way. It is clear, that the previous migration experiences and the proximity between the two countries contributed to facilitate an increasing flow of population from Nicaragua to Costa Rica. The Costa Rican Census and the thesis survey showed that the turning point was in 1995, producing what is conceptualised as a structural contingency, a transnational social space in which Nicaragua supply labour and Costa Rica the main economic activities and capital.

In summary, it is possible to conclude that the Neoliberal transformation of these societies changed the game of opportunities for collective and individual agents, concentrating even more the access to material and symbolic resources in very few people. With regard to migration trends in this period, although the link or relationship between structural adjustment and migration requires more research, it is evident that in the Nicaraguan case, the social outcomes of economic adjustment provide evidence that may help explain the pressure to migrate in the last ten years has been a massive reduction in employment in the public sector and deregulation of a wide labour markets, which have precarious employment conditions. In the rural area, lack of credit and technical support for small and medium producers, has contributed to dismantling the Revolution's land reform, creating a

strong pressure to re-concentrated land tenure. Again, like in the past, rural population is facing the dilemma of migrating to Costa Rica to save remittances to produce and survive in Nicaragua, creating a transnational dynamics that allow peasantry to resist the pressure to give up their small farms.

As was demonstrated in the thesis, this process facilitated the interpenetration of labour dynamics between the two countries, linking the economic structures and labour markets of both countries. Along these lines, it is clear that the question of labour has been central to this coincidence, particularly through the creation of a large surplus labour force in Nicaragua as a consequence of the impacts of the Neoliberal development process. Conversely, during this same period, Costa Rica began a gradual but continuous economic transformation process that included a significant diversification of exports.

This diversification was made possible in good part because of the attraction of thousands of both male and female Nicaraguan immigrants. Hence, the increasing transnational linkage between Costa Rica and Nicaragua is reflected in a growing labour and economic interdependence which is now a structural characteristic between the two countries has created various forms of transnational linkages (including families divided by the physical border between the two countries as well as mixed families reflective of an impressive laboratory of cultural, economic, and social *mestizaje*).

In relation to the functionality of these migration dynamics, the main finding of the research is that they have served two purposes. In Nicaragua, transnational migration has helped to decrease social pressure by reducing the demand for jobs and public services. In addition, migrants send money (remittances) back to their families, which contributes to their microeconomic subsistence and helps to mitigate the macroeconomic trade deficit that exists in Nicaragua. This functionality has worked as a sort of escape valve for the ruling class and the power elite which could help to explain what I have named a politics and culture of silence about the large expulsion of population that has been occurring in Nicaragua since the beginning of the 1990s.

In Costa Rica, migration has increased the supply of productive-age workers, contributing to a continuous economic expansion and increased profits for businesses that hire migrant workers. As has been demonstrated by other scholars, most of the Nicaraguan migrants

work in labour markets that require non-qualified workers while most of the Costa Rican labour force has improved their position in the labour market labour and moved into more qualified jobs. This has been possible thanks to the way in which the Nicaraguan migrants have helped to create a variety of dual labour markets, markets which have been segmented by the rising xenophobia and the undocumented status of many Nicaraguan migrants (features that facilitate their over-exploitation and the violation of their labour rights). For all these reasons and contrary to some discourses that portray Nicaraguans as a great burden for Costa Rican society, it is possible to affirm that the existence of Nicaraguan immigration has been a factor that has contributed significantly to the level of competitiveness of the Costa Rican economy. This is particularly evident in the case of export agriculture, where Costa Rican producers would not be able to compete with the rest of the Central American producers without the advantages created by the presence of a transnational seasonal rural migration from Nicaragua.

The detailed historical analysis and re-interpretation of the process of production of the migration dynamics between the two countries that has been attempted in the thesis brings me to one of the first major conclusions of the research, namely that, in the long-*durée*, Nicaragua has served as one of the main sources of labour force for the Costa Rican economy.

A particular relevant set of findings are related to the survey that this research developed to analyse seasonal rural migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica in the studied period. It is important to remind that seasonal rural migration is the less studied dynamic in part because it is very difficult to grasp, it is a very mobile migration and the great majority are undocumented immigrants making very difficult to interview them when they are working in the recipient country.

Hence, an important contribution of this thesis is methodological, in the sense that it explored this dynamic in the regions, communities and households of origin and not in the recipient country, which made possible to explore the main characteristics of the migrants and their households in the studied communities and their dynamic with Costa Rica. At the end of the day the research strategy allowed me to study, not only the individual migrants but also their families, as well as the effect that the migration had upon their social reality. Beyond this, the fact that I carried out most of my fieldwork in the place of origin

of the migrants (as opposed to the more usual practice of concentrating research upon the host communities) allowed me to analyse the quantitative importance of the phenomenon in the selected communities and also to establish that there are important differences in the rural migration dynamics between the rural communities of the three departments although in general terms they share the same structural conditions created by the Neoliberal reorientation of the style of development in Nicaragua during the period 1990-2003.

In terms of the main features and characteristics of the migrants and their households, there are several relevant findings to emphasise here. In fact, the first finding to highlight is that 22.3% of these rural households have immigrants in Costa Rica, which is a high rate, although there are significant differences among the studied departments, with communities of Estelí expelling the highest rate (41.2% of the households) and León with the lowest rate of migration (9.6%). Although the majority of households with migration to Costa Rica have only one member in that condition (60.3%), a significant 39.7% have more than one.

The research also explored the the main socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the migrants and their households, in the process highlighting the differences between households with migration and households without migration. Here we can re-emphasize some of the main findings of that analysis. Clearly the production of migration in the studied households is a very complex phenomenon, which can by no means be considered as a process oriented around a single factor, (as suggested by some demographic or neoclassical approaches). Rather, it is a multi-factorial process in which the result – migration- is produced by the interaction of many factors such as: the dependency ratio, the average age of the migrant and the education level. In economic terms, the main economic activities of the *finca*, as well as the size and type of ownership of the land, are significant factors in explaining the decision to migrate or to stay. It is important to note that some very important variables such as annual gross or net income were not significant in discriminating between those households with migration and those without it. In fact, a very relevant finding in explaining the decision not to migrate to Costa Rica is the frequent existence of a 'backyard' economy (*economía de patio*) in the households without migration to Costa Rica.

In relation to the geographical dimension, a very interesting finding was the existence of significant differences in the composition of the migration to Costa Rica from the rural communities of the three selected Nicaraguan departments. This is perhaps seen most clearly in the massive difference in migration levels between León (10 percent of households) and Estelí (44 percent of households). There is also an important gender dimension to the differentiation between the departments, with León having a higher level of female than male migration in a process which is generally macho oriented, as confirmed by the migration trends in the other two departments. The differences continue with the average composition of the households in which León and Estelí have opposite results, and so on. Again, what is important to emphasise is that a massive and national process such as rural migration from Nicaragua, is not spread in an even manner throughout the different regions of the country, and its real understanding requires detailed analysis of these regional differences.

In relation to this part of the analysis, it can be concluded that seasonal rural migration to Costa Rica can be best conceptualised as part of a vulnerability reduction strategy of rural households in a context in which the Neoliberal development reduced the opportunities for their social and economic reproduction. In this context, it is important to highlight that the households with migration are not the poorest households in the rural communities or, to put it in more precise terms, there are households both above and below the poverty line who participate in migration to Costa Rica. For many households seasonal migration is a strategy to avoid falling into poverty. In other cases, however, it is used as a strategy to obtain savings that can allow the family to pay debts, to improve their housing, buy medicines or invest in the productive realm of the *fincas*. A very interesting finding related to this point is that in Estelí's case, many youngsters are perceiving and using migration to Costa Rica as a way to save money to buy their own farm, but also as a cultural escape from patriarchal control and rural 'boredom'. The relatively more developed Costa Rican countryside is, in some ways, playing the migration-pulling-role that used to be seen as the exclusive preserve of the famous metaphor of the "city lights" in the attraction of rural migration in the 1960s and 1970s, as part of the intense process of modernisation and social change that occurred in most of Latin America during that period. Without any doubt, this as an important component of the transnational social space between Nicaragua and Costa Rica that is increasingly being built up by the migrants and is one of the on-

going factors that is stimulating the reproduction of the migration dynamics, particularly that of rural or seasonal migration.

The thesis also explored how the households with migration experience the decision to migrate of one or more of their members. The data showed and confirmed that, albeit with different level of involvement and forms of participation, the decision to migrate tends to be a collective and not an individual project, confirming what has been indicated by other researchers and studies, that migration is a sort of "collective bet" of the family. Of course, the involvement of the household in the decision making does not mean that it is a democratic decision because these households tend to be patriarchal, and also because the level of collective decision depends of which member of the household is actually intending to migrate.

One of the most interesting points relates to when the current migration dynamics originated in the studied communities. In general terms, it is possible to establish the mid-1990s as the moment when this particular seasonal migration emerged in coincidence with a generalised socio-economic crisis in Nicaragua and the growing expansion of the Costa Rican economy, reinforcing the idea of a historical coincidence. The analysis also confirmed that the migration has been accumulative over time, albeit with a cyclical pattern that has been affected by different social and environmental factors, including national elections, and natural events such as Hurricane Mitch.

The data collected to explore the specific rural migration dynamics to Costa Rica from Estelí, Chinandega and León included information from dimensions such as: the number of times the migrants have travelled to Costa Rica, the length of their visits, the conditions and cost of travel, the process of decision making within the household, the social networks they have in Costa Rica, the occupation and location of the migrants in Costa Rica and remittances (including the means of transfer, the amount, the periodicity and their use by the households in Nicaragua. The information obtained confirmed the existence of a very dense and complex transnational social space created by the migrants, their households in Nicaragua and the economic activities that they developed in Costa Rica. It also indicated the importance that this labour mobility has for the recipient country economy, in fact, many Costa Rican economic activities would be in severe problems without this kind of migration.

11.2 Contributions and reflections about theorising migration

One of the initial questions was to select a theoretical approach or framework that could capture in all its complexity two basic aspects of the migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica from a long term perspective, on the one hand, how these migration dynamics were produced, and, on the other hand, what were the main characteristics of the migration dynamics, in every studied period. The literature review convinced me to opt for a sort of heterodox approach, combining authors such as Faist and Portes that belong to the transnational migration school of thought that analyses migration focusing in what they conceptualised as meso-level, meaning by that the social networks that link the original society with the destiny by mean of the migration dynamics with other authors that like Sassen and Harvey, contribute to explain the historical production of social transformations and contexts that explains the creation of labour surplus or scarcity, or the factors that stimulate or force that put people on the move, as well as the necessary conditions to allow the reproduction of migration dynamics. At the end of the day, migration is product of contingency and causality, of individual agency, social networks and structural conditions.

In the case of the transnational approach, I think the key contribution to the understanding of contemporary migration dynamics is the existence of a diverse range of social networks that contribute to explain and sustain a great variety of migration flows. This is the main contribution, beyond the concept of transnational migration in itself, wich in the restrictive definition of Portes is not the most representative kind of migration of present days. In this thesis, the existance and use of social networks, the meso-link in Faist words, was demonstrated as well as their multiple functions in the process of migration, that were key to the sustainability of the seasonal migration dynamics. As was pointed out in the analysis of the data, they play different roles, including bringing different types of information, shelter, money, contacts for jobs. In the case of rural migration the networks also play an important role in the money sending to their communities. Without any doubt, the meso-link validity to explain the configuration and reproduction of migration as part of wider transnational social spaces.

Another important element of this approach is that allowed to analyse the agency level, that in terms of the case study was the migrants or their relatives (household level). In this case, the data confirmed two things, firstly that, in general terms, migration was not an individual adventure but a collective project involving the family in different forms and commitment. Secondly, that migration was part of a income diversification strategy of the households, not only to guarantee their simple reproduction, but beyond that to contribute to their expanded reproduction as small and medium producers. An important evidence of this point was that a significant part of the household with migrants, use their remittances not only for food or services such as health or education, but also to pay debts (many of them related to credit), or to invest in production (as was pointed out in the interviews, with the remittances they financed the second harvest of the year), or to buy cattle and livestock. Another important point is that the experience of migration is live in a very different way in dependence of age and gender for example. It was interesting to observed how for young people of the studied communities to migrate soon became not only an economic issue but also a cultural sign of success or, how for relatively old migrants (more than 35y.o., generally married) to migrate was something they actually suffered and they would preferred to avoid. So, any approach to migration should keep an eye on how migration is experienced by the individual migrants, how they 'read' the structural conditions that make them to think in migration as a possible way to guarentee their survival.

However, as was also pointed out in the theoretical chapter, the production of the migration dynamics could not be seen as isolated of other geopolitical, economic, political or social processes that occured in other scales. Along this line, it is possible to conclude that to follow authors such as Portes and Sassen that conceive migratory transnational space as multi-scale that involves individuals, their flows and networks of social relations, their communities, but also national institutions like local and national governments and immigration policies, or national and regional structures such as labour markets or economic policies (Portes *et al*, 1999; Sassen, 1988). Furthermore, it is important to bring a historical light to these processes to understand how they were produced.

As was explained in the more historically oriented chapters 4, 5 and 6, the migration between Nicaragua and Costa Rica is not new, and, as trend, they have been part of geopolitical, political and economic transformations that involve not only the two

countries, but also the Central American region in which the United States has played a determinant role. Hence, if we think in migration dynamics as part of a wider transnational social space, it is necessary to understand what is going on in terms of development in different scales (region, national and local scales) that are contributing to produce conditions of population expelling in the origin and of population pulling in the recipient country.

In this thesis was particular useful the Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession to explain the production of what was called as structural coincidence between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the 1990s that, in a resume version, is explained by the deep transformation that occurred in Nicaragua when it passed from the revolutionary development to a Neoliberal development at the beginning of the 1990s and, in Costa Rica with the deepening of the transnationalisation of their economy at the same time. It is important here to emphasize that this migratory transnational space is creating a solid structural bond that articulate sectors and regions of both countries by mean of the economic activity of the migrants that are small producers in one side of the border and workers in the other side.

A final element to highlight about the importance of working with different scales is that it allows to find important difference in the production of the migration dynamics that are produced in part as consequence of the regional agro-ecological and historical characteristics. Hence, in the case of the studied departments, the data showed that the economic activities of the migrants and their relatives in their locations of origin contributed to determine the kind of migration dynamic they have to Costa Rica. To put it in a simple expression, the 'purest' seasonal rural migration was that of Condega, Estelí, where the small peasantry was dominant. In synthesis, the geographical dimension is fundamental to understand the main characteristics of the migration processes.

In theoretical terms, my main conclusion is that is time for synthesis, to understand migration as a complex result of agency, social networks and structural conditions, and of processes that are multidimensional and multiscale.

11.3 New perspectives for migration research in Central America

This thesis has emphasised that migration should not be studied as an isolated phenomenon but as a process that is interwoven to economic, political, geopolitical and

social transformations that frequently involves different scales (global, regional, national and local). Along to these lines, there are two future lines of research to be developed, on the one hand, it is evident that globalisation has deepened transnational dynamics, processes and relationships in different realms of social life. Different sort of migration dynamics, including international, internal or transnational migration are part of these transnational dynamics and social spaces.

However, the intensification and growing diversity of migration dynamics and flows has not been accompanied by the creation of transnational and international regime of human rights for the migrants. To the contrary, the immigration policies around the world are more and more severe and exclusive against this population. In fact, most migrants live in the worst possible world, without rights in the country of origin and in the country of reception. They are, by definition, non citizens. This fact is creating what some scholars have called the fourth world within the first world or, more precisely, in countries with immigration. Fourth world inhabited by the slaves of the global era. This opens a research field that should discuss the political, social, cultural and economic rights of the migrants in a wider debate that should problematise the concept of citizenship, that up to day is basically tied to the nationality or national identity. The question here is that taking in to account the situation of millions of people, that are migrants, citizenship should be related to nationality and not to the concept of inhabitant of a place. This debate has significant political and social implications, namely, who should vote in presidential or national elections, or who should be the beneficiaries of the public policies. It is important that, in general terms, the Welfare State was developed by national citizens and in a period in which many societies have a significant number of non national population this reality could contribute to create two kind of social classes, namely those cover by public policies and those that are not. It seems that is time to put the traditional concept of citizenship into question.

The other field of research is related to the process of globalisation and the growing transnationalisation that is ongoing. The question here is what is going to happen with the transnational processes and dynamics in periods of crisis? The main concern here is that when the global, regional and national economies are suffering contraction, then the first sector that probably would suffer loss of jobs are the immigrants, firstly the undocumented and secondly the regular immigrants. This opens several questions, what are

going to do the immigrants in the recipient country? How are they going to survive in a context of growing hostility because the national workers feel that immigrants are -literally-stealing their jobs? What is this going to imply to their families in the country or communities of origin? As was shown in this thesis but also in the consulted reference, in Central America in general, and in Nicaragua in particular, there are thousands of families that depends upon the remittances that the immigrants send to them. Furthermore, what is going to happen to countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, that have a significant percent of their National Income related to remittances. What is going to happen in these countries if a good part of the immigrants decide to return to their country of origin? So, this is not a minor issue. This is a field that should be developed with urgency.

A final thought

I would like to finish this thesis by re-emphasising that, beyond this particular juncture, there have been migration dynamics between Nicaragua and Costa Rica for a long time. This has created a solid transnational social space between both countries. The existence of these linkages and bonds, expressed in thousands of families with bi-national identities and compositions, should obligate the power elites and ruling classes of both countries to take migration seriously, in the process ending the culture and politics of silence about migration in Nicaragua and eradicating the discriminatory and exclusive policies and practices (and xenophobic attitudes) all too often observed in Costa Rica. Maybe it is time to change approach. To think in transnational terms and to promote transnational policies beyond national boundaries. Policies that would be oriented towards the improvement of the living conditions of that significant part of the people of the two countries that cannot exert one of their most basic human rights, the right to live decently in the land where they were born.

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ANNEX 1: Methodology of the workshop in Condega.

Metodología del Encuentro La migración de Condega a Costa Rica

PRESENTACIÓN

La migración de carácter estacional, es cada vez más común en las comunidades rurales de Nicaragua. Condega no es la excepción. A pesar de las marcadas diferencias, prácticamente todas las regiones del Municipio tienen migración hacia Costa Rica. Por tal motivo, Octupan ha decidido organizar un encuentro de dirigentes comunitarios, municipales y sociales, para discutir la migración de nuestra región, realizar un diagnóstico y proponer políticas para enfrentar la misma.

OBJETIVOS DEL ENCUENTRO

- Hacer una caracterización de la dinámica migratoria y sus principales efectos en las familias y las comunidades
- Formular propuestas para evitar la migración
- Formular propuestas para reducir al máximo la situación de vulnerabilidad de quienes migran

METODOLOGÍA

El encuentro combinará trabajo grupal con sesiones plenario para cada eje temático. Los mismos son tres:

Causas, características y balance de la dinámica migratoria

Acciones y políticas para evitar la migración

Acciones y políticas para reducir la vulnerabilidad de las personas que tienen que migrar

4. Dinámica grupal

- Se organizarán dos grupos simultáneos: uno por cada tema.
- Se harían mesas de trabajo, de hasta 10 personas como máximo
- Cada grupo nombrará una persona que modere el debate y una para la presentación de resultados en el plenario
- La persona encargada de la presentación de resultados y conclusiones en el plenario deberá hacer notas, que se entregarán al final a la coordinación del evento. Esas notas, son distintas de lo que se presente en el papelón o en pizarra
- Se facilitará material de apoyo para la exposición

5. Plenarios

- En la sesión plenaria, cada grupo tendrá hasta 20 minutos para presentar sus resultados y propuestas

- En el cierre de la actividad los organizadores harán una síntesis de las principales conclusiones del encuentro
- 9:00 a.m.: Presentación de la actividad (Ligia Monge) y de las personas participantes (quiénes son, qué les motivó a participar en el taller)
 1. 40 minutos
- 10.00 a.m.: Dinámica migratoria nica-tica
 1. 1 hora de presentación de documental "Desde el Barro al Sur"
 2. 20 minutos de comentarios (Alberto Cortés)
 3. 40 minutos del público
- 12.00 md.: Almuerzo
- 1.00 pm.: Sesión de trabajo grupal: Un grupo sobre cómo evitar migración y otro grupo sobre cómo reducir vulnerabilidad y riesgo de los/as migrantes.
 1. 1 hora y 20 minutos
- 2.20 p.m.: Receso
 1. 10 minutos
- 2.30 p.m.: Sesión plenaria para presentación de informes de grupos y discusión
- 3.30 p.m.: Cierre del Encuentro

ANNEX 2. Semi-structured interview authorisation.

PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN DOCTORAL TRANSFORMACIÓN RURAL Y MIGRACIÓN DE NICARAGUA HACIA COSTA RICA EN EL PERÍODO 1990 2003

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY, 2003

Entrevista semi-estructurada

Por este medio, autorizo al señor Alberto Cortés Ramos, investigador del proyecto de doctorado Transformación rural y migración de Nicaragua hacia Costa Rica en el periodo 1990-2003, Universidad de Loughborough, a que utilice la información de esta entrevista con propósitos estrictamente académicos.

Nombre y apellido

Firma

ANNEX 3: Rural Migration Questionnaire.

PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

TRANSFORMACIÓN RURAL Y MIGRACIÓN DE NICARAGUA HACIA COSTA RICA EN EL PERÍODO 1990-2002

ENCUESTA

NAGAROTE Y LA PAZ CENTRO, CONDEGA, CHINANDEGA

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

FEBRERO-ABRIL 2003

FECHA: _____
1. CÓDIGO DE ENCUESTA: _____ No. de encuesta (digitalizador)
(Los primeros dos dígitos refieren al no. de la comunidad y los últimos dos al número del encuestado. Ej.; 18-11 = com. 18 y encuesta no. 11 en esta comunidad).

1 DATOS GENERALES

2. Nombres y apellidos: _____ Edad _____

3. Dirección de la vivienda
Círculo: _____ Comarca: _____ Municip.: _____

4. Vivienda

a. Propia () b. Alquilada () c. A cuidado () d. Posada () e. A medias ()

5. Dirección de la unidad de producción
Comarca: _____ Municipio: _____

6. Datos generales del grupo familiar (orden: primero jefe/a, luego conyuge, después hijos/as de mayor a menor, finalmente otros familiares)

[illegible]

x)									
xi)									
xii)									
xiii)									
xiv)									
xv)									

a Estado civil actual: 1. Soltero; 2. Casado/a; 3. Unión Libre; 4. Viudo/a; 5. Divorciado; 6. Separado/a
b Años de Escolaridad: Analfabeta (AN); Alfabetizado (AL); Primaria Incompleta (PI) = menos de 6; Primaria Completa (PC) = 6; Secundaria Incompleta (SI) = menos de 11; Secundaria Completa (SC) = 11; Educación Técnica (ET)= 12; Universitaria Incompleta (UI) = menos de 16; Universitaria Completa (UC)= 16 o más

II. MIGRACIÓN

7. ¿En qué año llegaron a la comunidad? _____

8. Pregunta para Jefe o responsable del hogar: ¿Se ha desplazado o ha migrado a lo largo de su vida adulta?
a. Sí () b. No () PASAR A PREGUNTA 17

9. ¿Dónde residía anteriormente el Jefe/a de familia?
Comunid.: _____ Municip.: _____ Departam.: _____

10. Causas principales de último desplazamiento
a. Mejorar ingresos () b. Trabajo permanente() c. Trabajo de temporada() d. Cambio de residencia() e. Estudios()
f. Familiares() g. Reforma Agraria h. Otros (Especifique) _____ i. No sabe ()

11. Cuando decidió emigrar, ¿tenía trabajo aquí?
a. Si () SI LA RESPUESTA ES SI, SIGA A LA 12 b. No () SI LA RESPUESTA ES NO, SIGA A LA 13

↓
12. ¿Qué tipo de trabajo tenía ?
a. Permanente () b. Estacional ()

xvi) Si no tenía trabajo ¿Buscó antes de decidir migrar?
a. Si () Pase a la 15. b. No () Conteste la 14.

14. ¿Por qué no buscó? (Especifique) _____

a. Mejorar ingresos () b. Trabajo permanente () c. Trabajo de temporada () d. Cambio de residencia () e. Estudios ()
f. Familiares () g. Reforma Agraria () h. Otros (Especifique) _____ i. No sabe ()

[illegible]

a. Mejores ingresos; b. Trabajo permanente; c. Trabajo de temporada; d. Cambio de residencia; e. Estudios; f. Familiares; g. Otros (Especifique); h. Reforma Agraria; i. No sabe

^c Estado civil: 1. Soltero; 2. Casado/a 3. Unión Libre 4. Viudo/a 5. Divorciado 6. Separado/a

17. Pregunta para conyuge de Jefe/a: ¿Se ha desplazado o ha migrado a lo largo de su vida? SI NO ESTÁ LA PERSONA, PASE AL ITEM 19

a. Si() b. No()

18. Historia de desplazamientos de cónyuge

Año	Edad	Lugar	Actividad económica	Duración (meses, años)	Causas de desplazamiento ^a	Estado civil ^b
		Nicaragua: Municipio/Departamento Costa Rica: Municipalidad/ Provincia Estados Unidos: Ciudad, Estado				

^a a. Mejores ingresos ; b. Trabajo permanente; c. Trabajo de temporada; d. Cambio de residencia; e. Estudios; f. Familiares; g. Otros (Especifique); h. Reforma Agraria; i. No sabe

^b Estado civil: 1. Soltero; 2. Casado/a 3. Unión Libre 4. Viudo/a 5. Divorciado 6. Separado/a

19. En la familia, ¿cuántos han emigrado? (ESCRIBIR NÚMERO DE PERSONAS) _____ a. Femenino _____ b. Masculino _____ c. Ninguno _____

SI CONTESTA NO PASAR A ÍTEM V: PERSONA RETORNADA DE COSTA RICA

20. Información sobre cada persona del Cuadro del punto 6 con experiencia migratoria dentro de Nicaragua

No. en A	Nombre	# total viajes	Viaje	Lugar de destino (Municipio/Departamento)	Causas desplaz ^a	Año en que llegó	Tiempo que estuvo	Actividad económica	Salario en córdobas		
								Ocupación ^c	Cantidad	Por ^a	¿en qué año?
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	

a a. Mejores ingresos ; b. Trabajo permanente; c. Trabajo de temporada; d. Cambio de residencia; e. Estudios; f. Familiares; g. Otros (Especifique); h. No sabe
^b Frecuencia de pago: 1=Hora 2=Día 3=Semana 4=Quincena 5=Mes 6=Año

21. Información sobre cada persona del Cuadro del punto 6 con experiencia migratoria a Costa Rica

No. en A	Nombre	# total viajes	Viaje	Lugar de destino	Causas desplaz*	Año en que llegó	Tiempo que estuvo	Actividad económica	Salario en colones o \$		
								Ocupación	Cantidad	Por*	¿en qué año?
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	
			1er.								
			Último							Cód.	

a a. Mejores ingresos ; b. Trabajo permanente; c. Trabajo de temporada; d. Cambio de residencia; e. Estudios; f. Familiares; g. Otros (Especifique); h. No sabe
b. Frecuencia de pago: 1=Hora 2=Día 3=Semana 4=Quincena 5=Mes 6=Año

22. ¿Hacia dónde emigró el que es más cercano al jefe de familia? (País, ciudad, municipio)_____

23. ¿Qué parentesco tiene con el jefe de familia actual la persona que emigró?

- a. Papá/mamá () b. Hermano/a () c. Hijo/a () d. Cuñado/a () e. Conyugue () f. Tío/a ()
g. Nuera/yerno () h. El jefe de familia ()

- ¿Por qué decidió emigrar?

- a. Mejorar ingresos () b. Trabajo permanente() c. Trabajo de temporada() d. Cambio de residencia() e. Estudios()
f. Familiares() g. Reforma Agraria () h. Otros (Especifique)_____ i. No sabe ()

- ¿Aquí él/ella tenían trabajo o fuentes de ingreso?

a. Si () Pasar a la

b. No ()

Si la respuesta es no hacer la siguiente pregunta

- Buscó alguna vez trabajo?

a. Si () Seguir a la 31

b. No () Pasar a la siguiente

27. ¿Por qué no buscó? (especifique) _____

28. ¿Quién decidió que él/ella emigrara?

a. Papá ()

b. Mamá ()

c. Un familiar ()

d. Todos ()

e. El/Ella quiso irse (No hacer siguientes pregunta)

f. Otro _____

- Por qué decidieron que él/ella fuera quien migrara?

a. Es más joven ()

b. Tiene amigos ()

c. Tiene más experiencia ()

d. Es más listo/a ()

e. Ha viajado antes ()

f. Hay más trabajo para ella ()

g. Es la persona mayor ()

h. Más responsable ()

i. No aplica ()

- ¿En qué condiciones emigró hacia Costa Rica?

1. Documentado ()

Si iba documentado conteste la siguiente b. Indocumentado ()

c. No sabe ()

➡ Pase a la 35

- Si viajó documentado: ¿qué tipo de permiso llevaba?

a. Tarjeta de Trabajo Estacional ()

b. Visa de Turista ()

c. Salvoconducto ()

d. Permiso de residencia ()

e. Otro _____

- ¿Cómo viajó?

a. Servicio de bus internacional ()

b. Transbordando ()

c. Otro (especifique) _____

- Recursos con que viajó: ¿de dónde salieron?

a. Ahorro ()

b. Préstamo a un amigo ()

c. Préstamo a familiar ()

d. Préstamo casa de empeño ()

e. Venta de bienes ()

f. Venta de inmueble ()

g. Apoyo de ONG u organización social ()

h. Otro _____

- ¿Cuánto costó el viaje? (monto aproximado en córdobas o dólares) _____

- Ha sido beneficiado por la amnistía migratoria o algún otro decreto del gobierno costarricense?

- a. Si () Pase a la siguiente pregunta b. No () Pase a la 37

- ¿En qué año la obtuvo? _____

- ¿Cómo es la estadía del miembro de la familia?

- a. Temporal () b. Permanente ()

- ¿En qué está trabajando actualmente?

- a. Como doméstica () b. En construcción () c. Obrero industrial () d. Celador () e. Maquila () f. Empleada de servicio ()
g. Trabajador agrícola () h. No está trabajando () i. Otro (especifique) _____ j. No sabe ()

- ¿Qué beneficios le trajo a su familia el que emigrara?

- a. Mayor ingreso () b. Adquisición de nuevos conocimientos y destrezas () c. Otros (Especifique) _____ d. Ninguno ()

40. ¿Qué beneficios le trajo a usted migrar?

- a. Mayor ingreso () b. Adquisición de nuevos conocimientos y destrezas (especifique) _____
c. Otros (Especifique) _____ d. Ninguno ()

41. ¿Qué perjuicios le trajo a su familia el que emigrara?

1. Separación familiar () 2. Otro (especifique) _____ 3. Ninguno ()

42. ¿Qué perjuicios le trajo a usted migrar? _____

- ¿Con qué frecuencia recibe dinero del familiar (es) que está(n) en el exterior?

- a. Mensual () b. Cada dos meses () c. Tres o cuatro veces al año () d. Dos veces al año () e. Una vez al año () f. Nunca manda ()

44. ¿Cuánto es lo que manda(n)? _____ a. No aplica ()

- ¿Por qué medio envía el dinero?

- a. Familiares () b. Amigos cercanos () c. Conocidos () d. Agencias de envíos () e. Lo trae personalmente ()
f. Otro (especifique) _____ g. No aplica ()

- ¿En qué utilizan principalmente este dinero?

- a. Terminar de pagar deudas () b. Alimentación () c. Medicina () d. Mejoras en la casa () e. Pagar escuela () f. Título de propiedad () g. Ganado ()
h. Inversión en finca () i. Otros (especifique) _____

- ¿La persona que envía el dinero decide en qué será utilizado?

- a. Sí () b. No ()

- ¿Qué necesitaría para no tener que migrar? _____

- ¿Debería apoyarse a los/as migrantes en su viaje a Costa Rica?

- a. Sí () b. No () c. No sabe/No responde ()

- ¿Cómo? _____

III. GÉNERO

- ¿Quiénes realizan las labores del hogar?

- a. Mamá () b. Papá () c. Abuela () d. Hermana mayor () e. Hermano mayor () f. Tía () g. Tío () h. Todos ()
i. Otros (especifique) _____

52. ¿Quién asume totalmente la responsabilidad cuando es el padre () o madre () quién emigró?

- a. Mamá () b. Papá () c. Abuela () d. Abuelo () e. Hermano mayor () f. Hermana mayor () g. Tía () h. Tío ()
i. Otro _____

- En caso de que el padre () o la madre () estén afuera, ¿le consultan en la toma de decisiones del hogar?

- a. Sí () b. No ()

IV. REDES SOCIALES EN COSTA RICA

53. Información sobre los parientes y amigos de la persona que migró:

Relación al jefe	¿cuántos viven en la actualidad en CR?
Tíos	
Primos	
Sobrinos	
Cuñados	
Yernos o nueras	
Suegros	
Amigos cercanos	
Ex – cónyuges	
Conocidos	

54. ¿Tuvo contacto con ellos antes de irse?

a. Si () b. No ()

55. ¿Recibió algún apoyo de familiares o conocidos en CR?

a. Si () b. No () c. No sabe ()

56. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo? (especifique)

57. ¿Tenía trabajo asegurado cuándo decidió emigrar?

a. Si () b. No ()

V. PERSONA RETORNADA DE COSTA RICA

58. ¿Tiene algún familiar que haya regresado recientemente al hogar?

Edad	Sexo	Parentesco con Jefe/a	Estado civil		Escolaridad	Oficio	Lugar de dónde vino
			Al irse	Al volver			

a. Ninguna () PASE A ITEM VI. PERSONA QUE QUIERE EMIGRAR A COSTA RICA

59. ¿Cuál fue la causa principal por la que decidió irse a Costa Rica?

- a. Mejorar ingresos () b. Trabajo permanente () c. Trabajo de temporada () d. Cambio de residencia () e. Estudios () f. Familiares ()
h. Otros (Especifique) _____

60. ¿Qué tan de acuerdo estuvo su familia con el viaje a Costa Rica?

- a. Totalmente de acuerdo () b. Poco de acuerdo () c. No aceptaron () d. No preciso ()

61. ¿Participó la familia en su decisión de migrar a Costa Rica?

- a. Mucho () 2. Poco () 3. Nada ()

62. Ahora que ha regresado, ¿qué comentarios tiene su familia del viaje?

- a. El trabajo es pesado () b. Gran progreso económico () c. Nuevas enseñanzas () d. Cosas muy caras () e. Ninguno ()
f. No hay trabajo () g. Otros (especifique) _____

63. En términos generales ¿cómo considera que está actualmente su familia?

- a. Mejor () b. Igual () c. Peor ()

64. ¿Por qué?

- a. No obtuve un gran ingreso () b. Mejores ingresos () c. La situación económica es dura () d. Trabajo estable ()
e. Estabilidad laboral () f. Otros (especifique) _____

65. ¿Cómo se siente después de haberse reintegrado a la familia nuevamente?

- a. Bien, alegre, feliz () b. Inconforme (mamá está en el exterior) () c. Otro (especifique) ()

66. ¿Cómo fue recibido/a en su casa?

- a. Con alegría () b. Bien () c. Inconforme () d. Otro (especifique) _____

67. En su comunidad, ¿Cómo le recibieron?

- a. Muy bien () b. Bien () c. Normal () d. Mal recibida () e. Otro (especifique) _____

68. Comente qué costumbres perdió

- a. Ninguna () b. Comida () c. Vestir () d. Acento () e. Otro (especifique) _____

69. Comente qué costumbres ganó

a. Forma de hablar () b. Educación () c. Ser responsable () d. Forma de vestir () e. Alimentación () f. Otro (especifique) _____

70. ¿Participó su familia en su decisión de regresar a Nicaragua?

a. Mucho () b. Poco () c. Nada ()

71. ¿Cuál fue la principal causa de su regreso?

a. Problemas familiares () b. Visitando () PASAR AL PUNTO VI. PERSONA QUE QUIERE EMIGRAR...

c. Visa vencida () d. Deportado () e. Actividad finalizada () f. Otro (especifique) ()

72. ¿Cuánto tiempo estuvo fuera del país? _____

73. En esta estancia fuera del país, ¿qué habilidades desarrollo?

a. Ninguna () b. Constructor () c. Fontanería () d. Electricidad () e. Estudiar () f. Nuevas destrezas (especifique) _____

g. Nuevas técnicas de producción agrícola (especifique) _____ h. Administrar mejor el dinero ()

i. Otro (especifique) _____

74. ¿En qué trabajó la mayor parte del tiempo?

a. Como doméstica () b. En la construcción () c. Maquila () d. Obrero industrial () e. Celador () f. Empleada de servicios ()

g. Trabajador agrícola (especifique en qué actividades) _____

h. Otro (especifique) _____

75. ¿Cada cuánto enviaba dinero a su familia? _____

76. ¿Cuánto era el monto que enviaba? _____

77. ¿Decidía usted sobre el uso del dinero que enviaba?

a. Si () b. No ()

78. ¿Qué efectos tenía para usted el enviar dinero a su familia?

a. Positivos () b. Negativos ()

79. ¿Por qué?

- a. Mejoras en el hogar () b. Alimentación () c. Suplir necesidades () d. Pago educación hijos () e. Asumir responsabilidad ()
f. Lo administran bien () g. Compra de animales () h. Otro (especifique) _____

80. ¿Cuál considera usted que fue el principal problema dentro de la familia que trajo la migración?

- a. Ninguno () b. Problemas económicos () c. No hay trabajo () d. Desacuerdo () e. Desintegración familiar ()
Otro (especifique) _____

81. ¿Cuáles fueron las principales ventajas de haber migrado?

- a. Mayores ingresos () b. Adquisición de nuevos conocimientos y destrezas () c. Nuevas oportunidades de trabajo o estudio ()
d. Otros (especifique) _____

82. ¿Piensa regresar a Costa Rica?

- a. Sí piensa regresar, de inmediato () b. Piensa regresar más adelante () c. No regresará ()

83. ¿Por qué lo haría o no lo haría? _____

84. ¿Piensa llevarse a alguien de la familia?

- a. Si () 2. No ()

85. ¿A quién? (Anotar parentesco, género y edad? _____

86. ¿Por qué quiere llevarse/a? _____

87. ¿Qué necesitaría usted para no tener que migrar? _____

88. ¿Recibió algún apoyo del gobierno de Nicaragua?

- a. Si () 2. No ()

89. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo recibió? _____

90. ¿Debería apoyarse a los migrantes durante su estadía en Costa Rica?

- a. Si () ¿Cómo? _____

- b. No ()

91. ¿Debería apoyarse a los migrantes en el retorno a Nicaragua?

- a. Si () ¿Cómo? _____

b. No ()

VI. PERSONA QUE QUIERE EMIGRAR A COSTA RICA

92. ¿Hay alguien de la familia que actualmente está haciendo planes para irse a Costa Rica?

a. Si () b. No () Terminó entrevista

93. Parentesco con el Jefe/a de familia _____ Sexo _____ Edad _____

94. ¿Hacia dónde piensa ir?

Lugar _____ Rural () Urbano ()

95. ¿Cuál es la razón por la que quiere irse?

a. Buscar un trabajo () b. Mejores ingresos () c. Ayudar a familia () d. Reunificación familiar () e. Nuevas expectativas de estudio ()

f. Otro (especifique) _____

96. ¿Cuánto tiempo piensa quedarse? _____

97. ¿Tiene trabajo asegurado?

a. Si () b. No ()

98. ¿Tiene contactos allá?

a. Si () b. No ()

99. ¿Qué tipo de vínculo tiene con ellos?

a. Familiar () b. Amistad () c. Laboral () Otro _____

100. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo le brindan?

a. Hospedaje () b. Contactos () c. Otro _____

101. ¿Qué necesitaría usted para no tener que migrar? _____

102. ¿Debería apoyarse la emigración?

a. Si () ¿Cómo? _____

b. No ()

NO OLVIDAR PEDIR DIRECCIÓN DE FAMILIARES O FORMA DE CONTACTARLOS EN COSTA RICA
FIN DE ENTREVISTA, MUCHAS GRACIAS!!!!!!

