

**XXVI IUSSP International Population Conference
Marrakech, 2009**

Regional Session - IUSSP- ALAP

Title of session: Demographic transformations, convergences and inequalities in Latin America: what the future holds?

Description: The demographic transition is complete in almost every country in Latin America. Life expectancy has increased almost to the same levels reached in developed countries. Fertility rates have declined from over six children per woman to around the replacement level in the last 40 years. At the same time, migration from rural to urban places has created large cities with huge social heterogeneity. Changes in age structure and composition become visible very rapidly, and although there is convergence in all the demographic events in LA, there remain enormous inequalities. The papers presented in this session will give emphasis on the large demographic transformations leading to convergences in all Latin American countries, mainly on average fertility, mortality, age structure and composition, and disorder in the growing urbanization in a context of socio-economic inequalities. We look for discussions on the consequences of this dynamic to Latin American population, such as the pressure to international migration, unequal access to health and, mainly, reproductive health, and social security, among other. The papers will also discuss on:

- The persistence of large differences according to socio-economic characteristics
- The role of public policies
- The role of macro-economic policies

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Papers:

- 1 - Low fertility levels and reproductive health in Latin America: perspectives on new unmet needs
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- 2 - The Unique pattern of Latin American aging process

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3 - Current view of migrations in Latin America

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4 - Urban growth and mobility in Latin America

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See abstracts below.

Low fertility levels and reproductive health in Latin America: perspectives on new unmet needs.

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... As countries get richer, their populations age and their birthrates plummet. And this is not just a problem of rich countries: the developing world is also getting older fast. Falling birthrates might seem beneficial, but the economic and social price is too steep to pay. The right policies could help turn the tide, but only if enacted before it's too late" Longman (2004) – p. 1

Abstract

Several decades of study of the Latin American demographic dynamics has been barely enough for policy-makers to take notice of the great *age structural transition* triggered by the sharpest fertility decline observed in modern times in the continent. The transition towards an old age structure brings demographic, socio-economic and political consequences and challenges that are not yet well understood. One of the challenges - of an essentially demographic nature - has to do with the fast fertility decline that lowered not only birth rates but also absolute number of births. Diminution of new cohort's size, as it is well accepted, destabilizes in the short term - and also, in the medium and long run - the intergenerational relations. The demographic consequences of such destabilization have repercussions of the biggest importance in the composition of the population and in the social demand of the diverse age groups, which is particularly crucial if there is - as in the major part of the Latin American countries - an extremely fast aging process. The first objective of the paper is to present the most recent evidences of the fast fertility decline experienced throughout the continent that will probably end up soon well below the replacement level for almost all Latin American countries. Outliers will be singled out to evaluate its relevance in the whole reproductive process. Because of the particularly young age fertility pattern that characterizes the continent, the paper will also evaluate the possibilities of further deep decline of the TFR due to tempo effects if teenager fertility manages to fall. Secondly, the paper will explore consequences of the fertility decline and diminution in the size of the new cohorts on the age structure. It will also emphasize the new demands on reproductive health, particularly, implementation of family size preferences throughout the different socioeconomic strata.

The Unique Pattern of Latin American Aging Process

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Abstract

The process of population aging is an inevitable fact because populations cannot grow for ever. The desirable aging process is the one that we have currently: low mortality it is the best possible scenario that the populations can aspire. Since the growth of population cannot continue for ever, the low mortality scenario has to go together with low fertility and, consequently, the reduction of fertility mainly produces the aging process. Under this desirable and inevitable circumstance the aging process cannot be considered a problem because it is a natural development brought by modernization of the societies. The problem is not that the populations will increase the proportion of the elderly; the problem is the lack of planning in front of the inevitable change of all populations will have. It is the lack of social planning that generates the problems that populations will face in the near future. At the present time few Latin American countries are planning the social services that will the expected future population changes. The article analyzes the countries of Latin America and it compares them with some of the process observed in West Europe in order to show the main differences among them. We should understand that the demographic evolution in Latin America is different from what happens in Western European countries. And the aging process will not be an exception. In the same way as Latin American countries had a population explosion with unique characteristic; they will face an aging scenario that differs from the Western European one. The main difference is the speed of demographic change that will produce the fastest aging process ever observed in a continent. The impacts that such aging processes will have on population health, pensions, education, and familiar composition will be tremendous. The demographic changes that Latin American countries will face will affect the interrelations among the different social organizations within these societies, and it will require new regulations to facilitate the fast transition of the affected social groups.

Current view of migrations in Latin America

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Abstract

This text offers a panoramic of International migration in Latin America within the current economic context. The introduction reviews the role of migration in populating the region since the second half of the nineteenth Century and the beginning of the twentieth Century. We stress the change in the migratory dynamics of the region starting from the last decades of the former Century, when it passed from being a region of immigration mainly from Europe, to be a migratory region towards the developed countries, mainly to the United States and Europe, but also to Japan and Australia. This role's change is according to a more global restructuring of the world migratory system. The first section analyses the characteristics of Latin American migration, compared to other International migratory fluxes. The objective is to characterize, in terms of its volume, basic characteristics, regions of destiny and origin, etc. the current Latin American migration according to its role and specificity in this new era of international migration. In particular, we offer information about the three main migratory fluxes originated in the region: the traditional migration towards the United States, the emergent migration to Europe (mainly to Spain) and also to Japan, and finally the new dynamics of migration inside the region. In the second section we turn back to the analysis base don the relationship Migration-Development, in order to study two relevant phenomena:

- On one hand, the role of international migration in the countries that received it, mainly the developed countries. In this case, we will focus on the United States and Spain, as they concentrated the larger fluxes of migrants from Latin America in the last decade. Firstly the contribution of migrants in demographic terms (demographic complementarities in a context of ageing). Secondly its economic contribution according to its working insertion (economic sectors, occupations, incomes, etc.). Finally, we document the social and economic situation of migrants with the available statistical information.
- On the other hand, the role of Latin American migration in the regions of departure. In this respect, we present macroeconomic information about the amount of remittances and their contribution to the economic dynamics, impact on the wealth's distribution and on the arguably reduction of poverty, showing the differences amongst the countries of the region. In this way, and focusing in Mexico and Ecuador, we analyze the impact of migration on both countries, in terms of its demographic, social and economic impact (rural depopulation, labor markets and unemployment, home dynamics, etc.). Finally, we conclude with a general thinking about the new era of International migration in the contemporary globalised World, and about the role of Latin American migration in this World context. In particular, we review the controversy about the relationship between migration and development from a point of view that backs on the characteristics of the countries and regions where this migration departs from.

Urban growth and mobility in Latin America

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Abstract

Latin America (LA) is the most urbanized region in the developing world. And this is not due to a statistical fiction, but to an effective agglomeration of its population in cities, many of them very large (1 million or more inhabitants). This feature has at least two consequences. On the one hand, many indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a greater degree of progress, in comparison with other regions in the developing world, because, considering the nature of these goals, concentration in cities may facilitates their achievement. On the other hand, for LA countries, it is in big cities or urban agglomerations where social problems are more complex, and also where we can find the largest concentrations of poverty. Thus, despite the hypotheses and some empirical evidences of demographic and economic decentralization from large urban agglomerations, these areas still remain the arena of the greatest challenges facing our societies. Accordingly, monitoring MDGs indicators in the region should be segmented by area of residence (rural and urban) and city size, and for big cities or agglomerations, further analysis taking into account the intra-urban features almost always must be considered. Because migration has historically a central role on the demographic growth of LA cities, an understanding of the changes in the trends of population spatial distribution must consider detailed analysis of migration. In the last three decades migration dynamic has changed a great deal in terms of spatial patterns - such as the predominance of movement between cities, the greatest diversity of patterns of displacement, redefinition of places of attraction and rejection - determinants, consequences, selectivity of migrants, in addition to the means and possibilities of integration of migrants in the destination area. By studying migration processes it is possible to understand, at least in part, the consequences of the intense process of urbanization in LA countries. Indeed, the phenomena of metropolitanization (or demetropolitanization as suggested by some authors) at some extent is a reflection of migration dynamic; the same can be said regarding to the internal problems of the metropolitan areas. Hence, based on censuses data for some key Latin America countries, the paper will provide evidence on several of these issues and draw attention to the challenges of measurement, analysis, and public policies involved.