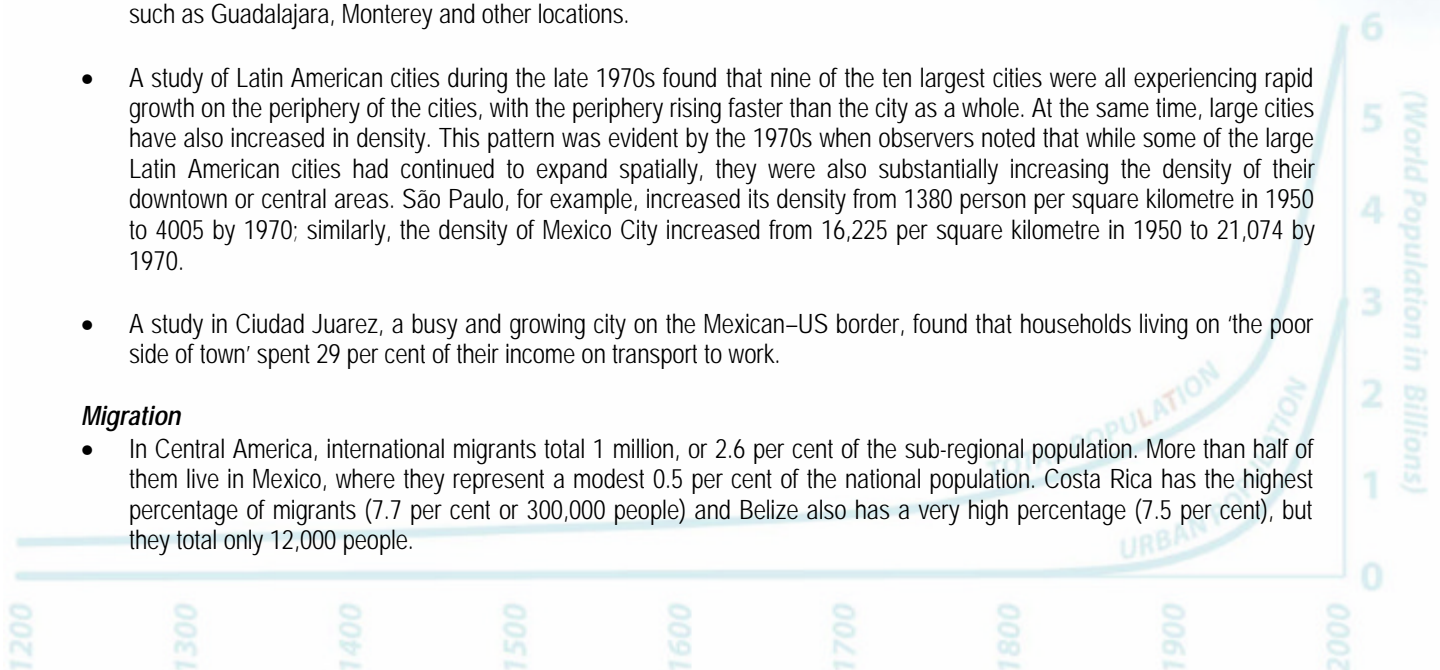


State of the World's Cities: Trends in Latin America & the Caribbean *Urbanization & Metropolitanization*

- In 2000, 75.4 per cent of the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) population – about 400 million people – lived in urban areas. Urbanization was highest in South America (77.2 per cent), followed by Central America (68.2 per cent) and the Caribbean 63.1 per cent). 31.6 per cent of the total LAC Population.
- 41.8 per cent of the urban population lived in the region's 50 cities exceeding 1 million inhabitants, while 15.1 per cent of the total LAC population and 61.5 per cent of its urban population lived in cities exceeding 5 million people.
- The region has seven such metropolises: Mexico City (18.1 million), São Paulo (17.9 million), Buenos Aires (12 million), Rio de Janeiro (10.6 million), Lima (7.4 million), Bogotá (6.8 million) and Santiago (5.5 million). In 2000, the first four ranked 2nd, 3rd, 11th and 15th respectively among the world's 15 largest urban agglomerations. By 2005, São Paulo and Mexico City will be in second and third positions, with 19.5 and 18.9 million inhabitants, respectively.
- São Paulo is Brazil's financial and industrial capital. The core of this city expanded tremendously from 189 square kilometres in 1930, to over 900 square kilometres in 1988. The municipality of São Paulo is now one of the world's largest cities, with 10 million people. Greater São Paulo holds 19.8 million people within 39 municipalities and occupies a contiguous urban area of 1500 square kilometres.
- The Mexico City Metropolitan Area now has more than half of the population of this 28-municipality entity located outside the 16 delegated areas of the federal district in the state of Mexico. The São Paulo metropolitan region has 39 districts/municipalities, Rio de Janeiro consists of 13 separate municipalities and Buenos Aires has 20 local government units that, to varying extents, have local autonomy.
- During the 1970s, demographers were predicting that Mexico City would reach 30 million people by the 2000. In fact, Mexico City stopped growing much beyond 20 million, as migrants began to search for better opportunities in other cities such as Guadalajara, Monterrey and other locations.
- A study of Latin American cities during the late 1970s found that nine of the ten largest cities were all experiencing rapid growth on the periphery of the cities, with the periphery rising faster than the city as a whole. At the same time, large cities have also increased in density. This pattern was evident by the 1970s when observers noted that while some of the large Latin American cities had continued to expand spatially, they were also substantially increasing the density of their downtown or central areas. São Paulo, for example, increased its density from 1380 person per square kilometre in 1950 to 4005 by 1970; similarly, the density of Mexico City increased from 16,225 per square kilometre in 1950 to 21,074 by 1970.
- A study in Ciudad Juarez, a busy and growing city on the Mexican-US border, found that households living on 'the poor side of town' spent 29 per cent of their income on transport to work.

Migration

- In Central America, international migrants total 1 million, or 2.6 per cent of the sub-regional population. More than half of them live in Mexico, where they represent a modest 0.5 per cent of the national population. Costa Rica has the highest percentage of migrants (7.7 per cent or 300,000 people) and Belize also has a very high percentage (7.5 per cent), but they total only 12,000 people.



- Mexico is affected by transit migration, as the major conduit for migrants seeking entry into Northern America. This flow is primarily to some Mexican border cities (Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juarez and Matamoros) that attract both national and foreign migrants as part of the *maquiladoras* phenomenon – that is, manufacturing plants located in northern Mexico, producing parts for assembly in the US.
- In 2002, for instance, there were more than 200,000 undocumented migrants into the southern state of Chiapas, mainly to the border cities of Tapachula and Ciudad Hidalgo. In Belize, rural migrants are still dominant: Belmopan and Belize City absorb only 33 per cent of total foreign immigration; but this percentage is growing, as is the marginality of migrants living there.
- Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica is one of the most significant in Central America. Like the region's other migration flows, it has deep historical roots in agricultural transient labour, even though this flow is becoming more urban oriented. Today, the San José metropolitan area holds large numbers of Nicaraguans (about 25 per cent of total migrants in the country).
- In the Caribbean, emigration (mainly to the US and Canada) is much higher than intra-regional migration. According to the official statistics, international migrants within the sub-region are a mere 400,000 (although this figure underestimates the illegal flow of Haitians to the Dominican Republic) or 6.7 per cent of the regional population.
- On some islands, the percentage of foreigners is very high (10 per cent in the Bahamas and Barbados); but their absolute number remains modest. The only significant concentration of international migrants is reported in the Dominican Republic, which hosts about 500,000 Haitians (about 6 per cent of the total population) due to both Haiti's political instability and difficult economic conditions during the 1990s.
- Latin America has the highest number of international migrants in the region (3.7 million), but they represent only 1.6 per cent of the sub-region's total population. Only Venezuela and Argentina have more than 1 million foreigners (or 4 per cent of their national populations). Brazil has a significant 500,000 migrants, although immigration is rapidly decreasing (the figure was double just ten years ago).

Poverty & Slums

- From 1990 to 1997, the Latin American region experienced a cycle of moderate economic growth, cutting poverty by 5 per cent. Since 1997, the situation has worsened, primarily as a result of the Asian crisis, which severely hit the Latin American economies, as commodity export prices fell due to a lack of world demand. The more recent economic crisis in Argentina in 2001 seriously weakened the region's economy as a whole. By the beginning of the millennium, there was little doubt that the region was facing its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- In 2000, better economic performance brought with it a reduction in the volume of poverty by more than 4 million people. In 2002, the number of Latin Americans living in poverty reached 220 million (43.4 per cent), of which 95 million (18.8 per cent) were indigents.
- In Argentina's urban areas, poverty rates almost doubled from 23.7 per cent to 45.4 per cent, while indigence grew threefold, from 6.7 per cent to 20.9 per cent.
- Latin America's inequalities are the most extreme in the world. In 1999, Gini coefficients for all countries in Latin America were higher than the world's average of 0.4, and several countries – such as Brazil (0.64), Bolivia (0.60), Nicaragua (0.59) and Guatemala (0.58) – registered values close to 0.6.
- Whereas the richest tenth of the people in the region earn 48 per cent of the total income, the poorest tenth earn only 1.6 per cent. Inequalities are omnipresent in almost every aspect of life. A poor Guatemalan family has, on average, 3 children, whereas a rich household has 1.9 children. In the former household, 4.5 people live in each room, compared to 1.6 in the latter. The former household has a 57 per cent chance of being connected to the water main network and a 49 per cent probability of having access to electricity. The corresponding probabilities for the latter household are 92 and 93 per cent, respectively.

- Furthermore, these inequalities are persistently driven by race and ethnicity in Latin America, particularly for indigenous and Afro-descended people who are *at a considerable disadvantage with respect to whites*. Indigenous men earn 35 to 65 per cent less than white men. In Brazil, for instance, men and women of African descent earn about 45 per cent of the wages of their white counterparts
- The region hosts a large slum population. In 2001, one third of the urban population (32 per cent) was living in slums, representing 128 million people and 14 per cent of the world's urban slum population.
- Behind this overall figure, slum incidence varies tremendously from one country to another. Central America (excluding Mexico), the least urbanized sub-region (52 per cent) but experiencing the highest urban growth, shows the highest slum prevalence, at 42.4 per cent in 2001. The Caribbean sub-region enjoys a lower prevalence, with 21.4 per cent, showing better overall performance in terms of access to basic services.
- In South America, where urbanization has reached a very high but relatively stable point of about 80 per cent, the proportion of slum dwellers was 35.5 per cent in 2001.

Crime & Safety

- Youth are central to the increasing violence in most countries in the region. Youth are often organized in gangs that use violence to meet their social and economic needs, further adding to already high levels of violence in their communities.
- About 29 per cent of homicides in Latin America are among youth 10 to 19 years of age – in fact, homicide is the second leading cause of death for this age group in 10 of the 21 countries with populations over 1 million in the region.
- Youth homicide rates can be up to three times higher than national homicide rates. In Venezuela, 95 per cent of homicide victims were male, and 54 per cent of them were younger than 25. In Brazil, homicides among youths increased by 77 per cent during the past ten years, mostly because of the use of firearms.
- Latin America has the highest risk of all types of sexual victimization combined, with approximately 70 per cent of incidents described as rapes, attempted rapes or indecent assaults. Women in Latin America, particularly in Brazil and Argentina, were most frequently exposed to sexual victimization compared to other world regions.
- The lowest average rates for reporting sexual incidents to authorities were in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica. Latin American cities have the highest rates of sexual assault (around 5 per cent compared to 2.4 per cent in African cities and 1.6 per cent in Asian cities).
- Brazilian legislation considers domestic aggression to be a minor crime comparable to a street fight and aggressors are often released quickly by police, only to return home to threaten the victim not to report him again. Thus, key challenges involve empowering women, promoting prevention and reducing women's social exclusion.
- In Costa Rica, women have mobilized through marches and seminars to lobby politicians to penalize murders and other types of aggression against women. Women in other Latin American countries have also organized peace campaigns, such as the Honduran *Visitación Padilla* that succeeded in changing forced military service to voluntary.
- The lowest levels of citizens who are satisfied with the police in controlling local crime are in Latin America (up to 70 per cent are unsatisfied, as measured by the International Crime Victim Survey). Of all public officials, police officers also appear to be most involved in bribery in Latin America.

- **Urban crime in Brazil:** Crime rates have risen sharply in Brazil during recent years, largely due to increased organized crime and trafficking of drugs, firearms, human beings and endangered species involving local and international criminal organizations. São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo and Pernambuco are the most violent states in Brazil. However, homicide rates vary greatly depending upon area and income.
- For example, tourist areas of Rio de Janeiro have a homicide rate of around 4 per 100,000 people, which is comparable to some of the safest cities in Europe. On the contrary, homicide rates can be as high as 150 per 100,000 people in *favelas*, slum areas only a few kilometres from these tourist areas.
- A large part of almost 30,000 homicides registered annually in Brazil are linked to drug abuse and trafficking. Delivering drugs is estimated to create jobs for approximately 20,000 child and youth couriers, most of them between 10 and 16 years of age. A young courier's salary is often higher than that of their parents, earning them respect from their peers and a feeling of importance in the community.
- Colombia's cocaine production increased roughly five times between 1993 and 1999, making the country the source of almost 75 per cent of the world's illicit supply of cocaine. More positively, after an eight-year increase, Colombia has managed to reduce its coca cultivation by 37 per cent between 2000 and 2002. There are also some positive signs of progress
- Puerto Rico has been the largest cocaine hub since the early 1990s as it is the convergence point of several cocaine routes: cocaine flows directly north from South America, east from the Dominican Republic and west from the Eastern Caribbean islands. Although only about one third of this cocaine remains in Puerto Rico, the amount is beginning to increase.
- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC SAFETY, CORDOBA, ARGENTINA.** This initiative has generated safer spaces, people's involvement in identifying effective answers and solidarity networks that prevent exclusion. It has promoted, within the community, capacity to build and actively defend the right to urban security and public welfare. It also constituted an attempt to change the traditional structures of the police force and justice system, giving priority to prevention rather than repression. The methodology used has been open public dialogue, which enables people to accept and respect other people's ways of thinking and acting. It also facilitates the search for alternative answers to problem-solving.
- Campaigns organized by the NGO Viva Rio in Rio de Janeiro are excellent examples of mobilizing women as agents of social change to reduce violence and arms proliferation. Diverse women gathered to launch the *Choose Gun-free! It's Your Weapon or Me* campaign on Mother's day in 2001.

Governance & Transparency

- With respect to corruption and transparency, Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced, with uneven progress, a general increase in democracy over the past 15 years. At the local level, this has meant increasing numbers of local governments with new responsibilities and new leaders. Rapid urbanization and the increasingly apparent urbanization of poverty have also meant an increasing incidence and higher levels of corruption.
- Trust in persons and institutions in Latin American countries hovers at very low levels. Furthermore, between 1996 and 2003, trust in public institutions has been gradually, but distinctly, declining.

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