SPANISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES.

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Spanish speaking groups inhabited the region that is currently known as the United States long before the 13 US colonies proclaimed independence from England in 1776. The Spanish speaking communities in the US today constitute the largest single social group in the population. However, not all of them share the same ethnic origins, the same historical memories, similar symbols, including the use of a common Spanish language. Nevertheless, only portions of these communities self-identify as "Hispanics" while, at the same time, U.S. administrative authorities, immigration officials and the Census Bureau Office, all classify them as such. Not only are these communities identified as members of the same ethnic group by U.S. authorities, but they are also classified as members of a **racial minority**.

Use of the Hispanic concept in the United States is polemic, but more significantly it is inaccurate. This concept does not recognize these groups diversity and these also will require as much, if not more, attention in the near future.

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HISPANICIDAD[1] AND DIVERSITY

The first variable that differentiates the Hispanic communities living in the U.S. is **race**. The Spanish conquistadors who first came to the Americas, as are also many of their descendants, were Caucasians. They shared the same phenotypes as the British colonists who came later to the region. However, the term Hispanic has traditionally included indigenous populations that, of course, inhabited the American continent far longer than the historical period that was marked by the arrival of Columbus in 1492. Similarly, the race variable also includes Black populations, who are the descendants of the African slaves that were originally introduced into the Caribbean colonies. Later on, Black slaves were introduced throughout the remainder of the entire continent.

A second variable is **language**. Despite the fact that broad community populations described as "Hispanics" speak Spanish, many do not speak the language. A generalized application of this concept in referring to those communities does not distinguish differences at all. Among those Hispanic communities are many who happen to speak English, Portuguese or French, instead of Spanish, and whose origins also lay in Western Europe.

Another important variable refers to the **period** in which Spanish speaking communities settled in the territories that constitute the present-day United States. Some communities, especially those that homesteaded in the southwestern territories are descendants of the Spaniards, who arrived in the region before the US began its expansion West of the Appalachians. Other "Hispanics", who arrived later, can be divided into groups considered as legal residents, and those who are classified as undocumented or illegal aliens.

In direct relationship to the **period** variable, the **place of national origin**, that is, **nationality**, must also be considered regarding those individuals classified under the term "Hispanic". As mentioned before, many of those who settled in the Southwest region of the United States arrived even before Mexico became a sovereign nation in 1810. Similarly, a significant number of "Hispanics" not only came from diverse regions of the American continent, but also from nations in the Western Hemisphere. In other words, the so-called "Hispanics" share different **national origins**.

Another important element subsumed within the concept of "Hispanic" is that of a **racial minority** status, which is similar to Black populations and other ethnic minorities. In any event, not all "Hispanics" agree with the idea of being classified as a racial minority group, because their physical characteristics are not different from those of the White population. This situation is all-too-common among well-educated white groups with high socio-economic status, who emigrate to the U.S. from some South American countries. In general terms, this refers to the **class** variable.

Regardless of their characteristics, Spanish speaking communities represent the fastest growing population in the United States today. According to the changes in Census data between 1970 and 1980, the Hispanic population increased at the rate of 3.8% compared with 1.7% for the Black population. In other words, during this decade that began on July 1st of 1970 and ending April 1st of 1980, the Hispanic population increased from 9.1 million persons in 1970 to 14.6 million by 1980, according to the Census Bureau. The Census also indicated that in August of 1998, the number of Hispanics was approximately 29.7 million, a very significant increase in view of the fact that number was just 28.9 million in 1996. Out of these numbers, more than half were born in the U.S., and the total increase represents the addition of almost a million persons in less than 2 years.

The origins and development of the Spanish speaking communities in the U.S., in general terms, includes the following stages: 1] The presence of natural Spanish heritage in the Southwest of Mexico and later the U.S. 2] Mexico's independence from Spain, which catalyzed two successive periods of out-migration from Mexico: a) The beginning of immigration towards the border of the United States during the 19th century; b) Migratory waves as a result of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the World Wars. 3] The Puerto Rican emigration. 4] The Cuban emigration, which also included two distinct migratory periods: a) Immigration toward the United States as a result of the two Independence Wars (1860-1870 and 1895-1898); and b) Immigration as a result of the Cuban Revolution in 1960. 5] The immigration movement from the Dominican Republic during the 1950s. 6] And finally, sporadic immigration from other Latin American countries.

THE SPANISH HERITAGE

When the United States gained independence from Great Britain in 1776, its territories encompassed the regions between the Atlantic Ocean and the Allegheny Mountains. The population of this young nation in the year 1790 consisted of less than 4 millions inhabitants. That number included 3,172,000 Whites (80.7%), and 757,000 (19.3%) Non-Whites, of which the majority were Black (Gann: 1986: 3). Large segments of the English-speaking Anglo population lived in rural areas. At the beginning of the war of independence there existed only five towns with none having more than 8,000 inhabitants.

The situation in the Spanish Colonies in North America was very different, and these settlements exceeded British populations almost four-fold. According to the German scientist and traveler Alexander Von Humboldt, Spanish territories in North America at the end of the 19th century had a population of almost 3.5 million White people, 5.5 millions *mestizos* (mixed Spanish and Indians), 7.5 million Indians, and 750,000 Blacks.[2] The borders of the Spanish Empire reached the Mississippi River.[3] Florida also belonged to the Spaniards, a region that became a U.S. territory between 1819 and 1821. New Spain, that is, Mexico, embraced large territories that today are part of the Southwest of the United States. This situation lasted until the beginning of the 19th century, when Mexico became an independent nation in 1810. By the end of the 19th century the Spanish American provinces in that region enjoyed a prosperity that never had been achieved in the past. The Spanish boom at the end of the 18th century led to an appearance that the Spanish-speaking communities were destined to control large portions of the territories that are part of the United States today.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF MEXICO

After its independence Mexico became a powerful nation, at least on paper. The regions under its control, real or named, included all the regions from San Francisco to the borders of Central America. However, from its beginning the Mexican government experienced many serious challenges in maintaining control over its states. The administrative system was based on an adaptation of the U.S. Constitution, but it did not work. Development of the new republic was characterized by a prolonged political crisis. During the first three decades following Mexico's independence war there were 45 changes of government, innumerable rebellions, coup d'etats, and several foreign incursions into its lands. A range and variety of administrations ruled Mexico in a succession of diverse forms and organizational typologies including monarchies, a federal republic, a centralized republic and a dictatorship. The dominant class in Mexico represented only one tenth of the population, and the remaining Mexican citizens were excluded from all forms of political power. Via decree, the Indians were declared to be Mexican citizens, and forced to behave according to Mexican laws and custom, without recognition of their languages, cultural heritages and traditions. A similar crisis situation occurred in the countryside[4] expressed through serious tensions between peasants and landowners. These conflicts gradually worsened, and around the mid-1850's Mexico faced serious internal instability. Numerous external threats from Indian peoples and revolts among the peasants cast doubt on the Central government's ability to survive.

The Mexican borderlands in its northern territories included present-day California, Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. These regions were extremely isolated and so they were typically organized as autonomous administrative governments. Despite the existence of a remote system of communication between the regions most of routes led to Mexico. As a consequence the borderlands were vast empty and totally isolated, without markets and roads and ruled from outside by a deficient administrative central government.

Among these Northern Mexican states California held the richest prospects and Spanish settlers already occupied the narrow territories that hugged the Pacific coast. These populations were, however, very small and isolated from the rest of the Spanish Empire. At the beginning, Mexico's independence from Spain had few real effects on Hispanics living in California. Policies and measures to control those territories that were later adopted by the new Mexican authorities began to face resistance and were finally rejected by these territorial inhabitants, who preferred to identify themselves as Californians, instead of Mexicans or Spaniards. In 1836, California's landowners—*rancheros*—took control of the provincial government. This was done peacefully in order to protect the development of their immediate commercial interests. The rest of the population was marginalized in a process that provided them with scant political privileges and social benefits.

The Region of California

Once settled in California, the Spaniards conquered the Indian *pueblos*, and organized religious missions to Christianize them. The Spaniards occupied the best lands, and built military fortifications for their own protection and to affect control over the rich mining territories located in the Northern region of New Spain (later Mexico). In the beginning, the Spaniards settled in Alta California. The area was comprised of lands that lay between the present-day cities of San Diego and San Francisco. Taken together with Baja California, these regions were considered as part of the Spanish Province of California under control of the Vice-Royalty of New Spain, until March 24, 1804. Soon afterward, the region was divided into two separate states by the new Mexican government. Later on, in 1836, they were re-unified to become the 24th state under dominion by the federal government of Mexico. When the Guadalupe Treaty between Mexico and the United States was signed on February 2, 1848, this area, known as Alta California, passed directly into U.S. control[5].

The ruling authorities had maintained the same colonial social order imposed by the Spaniards and continued by the Mexican government throughout the region. Eventually, the discovery of rich gold deposits in 1848 drastically altered the social structure in this region, and attracted many Anglo-Saxons who were seeking instant wealth[6]. The Spanish- speaking communities that had settled in the area gradually became a significant minority group, with declining influence over the region. California's population now rose to more than 90,000 by the end of 1849 and to 220,000 by 1852, the year in which gold production reached its peak. In 1859, only 13,000 of the population were of Mexican descent[7]. The peoples living in California, who at the end of the war between the United States and Mexico had resented the imposition of any new legal system, had to face a series of economic, political and cultural transformations as a result of the massive emigration into the region. Anglo-Saxon domination became more evident in the form of increasingly restrictive laws, legal disputes over ownership of land, abuses, violence, discrimination and repression. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, over 800 huge grants of land had been given to Hispanics and some whites who settled in California. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo explicitly guaranteed that the United States would honor these land grants. Several were larger than 40,500 hectares (100,000 acres). With the beginning of the Gold Rush and the influx of new settlers, Americans complained about the size of such land claims. The U.S. Senate sympathized with the new immigrants, not the *rancheros*, most of whom were Hispanic, and passed legislation that allowed multiple appeals on land claim decisions. Thus, most claims remained unresolved for years. Owners had to prove ownership, a difficult task because few accurate surveys had ever been made. The cost of court proceedings often consumed more than the property was worth.

This situation forced many Spanish-speaking groups to abandon the mining sectors and the lands in the regions where they lived and worked. Some displaced Spanish-speaking sectors survived through banditry, and carrying on other extra-legal activities.[8] As a result, locally based authorities increased repression and other measures, which included violence against Spanish-speaking communities in the area. Thus, anti Hispanic discrimination acquired the characteristics of institutional legitimacy while, at the same time, transformed these groups into the cheapest labor forces available in the region. The Mexicans and other local immigrant groups were relegated to the periphery of the cities, as workers in the factories, smelters, and in railroad construction. The consequences of the Anglo-Saxon land takeovers involving the cattle ranches in the region, the Mexicans who had worked the land began to emigrate into the cities for work at even lower wages merely to survive.

As a result of the war between Mexico and the United States, the Mexicans living in California were economically dispossessed and forced into working for conquering Anglo-Saxon populations who continued pouring into the region. Despite the promises that Mexican residents in the region would be granted U.S. citizenship, freedom of religion and language under the terms in the Guadalupe de Hidalgo Treaty, these groups faced a series of problems. The consequences of this situation are still very much present today regardless of the passage of time.

Texas' Rebellion

During the first years of Mexico's relationship with the United States as an independent nation exchanges were cordial. The new Mexican Government appreciated the support provided by the U.S. to the independence movements in the former Spanish colonies of Central and South America. Moreover, the political document used as the Constitution of Mexico was adapted from the United States Constitutional Model. Nevertheless, relations between these two nations gradually began to deteriorate and led to several armed conflicts between their respective military forces.

The causes for warlike conflicts between these neighboring countries developed through the tensions created by territorial disputes over Texas. Around the year 1830, the foreign populations living in Texas began to number more than the local Mexican population. This situation did not seem very important to the distant Mexican Government insofar as these foreigners agreed to obey Mexican laws and regulations. However, the Anglo-Saxons colonists would not surrender the rights and privileges to which they were accustomed when living in the United States. Similarly, they objected what they considered a corrupted Mexican judicial system, which required them to pay excessive taxes, passed discriminatory laws against Protestants, and to commercial and administrative isolation of the region. In addition, the decision by the Mexican government to abolish slavery infuriated the slaveholder and cotton farmers in the Southern region of the United States, who by then were more numerous in Texas than Mexicans.

The majority of the Spanish-speaking groups living in Texas, California and New Mexico were too far distant to identify with Mexico and mainly its government. This element facilitated the Anglo-Saxon sectors' efforts to challenge the rules of the Mexican Government and to justify their efforts to launch a secessionist movement. The separatist movement became inevitable when President Antonio López de Santa Ana determined to maintain his pliable government, to dissolve the National Congress, and finally to impose himself on Mexico as its Supreme Commander of a highly centralized dictatorship. Additionally, Santa Ana proceeded to withdraw states' rights and powers from each of the Mexican states. In this way, Santa Ana not only alienated Anglo settlers in Texas, but also Mexicans who advocated for rights of California, New Mexico, Arizona and others. In 1836, Texas proclaimed its independence while the Mexican Government tried unsuccessfully to recover its lost territories.

Prospects for war with Mexico divided the United States. The Anglo groups most inclined towards a forceful military posture as the solution to the conflict, were Southerners who wanted to preserve the slavery system in the U.S. This strategy called for incorporating new states into this productive system, including annexation of Cuba. However, this policy was strongly opposed by abolitionist sectors from the northern regions of the U.S., who supported a productive system based on wage labor and industrialization of the country. The Mexican Government, for its part, was not prepared to part with any of its territories, and the resultant situation finally erupted into a war between these nations, in 1846.

Organizational contradictions, internal conflicts and divisions within the Mexican Armed forces contributed to the adverse effects of the war conflict on Mexico. The Mexicans were divided between the **centralists**, that is, those who wanted to establish a semi-monarchic form of government, and the **federalists**; supporters of greater distribution of autonomous governmental powers throughout the republican States of Mexico. Similarly, the sense of belonging to a national citizenry was very diminished, and the harsh realities of local regionalism very intense, especially in the borderlands (*Frontera)* along the Southern U.S. Finally, the United States imposed its military power on the Mexicans to force them into signing the peace treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo, at a small town near Mexico City in 1848. Thus, by means of a modest monetary compensation and use of strategic military forces, the U.S. acquired rich lands in the form of liberated territories. Those lands were equivalent to a half of Mexico at that time, and Westward expansion was secured in the Great Southwest all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

First Mexican Migratory Waves toward the United States

Migratory patterns into the U.S. in the period that followed Mexican independence until the end of the 19th Century can be separated into 3 categories or trend. The first trend included those sectors who were displaced from the loss of Mexican territories during wars with the United States in 1836, 1848, and again in 1853. This category included the Indians who, without necessarily being immigrants, were still considered to be aliens within their own former territories. The second trend includes groups of Mexicans who immigrated into Southern territories prior to actual settlement of U.S. statehood issues. The third and most important of these trends within these migratory groups consisted of Mexicans who were attracted by the dramatic need for workers faced in certain productive sectors of the U.S. during the last decade of the 19th Century.

Three significant events occurred to change the Anglo-Mexican relationship, and spurred the first migratory wave into action. The Rebellion of Texas (1836), the war between Mexico and the United States (1848) and a culmination of the Gadsden Purchase of[9] (1853), in combination produced massive losses in Mexican territorial lands. The nearly 80,000 Mexicans who lived in those regions experienced tremendous negative effects. In a period of less than 40 years, these populations were successively subjects of the Spanish Crown, Mexican citizens, and by 1850 they were ready to begin anew as Spanish-speaking citizens living in the U.S. A majority of this population was settlers of Spanish-Mexican origins, who emigrated from the interior of Mexico. They settled in territories where the native populations had been displaced and replaced by those who no longer lived and worked upon these lands. Instead, the Mexicans found themselves conquered and colonized, separated from their social and cultural roots, and inserted into a confusing border game that conditioned them on all levels.

Regardless of changes in the political ownership status of the borderlands, the region continued to experience the same migratory inflows during the first years of U.S. occupation of the southern territories. Migratory trends continued almost identically as had occurred in the past and without experiencing significant transformations. The discovery of gold in California, however, provoked a massive influx of gold-seeking miners from Sonora and other regions in Mexico, who arrived long-before the 1849 Gold Rush which marked the coming of Anglo-Saxon miners. Similarly, thousands of peasants began to abandon the *haciendas* from the northeast region of Mexico to the South of Texas after 1836, in search of new horizons and better labor opportunities.

Economic incentives to stimulate Mexican migrations toward the borderlands of the U.S. were almost nil before 1870. The scale of trading between these neighboring countries was limited to, basically, bartering for food with mining products to meet the transient need inside the isolated communities. Once the process of annexation of Mexican territories was completed, the markets for consumption spurred growth in the southeast in terms of a rapid expansion of the local population. It is no insignificant point to note that Mexicans who settled in Texas, New Mexico and California had developed trade relationships with Anglo-Saxon settlers long-before the rebellion in Texas. Territorial changes had a notorious impact on trade relations and the regional economy. Important economic activities and diversification in the region expanded based on the military maneuvers by the U.S. army to overcome the Indian resistance. Nevertheless, the forms of trading remained identical with those in use before annexation occurred.

Based on the construction of the railroad the economy after 1880 in the southern territories began to grow rapidly, a factor that stimulated Mexican immigration into those areas. In 1890, a modern railroad network linked the territories of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California with Northern Mexico and revolutionized connections between the East and the West. The variety of industrial development and related activities created huge demand for labor, which concentrated around stations along the railroad lines. This railroad technology caused Mexican laborers to spill out of Mexico in far greater numbers than had ever migrated in one contemporaneous period in history. During the last two decades of the 19th Century 127,000 Mexicans entered the U.S., a figure representing one-third of Mexico's total population in 1848.

The new immigrants dispersed rapidly among the southern population and continued being foreigners in every sense of the word: unable to communicate in English, subjected to rigorous laws that they did not understand and exposed to diverse forms of racism and discrimination. Until the Mexican Revolution began in 1910, most of the immigrants were peasants displaced from the land and the poor from the cities. These impoverished sectors were forced to abandon their regions out of hardship to sell their labor in the U.S. Despite the fact wages for Mexicans were below market value in the U.S. it was far better than the situation they faced in Mexico.

This was only the beginning of wave after wave of labor migrations from the interior of Mexico. Mexican migrants, together with other Anglo-Saxon groups, were attracted to the new cities and towns that emerged along the railroad routes and mining centers. In that sense, those newest Spanish speaking communities, mostly with Mexican populations, emerged along a route that led through cities and towns created by other Southerners who also had been displaced themselves along with Indian immigrants. This is the case of the cotton farming towns in Texas during the first years of the 20th Century, the numerous sugar beet production centers from Colorado to California, and also the miners who worked ore in Arizona and New Mexico.

The Mexican migratory movements during this first period proceeded without interference by administrative and immigration authorities from the U.S. However, this situation changed, drastically, in 1917. Mexicans entering the United States were required to pay 5 cents daily for passage across the Rio Grande River in a boat, and could cross as many times as they wished without additional charge. From the year 1917 forward, Mexicans were required to present 2 birth certificates, 2 marriage certificates, one certificate of good behavior and a certificate of health, as the documents evidence that would be needed before they were allowed to cross the border. The thinking behind these rigid demands was that the documents were evidence that émigrés would work to become economically self-sufficient, and not by their sheer numbers, drain the public treasury. In addition to these evidentiary requirements, Visas required that a $10 tax be paid, and for entering the US $8 was collected (Santibañez: 1930: 39-41). As the direct result of these policies, the term "illegal alien" was coined as a reference to those Mexicans who opted to ignore increasingly drastic migratory rules enforced by the U.S.

The Mexican Revolution and the World Wars

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) created another significant exodus of Mexico's population toward the United States. Mexicans fled to escape political, persecutions, violence, economic crises and other problems that almost paralyzed Mexico during the insurrection. Relatively low numbers crossed the border at the beginning the Mexican migration, and reached mass proportions after 1915, especially from the Bajío region, that is located in the central part of Western Mexico. This period coincides with the onset of W.W.I, which generated a production and export boom followed by a huge labor demand-crunch that was unprecedented in the U.S. The need increased dramatically again after the United States declared War against the Germans, and most employed workers joined the armed services.

The military draft produced serious labor shortages, especially in factories, in agriculture, in mining and transportation. The problem was abated primarily through the hiring of Mexican workers away from their country, in order to escape the worst economic crisis affecting that nation. Migratory restrictions existing at that time caused most Mexican immigrants to enter the U.S. illegally, especially in agriculture where the need for labor was greatest. The 1921 census estimated that the number of legal and illegal Mexican workers entering the United States exceeded 500,000 people for the period, when the total population of Mexico was 14,334,000 inhabitants, during the same period. (Kiser et.al.: 1979:19).

The Depression Period, beginning in 1929 and lingering throughout the 1930's produced a strong contraction in the world economy and severely affected the U.S. By the middle of 1932 the Gross National Product (GNP) dropped to one-half of the value it reached in 1929. As a result, this situation caused nearly 12 million people to lose their jobs and join the unemployed masses. That figure amounted to almost one third of the U.S. working population

Economic recovery was slow to come, and by 1940, Europe entered into conflict by declaring war against Germany and its allies. Despite the fact that conflict increased demand for producing food, weapons, ammunition and military supplies, seven million U.S. workers remained unemployed. No sacrifice made during the recession was greater than the Spanish-speaking and migrant worker populations in the U.S. They suffered privation right along with agriculture workers and other Spanish-speaking communities who bore the effects of the recession. Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, with only a very small group of professionals and entrepreneurs, mostly worked at temporary jobs that utilized non-skilled workers, and received very low wages for their labor. Wages received by these workers were only at subsistence levels.

As result of the recession a measure that was implemented to reduce U.S. unemployment resulted in a policy of repatriating Mexican workers, and especially those living in Border States. Studies have estimated that in the period between 1929 and 1935, more than 415,000 Mexicans, along with their U.S. families were deported to Mexico. This figure is without precedent in terms of the number of immigrants from a single race category forced out of the United States[10]. However, demand for labor increased sharply at the commencement of W.W.II, and gradually this began to reactivate the U.S. economy. Immigration enforcement actions were treated as a secondary priority for a while at U.S. Immigration offices. Once again, a massive conscription of workers, combined with growing demands for food, medicine, raw materials and munitions exports to allies in Europe, produced an accelerating demand rate for labor forces.

Around 1942, the "repatriation" policies implemented only a few years before, were forgotten in practice. Moreover, the U.S. government initiated a negotiation with Mexican authorities aimed at getting a labor treaty signed, to supply workers to agrarian producers in California, New Mexico, Texas and other Southwestern regions. Despite the Mexican government's numerous objections to terms In the treaty, and concern over the large amount of labor discrimination complaints from Mexicans working in the U.S., a labor agreement was signed by both governments in 1942. *The U.S. Farm Security Administration* was the agency created to hire individual Mexican workers to work on temporary labor contracts in the U.S., primarily for a set period of time and mainly in agriculture. These workers were better known as *braceros* and during the 22 years that this program existed 4.6 million Mexican workers were hired to work in just 6 states that make up the bulk of what until very recently was North-Central and Northern Mexico (Gann: 1986:58).

W.W.II also served as another binding element of important sectors of Spanish-speaking people communities within various branches of the U.S. armed forces. Spanish speaking U.S. soldiers began at the lowest ranks, and were assigned to the most difficult and dangerous tasks. The 1940 census indicates that there were 1,076.653 Mexicans (a figure considered very conservative), 69,967 Puerto Ricans and 65, 714 Cubans. By the end of the war, more than one third of this population—most of them Mexicans—had already served in the armed forces, the highest service rate of all ethnic groups living in the U.S[11]. According to figures published by the Census Bureau in 1982, the Spanish speaking population was 14.6 million people by 1980, and still concentrated mainly in California, Texas and Florida. Other population studies indicated that the period between 1980 and the beginning of the 21st Century will mark an era in which these so-called "Hispanics" could reach a population growth rate of between 6.4% and 9.9% of total U.S. population over the period measured[12].

Regardless of the strong tendency for Mexican workers to return to their country after a time, another significant number of them settled permanently into many cities in the US. Current migration patterns show that many Mexicans now move to more distant states, far away from the border with Mexico, and they look for permanent and stable jobs. This often does permit them to settle permanently in the U.S. with their families. At this point, it is most important to state that population studies that are doing research about the current wave of Mexican emigrations are not yet concluded. Many differences exist for comparison and understanding of population characteristics are not being properly studied and analyzed. What is clear is that the presence of both legal and illegal Mexican workers has been a fundamental advantage for development of the U.S. economy. This is even more evident today because there is a critical need for cheap labor to produce more competitive commodities in order to participate more aggressively in international markets, as required by the global neoliberal model.

THE PUERTO RICANS

The Puerto Rican and Cuban populations are respectively the number two and three ranking Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S., after the Mexicans. Cuba and Puerto Rico are located in the Caribbean who share a similar historical and cultural past, together with a similar racial heritage, resulting from the mixing of Spanish and Black slaves brought there from Africa. Similarly, Puerto Rico and Cuba were the last Spanish colonial possessions in the Americas after the independence movements that liberated the continent from Spanish rule between 1810 and 1821.

During the period between 1895 and 1898, Cuba initiated a second War of Independence against Spain, and this action culminated with intervention by the U.S. Army into the conflict. The independence insurrection contributed to very high economic and social costs both for Cuba and for Spain. However, the big winners in the conflict were U.S. entrepreneurs whose investments in this Island were estimated to be $30,000,000 to $50,000,000 in 1893. Faced with the unlikelihood that Spaniards could militarily defeat the insurrectionists, a group of U.S. investors in Cuba requested President McKinley to intervene in the conflict[13]. The entrepreneurs claimed losses averaging $100 million in lost commercial trade over the three-year course of the conflict (Gilbert: 1981:107). A series of discussions in the Congress were followed by declarations in support of U.S. troops by many Congresspersons in that era, including H.C. Lodge, Morgan, Frye, Foraker, Davis and Theodore Roosevelt (future U.S. President and a declared interventionist). The media was involved, especially the Hearst Newspaper group who enthusiastically participated in the debates that led up to support for military intervention in Cuba.

Using the mysterious explosion on board the U.S. battleship Maine as it lay anchored in the Bay of La Havana as a justification, the U.S. government declared war with Spain. After a period of six months, the U.S.

and Cuban armies together defeated the Spaniards forcing a negotiated peace agreement. Representatives of Cuba's government were not invited to participate in negotiating the truce and the Cuban Army and its Commanders were denied entry into the cities. On October 1, 1898, commissioners of War from the U.S. and Spain met together in Paris to draft a suitable peace treaty. Again, the Cubans were not invited to participate. The terms of the Paris Treaty protocols negotiated by the U.S caused the Spanish Government to relinquish all sovereignty rights to Cuba. Similarly, the territories of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam were also ceded in perpetuity to the U.S. (Gilbert. Op. Cited, 110).

Cuba became a quasi-independent nation in 1901, after the Platt Amendment was signed. A clause inserted into the Cuban Constitution established a legal basis for military intervention in Cuba, as the U.S. deemed necessary[14]. One year later, the Reciprocity Treaty on Trade[15] was signed on December 11, 1902, thus imposing monopoly trade between both regions controlled by the U.S.

In the beginning the U.S authorities administered Puerto Rican territories like a military camp regime. Between 1900 and 1917, the U.S. installed a civil administration with a governor and a legislative board whose members were all appointed in Washington D.C. In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act, which conferred U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans. In this way, the U.S. annexed important segments of the local Spanish-speaking population of Puerto Rico. This law had many consequences for Puerto Ricans, and it included the obligation for them to serve in U.S. armed forces. Regardless of Puerto Ricans new official status as U.S. citizens, they were still continuously exposed to colonial treatment and their destiny controlled by Anglo-Saxon sectors. This also included oversight from the Roman Catholic Church in Puerto Rico, which as the central church in Puerto Rico, also came under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Boston, Massachusetts. In addition to these social constraints on Puerto Ricans, Public schools public schools were required to teach only in English until the 1940s. Of course, few teachers in Puerto Rico spoke English, let alone write or read the language. In 1952 Puerto Rico acquired a controversial status as a Free Associated State, a situation continuing to the present day. During this period, U.S. economic interests began to explore business opportunity in the Island supported by the old Creole elite linked to the tobacco, sugar and coffee industries. More efficient productive agribusiness was then organized.

Fluctuations in the Puerto Rican economy weakened local interests under the strict control of principals in U.S. agribusiness, and this forced many Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the U.S., mainly New York. Together with the Cubans who emigrated from their Island country for very similar reasons became the labor force of choice in a loose-knit system of smaller clothing and shoe manufactories, that operated without government regulation. These immigrants also worked in restaurants and shops similar to the garment business in small industries that paid very low wages. In that sense, it was commonplace in New York City to find many Puerto Ricans circulating unrestricted, now as U.S. citizens, because of the lack of opportunity in their homeland. This Puerto Rican Spanish speaking community conferred very special characteristics onto certain neighborhoods in Manhattan, as did some Cuban groups that lived in Manhattan's West-side, East Harlem, and later on in Brooklyn and the South Bronx.

The Second World War interrupted the pattern of immigration from Puerto Rico into the U.S. Maritime traffic between the regions was restricted to only activities deemed necessary and essential. Once the war was over Puerto Rican immigration flows were again restored, only this time in more significant numbers, mainly due to facilitation by air transport instead of maritime transport. The media also contributed to the acceleration in immigration to the U.S., especially among those Puerto Ricans who sought better labor opportunity and an increased standard of living. A lack of restrictions for Puerto Ricans traveling to the U.S., and the military draft, also prompted greater numbers of immigrants to leave Puerto Rico in a new and amplified migratory pattern.

During the Korean War, in the 1950s, approximately 40,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. armed services during the conflict (Gann: 1986:78).

The 1960 census indicates that almost 900,000 Puerto Ricans were living in the U.S. Most of them emigrated between W.W.II and the end of the 1950s, at a time when Puerto Rico's total population numbered only 2,300,000 inhabitants. This figure was equivalent to nearly one-third of Puerto Rico's total population. As a result of this massive emigration the number of Puerto Ricans residing in the continental U.S. dramatically increased; from approximately 70,000 in 1940 to more than 300,000 in 1950, and again rose to 893,000 in 1960, and again rose to 1.4 million by 1970. This number increased to 1.8 million by 1980 (Bean and Tienda: 1987:24).

In the search for new sources of employment, significant segments of the Puerto Rican people also settled into various regions in the Mid-Western U.S., particularly around Lorraine, Ohio, where they accepted work in the steel industry. Significantly, another large concentration of Puerto Ricans immigrated to major cities including Chicago, Milwaukee and others in the Mid-West. Puerto Ricans found there were other Spanish-speaking communities already present in the region, and they included Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who had previously settled in the Mid-West. Puerto Ricans engaged in activities similar to those of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, who created mutual aid societies—*mutuales*—to defend the rights of labor, and to organize their own workshops to work and survive economically.

Mexican and Mexican-American communities did not easily mix with the Puerto Ricans, who opted to live in separate neighborhoods. Cultural differences (cooking, music, accents) and racial diversity (Black, *mestizos*, mulattos, Indians) were, and are, elements that separated Spanish-speaking communities into very different groups. Usually, poor Puerto Ricans and Cubans lived in the same neighborhoods and worked at similar poorly paid labor activities. Employers and other segments in the U.S. population usually fail to recognize, nor do they make any distinctions between these two Spanish-speaking communities, despite their different customs and national origins.

The largest concentration of Puerto Ricans traditionally has been located in New York State. The 1980 Census shows that 860,552 Puerto Ricans lived in that state, and totaled 12.2% of the population in New York. Theoretically, the problem of adjustment to new surroundings by this Spanish speaking community should have been much easier than was typical for other immigrant groups, because as U.S. citizens they had not necessarily been exposed to the types of traumatic experiences as occurred in similar concentrations of Mexicans, for example. Despite these advantages Puerto Ricans suffered racial discrimination, particularly the darker Puerto Ricans, by the Anglo-Saxon society. Still, many Puerto Ricans continue to live in squalid conditions and in extreme poverty. Official figures indicate that for 1983, nearly 60% of Puerto Ricans living in New York received one or more types of social welfare from government programs (Gann: 1986:83).

In Summary, the Puerto Rican population in the U.S. can be considered to be a Spanish-speaking community whose society was structured by conditions of poverty and a welfare dependency status. In addition, migratory patterns in these communities placed Puerto Ricans in a position of uncertain allegiance, and between two totally different cultural worlds. In this way, they have been isolated from each sphere, and moreover they were isolated from the Anglo-Saxon majority. These characteristics continue to be very much in evidence, especially in large industrial and urban areas, such as New York, Chicago and others.

THE CUBAN IMMIGRATION

The Cubans are the third largest Spanish-speaking community settled in the U.S. Similar to the Mexican emigration, the introduction of Cubans into the territories that make up the present-day United States can be traced to around the beginning of the 19th

Century, and mainly in the Florida territories. The geographical proximity of Cuba to the U.S. (90 miles) and its characteristics as a former Spanish colony can explain in historical terms why many Cubans tended to migrate into the Florida area in the U.S. However, an important difference between the Cuban migratory influx and those from Mexico and Puerto Rico, is that the Cuban migration included a high proportion of middle-income and working class sectors with similarities to white populations in the U.S. Historically, in the cases of Mexico and Puerto Rico immigrant groups are, and continue to be, from the working poor sectors, and mainly peasants who were caused to leave the countryside and rural areas.

Cuba's Initial Migratory Movements into the U.S.

From the onset of U.S. independence there existed a strong interest in controlling Cuba because of its favorable geographic location. Thomas Jefferson and others strongly advocated a position of incorporation of the island of Cuba into the Union territories. Proposals for this action reached a peak in popularity between 1800 and 1823, with slave states in the U.S. constituting the most enthusiastic bloc of supporters for annexation of Cuba. The potential advantages in adding another slave-state so near to U.S. slave territories was very important to the landlords who still relied upon slaves as the labor-force in their production-export activities. Politically speaking, adding a Cuban slave territory would strengthen the Southern states position in the struggle against the abolitionists and pro-industrial sectors from the Northern states. Similarly, pro-slavery groups believed that a weakened Spanish state was in no condition to resist pressure from France and England to unequivocally abolish slavery in Cuba.

By this time, the oligarchic sectors who were well-established inside Cuba utilized slavery too, and enthusiastically supported plans to annex Cuba into the U.S. This was especially true during the 1820s, after Spain discontinued in slave trafficking in Cuba. The only possibility to maintain a slave-labor force in service to the Cuban landowners then was to form and alliance with the landholders and pro slave groups in Southern U.S. states. Cubans aligned themselves primarily with slave-traders in Virginia and Maryland, who still imported slaves to work in local commercial and production-related activities. Defeated in the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) over the slave-labor issue, the Southerner's desire to annex Cuba as a slave-territory put an end to that possibility[16].

Later on, during the first independence movement in Cuba between 1868 and 1878, known as the Ten Years War, caused important segments of its population to emigrate into the U.S. and Europe. The United States had made offers to purchase Cuba from Spain on a number of earlier occasions. When the war for independence began, the White House again offered to purchase Cuba for $100 million, an offer that was again rejected by the Spaniards.

Around 100,000 Cubans left the Island in 1869 as political refugees, or voluntarily in pursuit of improved economic opportunities. The wealthiest Cubans immigrated to Europe, where they were able to continue to enjoy the high standard of living to which they were accustomed to, earlier in Cuba. The remainders were mostly from the middle class sector and those with professional training migrated into the United States, settling primarily in New York (Kenellos: 1994:119). Among the Cuban labor sectors that came to the U.S. was a group of skilled tobacco workers who relocated into present-day Key West, Florida and rapidly found employment in Cuban Cigar Factories, which were established earlier on, in the 1830's. Cubans who voluntarily expatriated themselves from the Island territories, to avoid the economically damaging rule by Spain, owned the Cigar factories. Spain's restrictive and monopolistic trading practices caused the owners of Cigar companies to abandon Cuba in an effort to escape the yoke of onerous and unpopular Colonial influences. As a result, around 1870 Key West presented practically the same characteristics of a Cuban city, but in U.S. territory.

From the very beginning, Cuban communities living in Florida displayed tremendous cohesion among its members, and much solidarity with those sectors that propitiated the struggle of Independence from Spain. Support groups and solidarity organizations were organized to collect funds to finance the insurrection; also, to bolster revolutionary leaders and representatives living in New York over the duration of conflict.

Once settled and established as communities, Cubans became actively involved in local political activities. In 1875, there were more than 1000 Cubans registered as active voters on the citizens' roster in Key West County, Florida. The first elected mayor of Key West was Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Jr., who was the progeny of maximum leader, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, in the War of Independence. However, over time labor conflicts and political problems led certain tobacco producers to move their productive and commercial activities into the Tampa Bay region of Florida. This situation resulted in a great influx of skilled tobacco workers into the region and transformed Tampa into the largest Cigar manufacturing center.

Between 1895 and 1898 a Second Independence war against Spain led by the Cuban poet and writer, José Martí was initiated. With many similarities to the earlier situation that developed in Key West, solidarity and support committees with the revolution were organized chiefly by politically active Cubans living in residences in Florida. At the end of this second war of independence some Cuban exiles voluntarily repatriated to the Island, however, a very significant number of the them and their families remained settled in Florida, had children who were born as United States citizens, and continued being politically active. The effects of these local concentrations of Cuban social and political influence, throughout Florida during the migrations in the second half of the 19th Century, were very significant. Cubans organized the first labor organizations and labor movements together with other commercial productive activities in that region. Bilingual education initiatives got a boost in many Florida cities including Key West and Tampa Bay communities. Many Important social reforms and cultural modifications were introduced into public service and civic life.

In parallel with the rapid increase of public and political influence wielded by local Cubans in the cities they also began to play a more dynamic role in State relationships between the U.S. and Spain. However, U.S. entrepreneurial and corporate interests in Cuba, which had expanded under the protection of Spanish colonial administration, were not prepared to risk their investments because of the European colonist inability to defeat the rebel forces.[17] Business and political pressures finally succeeded in persuading the U.S Congress and the White House to intervene in the conflict. Later, the signing of the Platt Amendment in 1901 and the Reciprocity Treaty of December 11, 1902 converted Cuba into a political state that was apparently an independent republic, but on closer inspection more closely resembled a colony in a United States' colonial capital venture and semi-democratic Republic.[18]

The enclaves established in Florida by Cuban immigrants during the 19th Century serving as a base for many new Cuban refugees who continued to escape the Island as a consequence of political turmoil, local violence and economic chaos. In the 1920s, for example, a group of young intellectuals relocated from Cuba to Miami in hopes to escape the fear and repression caused by actions of the dictator, Gerardo Machado. Machado fully enjoyed the enthusiastic political support given him by the U.S. In 1933, Machado was finally overthrown by a coalition of students. Together with his closest collaborators Machado also requested political asylum in Florida. Calm and prosperity were not then a characteristic inside the youthful Caribbean Island nation. Therefore, Miami and other cities of Florida continued serving as a center for many political and economic refugees from Cuba.

The Post Revolutionary Period of 1959

The best known exodus of Cubans from the Island into the U.S. occurred immediately following the triumph of the revolutionary movement that deposed the brutal and repressive dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on the night of December 31, 1959. During the corrupt administration of Batista Cuba reached heights of political degeneracy not seen since the infamous dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. Immediately prior to the Batista government there were two successive administrations with weak leadership, one beginning in 1944 and the other in 1948. Both of those administrations were quickly judged to be unpopular and those leaders lost popular confidence in their ability to lead. The situation involved a crisis of crumbling public support and the public trusts shaken by the impediments to achievement raised by political instability and lack of confidence in public administration. The takeover of power by Fulgencio Batista in 1952, in this occasion as an arrogant dictator, definitely opened up a new revolutionary era, which aimed to drastically change the antidemocratic, unpopular and repressive system existing in Cuba.

Important Cuban sectors and international observers agreed in pointing out the U.S. as being mainly responsible for Cuba's economic, social and political crises. In a similar vein, many economic sectors envisioned Cuba as a U.S. neo-colony, even though the discredited Platt Amendment had already been derogated by 1934. In addition to these troubling signs, it was clearly evident that Batista's dictatorship together with corporations and a sector of the U.S. Mafia virtually controlled the entire Cuban economy, including gambling and prostitution. Thus, the revolutionary uprising and eventual overthrow of Batista did not surprise even the most conservative sectors in the U.S. and the White House[19].

The orientation and trends in developments displayed by the New Revolutionary government began to bring displeasure into the U.S. Administration of President Dwight Eisenhower. Consequently it was not very long before the U.S. Government broke-off diplomatic, trade, and economic relationships with Cuba, and at the same time, implemented tough and overt obstructionist policies. The idea behind this strategy was to force the Cuban revolutionary leaders into negotiations to force them to work within the parameter imposed by the White House. The strategy invoked by the Eisenhower Administration included, economic embargo (closing off all U.S. markets to Cuba), diplomatic and political boycott (expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States), military operation (the invasion of Pig Bay and the *guerrillas* in the Escambray region), and ideological boycott. Manipulation of the goals of the revolution at the ideological level by the U.S. caused many Cuban sectors to abandon the Island en masse during the first years of the 1960s[20].

The presence of wealthy Cubans who were adversely affected by the new reform measures in agricultural, housing sectors, nationalization, wage policies and other similar measures produced strong antagonisms and tensions with the new revolutionary government. In addition, the enormous rate of illiteracy and lack of historical knowledge facilitated this ideological strategy of alienating important sectors of Cubans by a powerful anticommunist and pseudo Christian campaign. The U.S. opened its borders to all Cubans with a desire to escape Communism to freedom. Thus, through immigration, thousands of Cuban medical doctors, engineers, architects, teachers, intellectuals, technicians and skilled workers along with numerous entrepreneurs and traders abandoned Cuba to move into the U.S. In the ten-year period that followed Cuba's triumphant revolution nearly 500,000 Cubans left the Island. Although the majority of these Cubans went to Florida, a large number of them established themselves in other places, and mainly in New York, California and Chicago. Special housing programs for Cuban refugees English as second language courses, federal funds for educating children, health services and other benefits were part of a package implemented by U.S. authorities to facilitate the immigration process.

When Lyndon Johnson became the U.S. President following the assassination of John Kennedy, a special law was passed to permit temporary immigration status for those who fled from repressive governments—especially those considered as non-aligned with U.S. policies. In his 1965 response, Fidel Castro announced publicly that any Cubans with relatives in the U.S. would be permitted to leave the Island through Camarioca Bay. The trip was made very dangerous because the small vessels used could not possibly transport all the Cubans who wanted to emigrate to the U.S. at the time. An airlift was then organized to continue transporting refugees, until 1973, when this program ended[21]. While the U.S. immigration offices received thousands of skilled Cubans with open arms, many political refugees fleeing repression in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Haiti, Central America and other Latin American nations from U.S. backed military dictatorships, were denied permission to emigrate into the U.S.

From the inauguration of the revolutionary government, tensions between the U.S. and Cuba only increased. In April of 1980 a new conflict arose after a group of Cubans sought refuge in the Peruvian Embassy in La Havana, and were granted political asylum. In a calculated reaction, the government of Cuba announced publicly over radio and television that Cubans who wished to leave the Island should proceed to the Peruvian Embassy. Nearly 10,000 persons gathered at the Embassy grounds where Cuban authorities issued passports to all Cubans who requested them. A flotilla numbering 42 boats departed from Miami and arrived in the Bay of Mariel to transport the Cubans who wanted to emigrate to the U.S. At the end of 1980 a total of 250,000 Cubans, who became known as the "Marielitos" abandoned the Island for a life in the U.S, with the approval of President Jimmy Carter.

The "Marielitos" were different from other Cuban refugees who had arrived previously in the U.S. The "Marielitos" did not have relatives living in the US. For this reason, the immigration authorities placed them into several transitional camps where they were held. As a condition for release from the camps the "Marielitos" were required to obtain a sponsorship from a U.S. citizen willing to be responsible for their economic survival and to keep track of their whereabouts while they remained in the U.S. In several of these transitional camps riots and demonstrations were instigated by the Cuban refugees in protest of conditions and restrictions on personal freedom imposed by the authorities. The Cubans also protested the poor treatment they received in what were called "concentration camps" by immigration personnel and prison guards. Over a length of time, this group of Cubans gradually became integrated into the U.S. society.

THE OTHER LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRATION

Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans Spanish speaking communities, along with Latin American communities coming from Central and South America continue to grow at a rapid pace in the U.S. Nonetheless, migratory waves from Central and South America before the 1960s were very few due to the existence of several migratory restrictions imposed by the U.S. Immigration authorities regarding these populations. These migratory policies strongly contrasted with those applied to other immigrant groups, especially those coming from Europe. This situation change drastically in 1965, once the U.S. Congress abolished the quota system thus permitting other Spanish-speaking groups to emigrate from the Americas[22].

Central and South American have very little in common among themselves except they share the Spanish language and the Catholic religion. Neighboring Central American countries such as Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras, for example, present many contrasts among themselves in regards to their ethnic, cultural and social structures. The same contrasting characteristics apply to the nations of South America. In other words, the utilization of a common language does not necessarily create a similar sense of belonging to a singular community, as the term "Hispanic" wrongly implies. On the contrary, most of these Spanish speaking communities have different national, ethnic, cultural and social origins. These characteristics made them resent the inability of U.S. society to recognize the wide speaking mosaic of Spanish-speaking cultures, which exists in this country.

Groups of immigrants from the Dominican Republic were one of the first to take advantage of the changes in U.S. immigration policies. Between 1960 and 1975 Dominican in the U.S. increased from 756 to 13,081, without counting temporary visitors and those who stayed behind illegally. During 1980s, however, an important migratory process toward the U.S. began as a result of the continuing political and economic crises affecting that nation. The crisis affecting the sugar industry and its low market price plus a high foreign debt, which in 1982 reached the amount of 1,200 million dollars and a 30% unemployment rate, forced many Dominicans to seek better job opportunities in other places. Official sources estimated that at the beginning of the 1980s approximately 300,000 to 500,000 Dominican immigrants lived in the U.S., most of them in New York. This figure was equivalent to almost 10% of the total population of the Dominican Republic (Gann: 1986:117).

Similarly to the Dominican migration, inflows of immigrants from Central America to the U.S. were also not very numerous. Nevertheless, severe socio-economic crises and labor instability followed the rapid development of profound political conflicts and insurrections in the region. This situation forced many Central Americans to seek new opportunities outside their countries. Between 1961 and 1978, a total of 38.900 Salvadorians, 35,700 Panamanians, 35,500 Guatemalans and 28,000 Hondurans legally migrated to the U.S. (Ibid. 118).

The triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979, the rise of armed conflicts in Central America, and interventionist policies adopted by the Administration of Ronald Reagan produced a massive exodus of political and economic refugees from the region[23]. Official sources indicate that the number of Salvadorians in the U.S. was close to 500,000; out of this figure, between 200,000 to 300,000 of them lived in Los Angeles, thus becoming the second largest "Salvadorian" city in the world. Most Salvadorian refugees were illegal residents, and for this reason they experienced many problems finding jobs and gaining access to basic services such as health and education. The same situation applied to many other groups of refugees from Central America as well. Much of the Salvadorian and Central American refugees' problems were solved thanks to the solidarity of many U.S. organizations primarily concerned religious institutions. Among others, the Southern California Ecumenical Council played a fundamental role in assisting Central American refugees during this period.

South American immigration to the U.S. is different. The earliest to arrive in the U.S. were Colombians who escaped in small groups from violent civil unrest between conservative and liberal sectors over the period known as *La Violencia* (The Violence). Groups of well-trained professional Colombians arrived into the U.S. by the end of W.W.I. In 1970, there were 27,000 Colombians (first or second generation), most of them Whites, who resided in Jackson Heights, a middle class sector in New York. In that same year 3500 Colombians were living in the city of Chicago. Most of them came from the coastal regions in Colombia, and their racial composition included mixing of Indians, Africans and Spaniards. Thus, despite the fact that all of them were Colombians, their physical appearance, economic, cultural, and social conditions made for significant differences among these Colombians. Consequently, significant differences exist even among Spanish-speaking communities who share the same national origin.

In contrast, migrations of Argentineans, Chileans and Uruguayans present generally, similar patterns of migration as those who came from Western Europe during the period following W.W.II. That is, these individuals tended to come, mainly, from urban centers, middle class sectors, and had high levels of academic and technological training. Until the beginning of the 1970s, the majority of Argentineans, Uruguayans and Chileans who emigrated into the U.S. did so for purely economic reasons, in search for better opportunities. This situation began to change, drastically, during the 1970s with the installation of U.S. backed military regimes in South America. Consequently, thousands of South Americans were forced to leave their countries, mainly skilled workers and professionals, in order to escape political persecutions, repression, violence and massive layoffs.[24]

CHANGING CENTURIES

The end of the 20 Century shows that the Spanish Speaking populations in U.S. totaled 27 million in 1994, an increase of 28% since 1990. The total US population grew much slower, increasing by 6% during the last 4 years. As a result, about 1 in 10 citizens of this countries are "Hispanic". This group is projected to number 31 million in 2000, 63 million in 2030, and 88 million in 2050. By then, nearly 1 in 4 U.S. citizens may be Hispanic. Among the reasons for the rapid increase of the Spanish Speaking population are a higher birth rate for these groups, and high levels of immigration[25]. Over one-third or 39% of these Spanish-Speaking groups were born outside the U.S. (Bureau of the Census, September 1995).

Among the Spanish-Speaking groups, the March 1994 unemployment rate ranged from 7% for Cubans to an apparent high of 14% for Puerto Ricans. Similarly, Puerto Rican families had in 1993 a median income of $20.000 compared with about $25.000 for Mexican, Cuban, Central and South American. Overall, 11% of these groups and 6% of Non-Hispanic Whites were unemployed (Ibid.).

Poverty rates for Spanish-speaking families are more than twice as high as for non-Hispanics families. In 1993, about 27% of the so-called Hispanic families compared to about 11% of Non-Hispanic families were poor. Poverty rates among these groups ranged from an apparent low of 17% for Cuban families to 35% for Puerto Rican families (Ibid.).

While economic conditions rapidly deteriorate in Latin America, the rate of immigration, including illegal immigration tends to increase. According with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), about 5 million undocumented immigrants were residing in the United States in October of 1996. These undocumented immigrants made up about 1.9% of the total population of the country, being Mexico the leading country of origin with 2.7 million, or 54% of illegal population entering the country during that period. The estimated undocumented population increased by just over 150,000 annually in both the 1988-92 and 1992-96 periods.

Of the total undocumented population in 1996, about 2.1 million, or 41% were nonimmigrant overstay. That is, people who entered legally on a temporary basis and failed to leave the country once their visas expired. The proportion of this undocumented population who are overstays includes about 16% Mexicans compared to 26% from those from Central America. In October 1996, 15 countries were each the source of 50,000 or more undocumented immigrants. The top five countries are geographically close to the U.S.: Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada, Haiti (see table 1).

CONCLUSIONS

The Spanish speaking communities in the U.S. present significant differences within and among themselves: race, language, nationality, period of arrival to the U.S., social class, culture, ideology, among others. As a result, migratory experiences in each of these communities differ greatly from one another. This characteristic then, leads many Spanish-speaking sectors residing in the U.S. to challenge the usage of the "Hispanic" concept, as a single homogeneous element of classification for those groups. Each of these communities shares distinctively different historical migratory experiences, which have shaped their own forms of integration, cultural and economic insertion into the U.S. society. Evidently, these historical characteristics have affected the development of a sole "Hispanic" ethnicity.

The Puerto Rican Community is a population historically characterized by a particular socioeconomic status and isolation from the global U.S. society. On the contrary, the Cubans constitute the most successful Spanish-speaking community, because they were not segregated into a secondary labor market as were Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Central Americans. For this reason, the Cuban population shows strong tendencies for integration and assimilation into the U.S. society. Given the preferential treatment received by the Cubans from the U.S. authorities following the revolution of 1959, makes political refugees from that community very different from other immigrants coming from the Americas. Also, the presence of a wealthy sector, together with well-trained professionals, technicians and workers present notorious differences among the Cubans.

Mexican-Americans, the largest Spanish speaking community in the U.S., with its broader forms of cultural and economic diversity, requires more rigorous studies and analyses. To ignore this situation will lead to ambiguous, simplistic and incorrect interpretations of this important community and its historical role in the formation and development of U.S. society.

Finally, Mexican and Puerto Rican isolation within ethnic Spanish-speaking communities and respective cultural manifestations have structurally occurred as a result of their concentration in labor markets for minorities. The existence of a steady inflow of immigrants that has historically been available to replace them has supplied the necessary minority workers required by the labor market of the U.S. This continuous inflow of Spanish-speaking migrants contributes to keeping their cultural traditions alive, and to re-elaborate customs as a basis of social cohesion and even, solidarity. These old surviving characteristics are still intact regardless of the time. The material needs for survival of these Spanish-speaking communities in an Anglo-Saxon society that rejects them, but needs them, forced these groups to search for refuge in the richest elements they have; that is, their cultural traditions. And these social foundations have historically been nourished from solidarity relationships amongst their members.

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NOTES

[1] The concept of "Hispanicidad", is a term that refers to the Spanish nature, essence and spirit.

[2] Information taken from the *History of Latin Americans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972). See also, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico and the United States on the Indians of the South West 1533-1960*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1961).

[3] In 1762, France transferred to Spain its rights to the territories of Louisiana, a vast region located west of Rio Mississippi. The Spaniards controlled the region until 1800, after France invaded Spain. In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold Louisiana to the United States.

[4] Countryside in this context is amplified in Latin American countries as a more expansive concept to mean all lands which are not urban in nature, but also mountain and desert terrain where extractives and open pit mining occurs.

[5] According to the Guadalupe de Hidalgo Treaty's terms, Mexico ceded territories to the United States California and New Mexico, a territory roughly equivalent to half of Mexican lands during that epochal transfer. Similarly, Mexico resigned all claims to the possession of Texas. The border of both countries divided the Rio Grande River into North and South. Territories annexed emerged then into the States of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming. In compensation for these territorial concessions, the United States paid Mexico $15,000,000, and agreed to pay a total compensation of $3,250,000 that was demanded from Mexico by some U.S. citizens. Finally, US authorities agreed to respect the property rights and religion of the Mexicans who lived in the annexed territories. The Treaty also stipulated that Mexicans who wished might return to Mexico and do so in safety. Those who elected to remain behind would automatically be granted U.S. citizenship.

[6] In 1849 gold seekers, known as Forty-Niners, came to California from every part of the United States and from all over the world. The search for gold was concentrated on the Mother Lode country, in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada. In the next two years, the gold rush ended almost as quickly as it began. Gold mining became a fairly stable and more organized enterprise. Most prospectors either became farmers, merchants, or left the state, as large mining companies took their place.

[7] During the first that followed the discovery of gold in California the Hispanics accounted 15% of its population. In 1870, this group was only 4% of the total population. The massive Anglo-Saxon immigration was followed by the arrival of South American immigrants, mainly Peruvians, Argentineans, and Chileans, most of them skill workers: carpenters, bricklayers, and miners. However, the largest group of immigrants came from the region of Sonora, North of Mexico.

[8] Juan Flores, Joaquín Murieta, Jacinto Triviño y Tiburcio Vásquez are some of the displaced Spanish speaking individuals form that epoch that organized revolutionary activities for some people or banditry for others. The Chilean Novel Price laureate in literature (1971), Pablo Neruda inspired in the legendary life of Joaquin Murieta wrote a famous literary piece of work entitled: *Life and Death of Joaquín Murieta*.

[9] The United States purchased territories located at the extreme south of New Mexico and Arizona from Mexico in 1853, with the stated intention to secure the right to construct a railroad way in the southeast region.

[10] As a measure to stop immigration during the 1929 economic crisis the U.S. government implemented an immigrant "repatriation" program affecting mostly only the Mexican communities. This forced "repatriation" was based on a professed belief that the Mexican migrants who were returned involuntarily to Mexico were only those who failed to adequately assimilate to U.S. life, or were "perpetual " foreigners. Nonetheless, many of these people have children who were born in the U.S., attended public schools, were bilingual in English and Spanish, played baseball and so on. In general, these children shared the same circumstances with second generations of other immigrants in the U.S. Serial deportation of parents, the U.S. immigration policy seriously violated the rights of most the children born in the United States. Accordingly, these children were legally U.S. citizens who were forced to leave their country of birth to Mexico where they had never been before as a result of their parents' deportation.

[11] To enroll in the armed forces was one of the simplest means of obtaining permanent immigration papers and residence in the U.S. for Mexicans living in this country. Without experiencing the same migratory problems as the Mexicans, 65,000 Puerto Ricans also served in the U.S. armed forces during W.W.II.

[12] Regarding this information see the study carried out by the State Department of Parks and Recreation from California, published in 1982.

[13] The group (Memorialists) was made up of 70 businessmen from New York, 40 from Philadelphia, and 64 from Mobile, who on February 9, 1898 formally requested U.S. intervention to end the insurrection in Cuba. For more information about this period and conflict, see my work, *Cuba: From Primitive Accumulation of capital to Socialism*, chapter V. (Toronto: Two Thirds Productions: 1981).

[14] The Platt Amendment was the popular title of an amendatory law drafted by U.S. Senator Orville Hitchcock Platt of Connecticut and passed by Congress as an amendment to the Army Appropriations Bill of 1901. It specified conditions under which the federal government might intervene in the internal affairs of Cuba; it was included in the Cuban constitution, adopted in 1901. This amendment established the legal basis for U.S. government intervention in the internal affairs of Cuba and the right to maintain military bases on its territory. This amendment was later converted into a permanent treaty between Cuba and the U.S., signed on May 22, 1903. Under this treaty the U.S. intervened militarily in Cuba in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920. Many Cuban statesmen denounced these as undemocratic and imperialistic. Renegotiations of the treaty led to the abrogation of the Platt Amendment in 1934.

[15] The Reciprocity Treaty on Trade instituted a custom system favorable to the U.S. The Treaty permitted absolute control of the Cuban market, both its sugar and manufacturing sectors. The result of the Treaty was the consolidation of a dependent structure from the U.S. and the elimination of any possibly autonomous development of industrialization in Cuba.

[16] The chief and immediate cause of the war was slavery. Southern states, including the 11 states that formed the Confederacy, depended on slavery to support their economy. Southerners used slave labor to produce crops, especially cotton. Although slavery was illegal in the northern states, only a small proportion of Northerners actively opposed it. The main debate between the North and the South on the eve of the war was whether slavery should be permitted in the Western territories recently acquired during the Mexican War (1846-1848), including New Mexico, part of California, and Utah. Opponents of slavery were concerned about its expansion, in part because they did not want to compete against slave labor.

[17] According to the Secretary of State, US investments in Cuba at the beginning of the second war of independence were $50,000,000. During the first years that followed the insurrection investments declined by almost a half. Sugar production, and trade was chiefly

of benefit to the U.S. receded from 1 million tons in 1845-1895 to 25,000 tons between 1898-1899 (Leland: 1928:37).

[18] For more information about the U.S. investments and policies during this period see my work *Cuba: From Primitive Accumulation of Capital to Socialism*, chapters V and VI, already cited.

[19] In March 1952 Fulgencio Batista, supported by the army, seized power. Batista suspended the constitution, dissolved the congress, and instituted a provisional government, promising elections the following year. After crushing an uprising in Oriente Province led by a young lawyer named Fidel Castro on July 26, 1953, the regime seemed secure, and when the political situation had been calmed, the Batista government announced that elections would be held in the fall of 1954. Batista's opponent, Grau San Martin, withdrew from the campaign just before the election, charging that his supporters had been terrorized. Batista was thus reelected without opposition, and on his inauguration February 24, 1955, he restored constitutional rule and granted amnesty to political prisoners, including Fidel Castro. The latter chose exile in the United States and later in Mexico. In the mid-1950s the Batista government insituted an economic development program that, together with a stabilization of the world sugar price, improved the economic and political outlook in Cuba. On December 2, 1956, however, Fidel Castro, with some 80 insurgents, returned to Cuba. The force was crushed by the army, but Fidel Castro escaped into the mountains, where he organized the 26th of July Movement, so called to commemorate the 1953 uprising. For the next year revolutionary forces, using guerrilla tactics, opposed the Batista government and won considerable popular support. On March 17, 1958, the rebel forces called for a general revolt. Th revolutionary forces made steady gains through the remainder of the year, and on January 1, 1959, Batista was overthrew by the rebel revolutionary forces and fled the country.

[20] A more exhaustive analysis of the obstructionist policies by the U.S. against Cuba can be found in my work already cited, Cuba: From Primitive Accumulation . . . chapter 7. In Spanish, see the work of Vania Bambirra*, La revolución cubana: una reinterpretación*. (México: Editorial Siglo Veintiuno: 1974)

[21] For the rest of the 1960s U.S.-Cuban relations remained hostile, although, through the cooperation of the Swiss embassy in Cuba, the U.S. and Cuban governments in 1965 agreed to permit Cuban nationals who desired to leave the island to emigrate to the United States. More than 260,000 people left before the airlift was officially terminated in April 1973.

[22] The 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished the national-origin quotas and established an annual limitation of 170,000 visas for immigrants from Eastern Hemisphere countries. Another law, effective in 1968, provided for an annual limitation of 120,000 immigrants from the Western Hemisphere, with visas available on a first-come, first-served basis. In 1977 an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act changed the quota to 290,000 immigrants worldwide, with a maximum of 20,000 for any one country, thus abolishing separate limitations for each hemisphere. At the same time, a system was set up for Western Hemisphere immigrants, giving preference to those who are related to U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens and to workers whose skills are needed in the U.S. The Refugee Act of 1980 reduced the worldwide quota to 270,000 persons, while retaining the preference system. Spouses, children, and parents of U.S. citizens are exempt from numerical limitation, as are certain categories of special immigrants. Between 1981 and 1986, about 500,000 Southeast Asian refugees entered the country.

[23] A focal point of President Reagan's foreign policy was to reverse the tide of revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. After a revolution in Nicaragua in 1979 had deposed former leader Anastasio Somoza, the United States had accused the new Sandinista government of aiding rebels in El Salvador. The United States began then to support an anti-Sandinista guerrilla movement known as the "contras". In 1982

Nicaragua signed an aid pact with the USSR. Reagan then mounted a major campaign to overthrow the Sandinistas by supplying weapons, money, and training to the contras. Reagan also sent arms and advisers to the regime in El Salvador.

[24] For more information about this period see the *Aftermath of the Military in Latin America*, edited by Jorge Gilbert. (1990). In Spanish, se the work of Tomás A. Vasconi, *Gran capital en América Latina*, (1978). Additional information about these books in bibliography.

[25] According with the Bureau of the Census issued in September of 1995, about 2 million "Hispanic" immigrants entered the U.S. between 1990 and 1994.

TABLE 1

ESTIMATED ILLEGAL POPULATION FROM THE AMERICAS & STATES OF RESIDENCE OCTOBER 1996

Country of Origin	Population	State of Residence	Population
All countries	**5,000,000**	**All States**	**5,000,000**
Mexico	2,700,000	California	2,000,000
El Salvador	335,000	Texas	700,000
Guatemala	165,000	New York	540,000
Canada	120,000	Florida	350,000
Haiti	105,000	Illinois	290,000
Honduras	90,000	Arizona	115,000
Nicaragua	70,000	Virginia	55,000
Colombia	65,000	Colorado	45,000
Ecuador	55,000	Maryland	44,000
Dominican Republic	50,000	Michigan	37,000
Peru	30,000	Connecticut	29,000

Source: *Table compiled by the author with figures taken from the INS I-95*

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