Part VII
Development Challenges in the Caribbean and Central America: Social Exclusion, Migration, and Environmental Governance

25 Overcoming Barriers to Development in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean: Towards a New Research Agenda

Maria Angelina Pérez Gutierrez[1]

25.1 The region

The 25 countries[2] within the Caribbean and Central American region can be grouped in three categories: seven rather small countries that constitute the Central American Isthmus; the insular Caribbean countries; and the three larger countries of Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. Historically, the region has been characterised by its geopolitical importance as a path that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as by its political and social complexity (see Chapter 27 in the present volume). The Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South research programme, in its Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS)[3] Caribbean and Central America (CCA), has developed activities in countries in all three categories (Table 1). Differences between the countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) and in the Gini Coefficient illustrate the variety of development conditions they face.

The growth of *social exclusion* has been a central concern in analysis of sustainable development problems faced by the region. Social exclusion is understood as a phenomenon affecting households that suffer from deficient reproductive conditions because they do not enjoy the benefits of prevailing social citizenship and because their participation in the labour market is doomed due to labour surplus (Pérez Sáinz and Mora Salas 2007). These households were thus identified by the research projects as a unit of analysis, and two basic causal factors were postulated: social abandonment of a sector of the population by ruling institutions, and labour market failures. The first indicates the absence of adequate public social policies, and the second indicates the prevailing accumulative process that generates a labour surplus of a structural nature. How can the region overcome these deficiencies?

Table 1

Country	NCCR North-South phase(s)	Population (millions) (2005)*	Urban population (in % of total population) (2005)*	Gini Coefficient (1992–2009) ***	HDI (2005)*	Surface area covered by forest (in % of total surface area) (2005)**
Honduras	1	6.8	46.5	55.3	0.700	41.5
El Salvador	1	6.7	59.8	49.7	0.735	14.4
Costa Rica	1 and 2	4.3	61.7	47.2	0.846	46.8
Dominican Republic	1	9.5	66.8	50.0	0.779	28.4
Haiti	1	9.3	38.8	59.5	0.529	3.8
Cuba	1 and 2	11.3	75.5	No data	0.838	24.7
Mexico	1 and 2	104.3	76.0	48.1	0.829	33.7
Venezuela	1	26.7	93.4	43.4	0.792	54.1

Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS) Caribbean and Central America (CCA): countries with research activities within the framework of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme during its first two phases (2001–2005 and 2005–2009). HDI: Human Development Index.
Sources: * UNDP 2007; ** ECLAC 2006; *** UNDP 2009

25.2 Local emphasis in development approaches

Development alternatives in the Caribbean and Central America have been substantially modified in the last two decades by processes of global change and a clear emphasis at the national and international levels on promoting development through local initiatives. What are the reasons for this emphasis on the *local dimension*?

Among the recent processes of change in the Caribbean and Central America were three fundamental ones which enhanced the importance of the local scale (Sojo et al 1998). The first was a process of *institutional rebuilding*, which became possible thanks to the reestablishment of peace after the period of civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The most important transformations derived from this process have been the reestablishment of law, the subordination of

armed forces to civil governments, and respect for human rights: all of them acknowledged crucial components for securing the viability of democracy. Institutional rebuilding gave rise to the need to increase access by the population to public decision-making, improve the quality of governance, and establish mechanisms for accountability. In all of these issues, *localities* are the privileged working scale.

Second, coinciding with institutional rebuilding but independent of it, a process of *administrative reform* took place, including decentralisation of governmental functions at the national level, with devolution either to the private sector or to local public administration. Decentralisation processes are transferring new functions and additional responsibilities to local governments, thus creating a need for new local policies and strategies.

Third, the Caribbean and Central American region has undergone a profound *economic transformation*. There was a general macro-economic readjustment in the 1990s, when the previous economic model – the imports substitution model sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) since the 1950s – lost its capacity to promote development. The majority of the countries in the region opened their economies to the dominant global economic forces, resulting in a new economic model characterised by substitution of the rule of the state by the rule of the market and a reorientation of economic growth in response to external demands. These changes promoted three economic sectors: new agricultural exports, sweatshop industries, and tourism, all rooted in the locational advantages of particular territories and thus anchored in localities.

Two additional processes of a different nature promote the importance of localities. The first is the increasing international migration of the population and, along with this, the role of remittances in the budgets of recipient households, communities and countries (Figure 1). The second is regional upheaval due to regionalisation of the commercial drug chain and, with it, the delinquency of regional organisations from Colombia to Mexico, affecting security in all of the Caribbean and Central American countries, although to different degrees in the various regions and localities.[4]

These processes have had social impacts that put social problems at the centre of the political agenda. The downside of this is that negotiations on development issues are often delegated to territorial scales that do not have the required institutional strength or support to deal with them.

25.3 Development problems: three research themes

The most crucial effects of global change studied in the region within the framework of the NCCR North-South, during its first phase from 2001 to 2005, were growing poverty with increasing environmental risks and dete-rioration of natural resources (Figure 2), territorial fragmentation and vio-lence, and conflicts connected to governance problems. All of these were clearly linked to growth of social exclusion in the region. NCCR North-South research examined the social practices[5] and integration strategies of population segments facing these problems, in order to understand their underlying logic and their impact on societal and territorial transformations.

By the end of Phase 1 of the NCCR North-South it was clear that current development trends were *increasing inequity* and *disrupting social and institutional cohesion* in urban and rural areas. This disruption was reflected in the flow of labour migrants throughout the region and in the number and importance of environmental conflicts between different economic sectors.[6] Selection of research themes in the region for the second phase of the NCCR North-South was intended to frame regional reflection on these problems.

The first theme, *Social Exclusion, Inner Borders and Fragmentation*, focus-es on the conditions encountered in social practices when dealing with the impact of increasing inequity on localities and their potential to overcome it. The second theme, *Poverty, Livelihoods and Migration*, focuses on how com-

Fig. 2
Slum area in La
Carpio, San José,
Costa Rica. (Photo
courtesy of
ProDUS, University
of Costa Rica,
2004)

munities deal with the loss of key members and the impact of their contributions through remittances. The third theme, *Local Strategies, Environmental Governance and Conflict Management*, concentrates on collective responses to environmental conflicts involving new economic activities linked to global interests as well as activities linked to local producers and inhabitants. The socio-territorial dimension of the social practices studied and analysed during Phase 1 of the NCCR North-South thus formed the basis on which research projects in Phase 2 were developed, with a continued emphasis on localities paralleled by the focus of (national and international) development cooperation agencies on local contexts.

Socio-territoriality in analytically significant territories (localities) implies that the social subjects (households, enterprises and institutions) share 'something more' than the local geographical setting. 'Something more' for households refers to shared socio-cultural factors (identity, cooperation, organisation and innovation trends) and their social integration. For the enterprises working in given economic sectors, 'something more' means greater productivity on the one hand, as well as greater competitiveness due to the positive effects of *social cohesion* derived from socio-cultural aspects shared by the community, on the other hand. Finally, for institutions 'something more' is *institutional density*: enough institutions, of a public and/or private nature, striving together towards the collective and corporate dimension of the corresponding development strategy (Pérez Sáinz and Andrade-Eekhoff 2003).

391

For this reason, research has focused on what has been called 'neighbourhood communities' – territories with analytical significance – in order to study the local dimension of globalisation, defined by a given community's members' linkages through belonging, where the community is an actor under the impact of global changes (Pérez Sáinz 2006). The analytical dimension at stake is *social cohesion*. Social cohesion should reflect the degree of equity promoted by the local development process as an indicator of local competitiveness in facing global markets. Social cohesion should also reflect the *aim of equity*, promoted by a common agenda shared among the institutions in a community with institutional density.

25.4   Main activities undertaken

Five PhD research projects, eight Master's projects, and three Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS)[7] were the activities undertaken during Phase 2 of the NCCR North-South (2005–2009) in the region. All had their own objectives and research questions, but all dealt with localities and global change. Regional balance among the three regional themes (*Social Exclusion, Inner Borders and Fragmentation*; *Poverty, Livelihoods and Migration*; *Local Strategies, Environmental Governance and Conflict Management*) will be achieved as soon as the last projects are completed. The discussions related to the research projects undertaken in the region within each of the three themes are reviewed in chapters 26–28 of the present volume. What follows is an overview of research activities dealing with the various themes.

The theme *Social Exclusion, Inner Borders and Fragmentation* was approached through research dealing with pathways to overcome obstacles to access to public goods by excluded sectors of the population: housing in central locations (and thus in the city), adequate sanitary conditions, and security. Work on some of the projects is continuing to this date. Existing results are discussed in Chapter 26 of the present volume.

Access to housing and the city is being studied in a project on "Popular Habitat, Urban Renewal and Social Mobilisation in the Central Neighbourhoods of Mexico City" by Anabel Monterrubio, as well as in a project entitled "Citizen Participation in Face of the Deterioration of Central Neighbourhoods of Mexico City" by Martín Nájera, both reinforced by a PAMS concerned with "Social Capital and Participatory Management as Instruments for the

Table 2

Title	Location	Duration	Main outcomes
Social Capital and Participatory Planning as Instruments for Improvement of an Old Neighbourhood	Tepito, Mexico City	June 2008 – June 2009	Methodology to identify and promote a participatory concept for the integration and promotion of community improvement projects by training interested inhabitants and thus strengthening social capital.
Strengthening Governance Processes for Sustainable Agriculture in Western Mexico	Jalisco, Mexico	December 2008 – December 2009	Strengthening capacities of farmers in organic farming through participatory training processes consisting of fieldtrips, workshops and meetings to exchange experiences. Proposals for the marketing of surplus production of rural families are included, opening opportunities for fair trade and responsible consumption of agro-ecological foods (Figure 3).
Community-based Ecological Greywater Management in the Municipality of Tepoztlán, Mexico	Tepoztlan, Mexico	January 2007 – April 2008	Generation of baseline knowledge about ecological alternatives to treat greywater, with a community-oriented perspective. Implemented by Sarar Transformación S.C. in the urban core and adjacent rural and peri-urban communities of Tepoztlán, Morelos. Tepoztlán mirrors the need of other Latin-American municipalities for adequate sanitation alternatives to reduce environmental degradation, adequately manage potential health risks, and foster better policies to address this and other environmental issues.

Selection of Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS) carried out in the Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS) Caribbean and Central America (CCA).
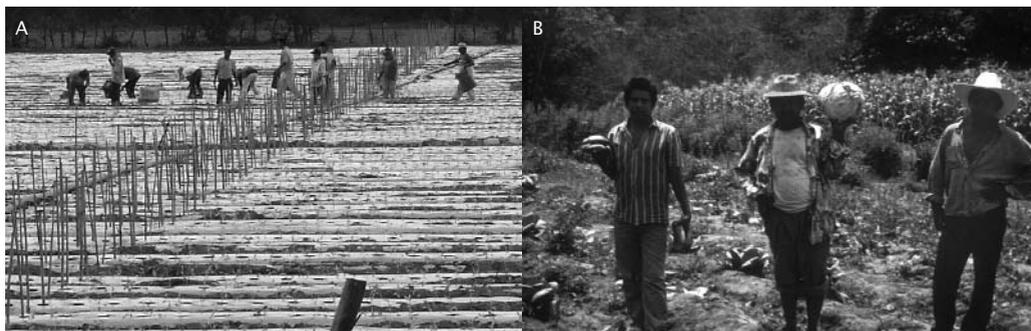
Improvement of an Ancient Neighbourhood in the City of Mexico: Tepito". A project by Laura Aguirre entitled "Territory, Youth and Development: The Case of Young People in Ciudad Perdida 9" was completed in 2008.

Access to adequate sanitary conditions is being explored by projects concerned with "Implementation of Environmental Sanitation Policy in Human Settlements in Costa Rica: The Case of Household-centred Environmental Sanitation (HCES)" by Horacio Chamizo, and "Adequate Urban Articulation: The Case of La Europa in Curridabat" by Zuhra Sasa. A PAMS on developing greywater treatment technology in Mexico complemented this research.

Access to security is being studied in a first project on "Urban Violence and Changes in Tegucigalpa" by Marysabel Zelaya, a second on "Characterisation of Closed Neighbourhoods in Tegucigalpa" by Ivonne Chain, and a third on "Social Representations and Practices of Insecurity in the Post-War Era" by Lorena Umaña.

Three research projects are concerned with reflection on "Poverty, Livelihoods and Migration: International Migration and Its Impact on Local Livelihoods in Chiapas, Mexico" (by Jorge Angulo), "The Labour Situation of Guatemalan Women in Chiapas, Mexico" (by Susana Martínez), and "Borderline Livelihoods: A Case Study from Southern Chiapas, Mexico" (by Lukas Sieber).

Finally, two projects are contributing to "Local Strategies, Environmental Governance and Conflict Management: Analysis of the Process of Governance Regarding Sustainable Water Management in the Watersheds of Santiago-Ayuquila" (by Alejandra Guerrero) and "Governance in Water Management in the Municipalities of Unión Tula and Zapotitlan de Vadillo, Jalisco" (by Silvia Salcido). One PAMS linked to this research theme is entitled "Strengthening Governance Processes for Sustainable Agriculture in Western Mexico".

Two of the so-called Transversal Package Projects (TPPs)[8] were also present in the region, contributing to the theme on social exclusion: "Innovation in Decision-making Processes in Sustainable Urban Projects", directed by Adriana Rabinovich, and "Operationalising Human Security for Livelihood Protection", directed by Albrecht Schnabel.

25.5   Outlook for future research

Research in the JACS CCA regarding present development trends linked to global change has been focusing on increasing inequity in access to resources, especially territorial ones, with social segregation reflecting *social exclusion*. Impacts of these processes on livelihoods and biodiversity have been studied, with the three themes providing insights into social exclusion as the cause of increasing migration, the increasing vulnerability of people to natural and anthropogenic risks and insecurity, and governance problems at the local and national levels.

Two main causes of social exclusion were identified: the absence of adequate social public policies and the prevailing accumulative process that generates a labour surplus of a structural nature. Research activities also examined how these causes were dealt with in urban and rural settings, and how pathways to greater sustainability were negotiated. The main means of success were found to be participatory planning interventions (emphasising the empowerment potentials of participatory approaches, including those related to upgrading sanitation systems) and inter-municipal resource management agreements.

Further analysis of these issues are among the challenges defined for the third phase of the NCCR North-South programme; the corresponding research projects will be included in a first thematic node on Health, Services and Planning and another thematic node on Resources, Economy and Governance. Research projects in the JACS CCA will be conducted in both nodes; this new constellation of themes will enable the programme to explore further aspects of the complex realities dealt with by development-oriented research in the region.

Endnotes

[1] Maria Angelina Pérez Gutierrez is Regional Coordinator for the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South in Central America and the Caribbean (Joint Area of Case Studies Caribbean and Central America, or JACS CCA).

Address: Regional Coordination Office, JACS Caribbean and Central America

FLACSO-CR

Urbanización El Prado, Curridabat

San José, Costa Rica

E-mail: mperez@flacso.or.cr

[2] According to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); see http://www.acs-aec.org/index.htm; accessed on 3 September 2009.

[3] The NCCR North-South is based on research partnerships with researchers and research institutions in the South and East. These partnership regions are called JACS (Joint Areas of Case Studies). Regional Coordination Offices (RCOs) were established in each of these JACS at the outset of the programme. The original function of the RCOs was to coordinate research; in the third phase of the programme, RCOs will consolidate the existing research network in the South and will become hubs for generating new research projects and partnerships.

[4] According to data from the US Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement (IACM) cited in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *World Drug Report* 2008, in 2006, between 530 and 710 tonnes of cocaine were sent from South America to the United States; of this amount, 90% passed through Central America and Mexico (UNODC 2008, p 76).

[5] Social practices – understood as meaningful actions by individuals or social groups, with or without direct relation to the state and the market, based on collective attitudes – were analysed in terms of their impact on the transformation of space (Pedrazzini et al 2005).

[6] Such conflicts occurred, for example, between the tourist sector and the agricultural export sector, as well as between environmental movements and traditional agrarian productive sectors, regarding impacts of activities on biodiversity or use of water resources.

[7] Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS) are projects implemented by local actors together with scientific and non-scientific stakeholders. As a component of the NCCR North-South programme they are designed to implement and validate approaches, methods and tools developed in research, with a view to finding promising strategies and potentials for sustainable development. Moreover, they are intended to promote mutual learning and knowledge-sharing between academic and non-academic partners in sustainable development.

[8] Transversal Package Projects (TPPs) were a Phase 2 component of the NCCR North-South that helped to cross disciplinary boundaries, with a view to achieving better integration of complex issues within the framework of the overall theme of sustainable development and syndrome mitigation. TPPs were interdisciplinary projects entrusted to research teams under the leadership of promising post-doctoral researchers from the North and the South.

References

Publications elaborated within the framework of NCCR North-South research are indicated by an asterisk (*).

ECLAC [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean]. 2006. *Statistical Year-book for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2005.* Santiago, Chile: ECLAC and United Nations. Also available at: http://websie.eclac.cl/anuario_estadistico/anuario_2005/; accessed on 17 November 2009.

* Pedrazzini Y, Bolay JC, Kaufmann V. 2005. *Social Practices and Spatial Changes.* NCCR North-South Dialogue Series. Bern and Lausanne, Switzerland: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (LaSUR). Also available at: http://www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/publications/Infosystem/On-line%20Dokumente/Upload/IP5_SocialPractices_0105.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Pérez Sáinz JP. 2006. Globalización y comunidad de vecindad: notas para el planteamiento de un concepto. *Íconos, Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 24:27–42.

Pérez Sáinz JP, Andrade-Eekhoff KE. 2003. *Communities in Globalization: The Invisible Mayan Nahual.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Pérez Sáinz JP, Mora Salas M. 2007. *La persistencia de la miseria en Centroamérica: una mirada desde la exclusión social.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Also available at: http://www.enlaceacademico.org/uploads/media/La_Persistencia_OK_01.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Sojo C, Rojas F, Avendaño B, editors. 1998. *Reforma económica, estado y sociedad en Centroamérica.* Guatemala City, Guatemala: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

UNDP [United Nations Development Programme]. 2007. *Human Development Report 2007–2008, Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World.* New York: UNDP.

UNDP [United Nations Development Programme]. 2009. *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision. Population Database.* http://esa.un.org/unpp/; accessed on 17 November 2009.

UNODC [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime]. 2008. *World Drug Report 2008.* Vienna, Austria: UNODC. Also available at: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2008.html; accessed on 17 November 2009.

26 Social Exclusion in Central American and Caribbean Urban Contexts and the Dynamics of Global Change

Sonia Baires[1], Maria Angelina Pérez Gutierrez[2], and Elsa Lily Caballero Zeitún[3]

Abstract

This article presents a synthesis of the conceptual and methodological debate carried out by a group of researchers who explored problems of sustainable development and global change in the Central American and Caribbean region. The heart of the debate and corresponding empirical research results presented here focus on social exclusion and related socio-spatial segregation and fragmentation of urban space. Social exclusion in the region largely derives from inadequate public social policies, weak public institutions and vulnerable labour market opportunities, which impoverish and exclude high percentages of rural and urban populations. These problems are related to the global predominance of the financial sector, relocation of production, and the role of the state in deregulating the market. To identify how these global changes are related to social exclusion – reflected in households suffering from deficient reproductive conditions that affect their habitat and livelihoods – a series of research projects analysed existing social and territorial conditions, focusing specifically on housing, basic services and security. The objective was to identify and analyse conditions of social exclusion and understand their relations to the visible territorial impacts of global change – segregation and the privatisation of public space. The next step was to characterise the negative dimensions of these territorial impacts and the positive processes that neutralise them. The present article is organised in four sections: an introduction, a conceptual framework developed on the basis of the individual studies, a summary of main results, and conclusions that pave the way for future social exclusion studies in the region.

Keywords: Social exclusion; territories; residential segregation; privatisation of public space; livelihoods and habitat.

26.1 Introduction

The global economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s deepened already existing inequalities in the distribution of income in Central America and the Caribbean, increasing poverty levels, segregation and the social and economic vulnerability of significant sectors of the population, while other, privileged minorities multiplied their wealth to levels without precedent (Portes et al 1997; Chossudovsky 2009). This situation is not limited to Central America or the Caribbean: it also exists in the rest of Latin and North America, as has been pointed out by several authors and international institutions (Menjívar Larín et al 1997; Sassen 1998; De Mattos 2009; see also the annual reports of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank [IDB] and the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC]).

Income inequality, together with increased fear and insecurity in the absence of adequate public security measures, have led to a territorial phenomenon, expressed in the enclosure of both rich and poor neighbourhoods and a resulting 'privatisation' or private use of public spaces in the cities (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Coy and Pohler 2002; Pirez 2002; Caldeira 2004; Low 2004; Glasze et al 2005; Coy 2006; Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2007). From a sociological point of view, physical and symbolic – or 'inner'– borders are created within the city (Pedrazzini et al 2005), resulting in overall urban fragmentation.

In socio-cultural terms, these dynamics – linked to the impact of the global economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s – are modifying the forms of socialisation, life styles and social fabric of communities (Coy and Pohler 2002; Caldeira 2004). Urban enclosure and fragmentation in Central America are producing a progressive 'disarticulation' of communities' networks and livelihoods which had, until recently, played an important role in the survival strategies of the poor (Gellert 2000). These strategies have an anchoring that is strictly territorial, since it is in the territory – defined as a "*[s]patial setting* allowing for the development of specific activities", i.e. as "[t]he various conventional and material equipments that frame and enable specific actions" (Pattaroni et al 2008, p 9) – that the different forms of capital accumulation take place and are anchored. In addition to the visible 'disarticulation' of communities that can be observed in Central American urban settings, the overall social fabric is affected by increasing violence and insecurity (Pedrazzini et al 2003; Pedrazzini et al 2005).

Given the novelty, intricacy and scope of the phenomenon described above, there is a need for concerted interdisciplinary research on how to mitigate its negative impacts. Research carried out within the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme from 2001 to 2008 emphasised the study of social exclusion seen from territorial and cultural perspectives. The two most clearly related trends under study were social segregation and increased violence and insecurity.

The case studies that substantiate our arguments and conclusions addressed a broad range of issues: from gated communities and informal neighbourhoods in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and San Salvador, El Salvador, to the social dynamics of neighbourhoods in Mexico City's historic centre, where rehabilitation and improvement projects have been implemented. These studies were inscribed within a line of research on "Social Exclusion, Inner Borders and Fragmentation", considered particularly relevant for Central America and the Caribbean by the NCCR North-South programme. They explored the nature and causes of the exclusion of specific disadvantaged groups from their territorial and cultural rights, and analysed the relation this exclusion has to increasing violence and insecurity, within the context of multifaceted global change. The studies were framed within a conceptual and theoretical debate that is summarised in the next section of this article. This is followed by a comparative presentation of main findings, and conclusions regarding questions and issues that still need to be addressed.

26.2   Conceptual framework

The central concepts underpinning the present line of research are *social exclusion*, *livelihoods*, and *territory*. With the use of these concepts an attempt is made, on the one hand, to conceptualise the relationship between households and the urban space they occupy, and, on the other hand, to define the exclusion/inclusion processes that people experience. These concepts come from several disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and geography (Rodgers et al 1995; Silver and Wilkinson 1995; Bolay et al 2005; Pattaroni et al 2008).

26.2.1   Social exclusion: the symbolic significance of income

The *social exclusion* concept (as discussed in Koonings and Kruijt 2007 as well as Pérez Sáinz and Mora Salas 2007) further develops the concept of poverty and overcomes its limitations. Poverty is in itself an internationally agreed standard that refers to a household's monetary capacity to cover the cost of the so-called 'basic basket' of consumption goods. By contrast, in accord with the ideas of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we share the notion that the social exclusion of both groups and individuals relates rather to the impossibility they experience of participating in development processes and gaining access to their benefits. The 'excluded' are those who find themselves in a state of disadvantage caused by economic as well as social, political and cultural processes that prevent them from fully participating in development processes (FLACSO and UNDP 1995, p 33).

In this sense, while low income alone does not create social exclusion, it does have *some* negative effects, as it affects the creation of social capital. For example, it becomes a hindrance to university studies and can lead to self-censorship. Sen (2000) and Byrne (2002) point out that the inability of individuals to relate to others and be part of community life may directly impoverish a person's life. Stable social relationships can act as community support for building individual and collective projects and thus promote development. Inequality gaps inhibit the consolidation of such relationships. Only social subjects with significant linkages outside disadvantaged communities and the territories they occupy succeed in becoming integrated into current social transformation dynamics (Baires et al 2006).

However, exclusion related to income can also take a socio-cultural form: indeed, certain forms of consumption are, according to the dominant global economic model, one way of exercising 'citizenship' (Baumann 1998; Clarke and Bradford 1998; Zukin 1998; García Canclini 2001). Exclusion through lack of access to consumption is therefore not only material but also cultural (De Freitas 2004). Spaces for cultural consumption destined for specific social groups that have not only sufficient economic resources, but also incorporate into their lives a series of new consumption practices, are replacing traditional public cultural spaces in the Central American and Caribbean region. For example, this is the case when spaces for recreation and consumption are concentrated in city zones that can be accessed only by car, or when spaces proliferate where – especially among urban youth – appearance, dress and behaviour become a sine qua non for admittance (Baires et al 2006).

Thus, global change processes anchored in territories generate forms of integration and exclusion that respond to global socio-economic logics. It is precisely the lack of capacity to become integrated in dominant economic practices that generates high percentages of exclusion in territorial transformations (Gacitúa et al 2000).

26.2.2   Livelihoods, 'territories' and 'inner borders': conceptual tools to understand urban fragmentation

Transformations of urban territories are generated by the social dynamics of the individuals that inhabit and use such territories. This is where the relationship between territory and livelihoods originates and is consummated. *Livelihood* refers to ways of life and subsistence that develop and are shaped within territories. According to Pattaroni et al (2008), inhabitants of contemporary cities live and are socially integrated by means of four types of 'territories' that give them access to housing, socialisation spaces, services, and economic activities. These territories are a conceptual construct useful for understanding how, in reality, humans create as well as live, socialise and work in different spaces that function along different organisational principles and produce corresponding results. The characterisation of and interaction between these territories influence urban inhabitants' life systems and well-being (Table 1).

Table 1

Type of territory	Organisational principle	Good delivered
Functional territory	Normalisation	Efficiency
Merchant territory	Competition	Growth and prosperity
Sociability territory	Reciprocity	Solidarity and social capital
Dwelling territory	Comfort and ease	Ontological safety

Organisational principles of, and goods delivered by, the four types of urban territories in which livelihoods are embedded.

Source: Pattaroni et al 2008

The combination of organisational principles and goods delivered produces complex social relationships that introduce, in the symbolic construction of territories, a series of processes that are difficult to comprehend and, hence, to manage. Two of these processes that specifically reflect social exclusion or inclusion are urban social fragmentation and the creation of mobile 'inner borders'.

Urban social fragmentation[4] is considered a 'syndrome' of global change (Hurni et al 2004), as it contributes to the deterioration of urban inhabitants' quality of life, especially in poor neighbourhoods, hampering the possibility of urban sustainable development (Pedrazzini et al 2003; Pedrazzini et al 2005). Urban social fragmentation leads to lack of reciprocity and thus to loss of *sociability territory*. This, in turn, makes it difficult to reach agreements for normalisation, resulting in inefficiency of the *functional territory*. Competition increases to a maximum, and growth and prosperity are dealt with in different ways, depending on the degree of social empowerment, affecting the *dwelling territory*. Promoting comfort and thus ontological safety becomes a matter of differentiation rather than collaboration. This is reflected in what we call 'inner borders'. The creation of inner borders within a city or within a municipality, as part of this fragmentation process, is determined by public and private interventions through which, over time, inhabitants provide their environment with existence and meaning, creating distinct territorial identity, e.g. in the form of gated communities. Borders and territory formation thus have a symbolic dimension that must be defined and accounted for, keeping in mind that their dimension is not static.

Mobile inner borders is our own term for the 'liminal spaces'[5] (Zukin 1991) or 'in-between spaces' where identities are anchored through specific dynamics that assert and produce symbolic communities to which certain social groups adhere. In order to clarify this concept, we must first conceptualise the term 'identity'. Social identities are the symbolic constructions of a 'we' in the face of 'others'. This is a discursive process of marking and ratifying symbolic boundaries (Hall 1996). As long as the nation-state was a unifying and stable space of symbolic belonging, social identity was provided by nationality (Anderson 1991). Global socio-economic change, expressed, for example, in increased migration and more complex migration patterns, has increased the complexity of social identity construction processes while also making these processes visible, since social identity is built on shared values and these values have become immensely diverse (Basch et al 1993).

26.2.3   Symbolic dichotomies and the dynamics of territories

From the socio-cultural point of view, two types of relationships define these inner borders, the fundamental nature of which is mobile: the public–private dichotomy and the security–insecurity dichotomy.[6] These dichotomies, in turn, contribute to the fragmenting of urban territories and experiences.[7]

Public–private: Public space is the civic space of common good, as opposed to the private space of individual interests. In the city, public space and the implicit covenant on which citizenship is founded become visible. Cities and public spaces express very well the image each society has of itself (Marks et al 2008).

Forms of coexistence are tested in public spaces since it is here that we meet the different 'others'. Therefore, this becomes a possibility for strengthening community ties. Nevertheless, in Central American cities, encounters with the 'other' have become the cause of daily fears. Urban space is no longer an opportunity that fascinates, but rather something that is feared and fled from. This feeling prevailing in daily life has put an end to public expressions of solidarity in Latin American cities (De Freitas 2004).

The increasing preference for private spaces is part of the social fragmentation syndrome; it evidences how the urban cultural experience has changed. An increasing preference for the private is perceptible both in consumption and in supply trends: on the one hand, the middle and upper classes prefer to spend their 'free' or leisure time in private spaces rather than public ones; on the other hand, 'cultural' supply tends to remain concentrated in these private spaces, at a cost that is generally high (which is why cultural supply is provided by international chains) in exchange for the 'lost security' of public space (Martel 2006b).

Governments in the region have proven to be more and more incapable of guaranteeing public security (De Freitas 2004; Zelaya 2009). This is one of the reasons why privatisation of public and community space is taking place, serving the (frequently multi-national) corporate interests behind this trend. These dynamics reinforce different individual and collective 'security' practices (Pedrazzini et al 2003). As an answer to this deterioration of public order, borders (physical and symbolic) are created to differentiate public space from private space. As mentioned above, such borders are mobile, in this case because they are drawn across public spaces to facilitate their use as private spaces, and at the same time private spaces function internally as public spaces by blurring previously fixed borders.

Security–insecurity: As mentioned above, one of the characteristics of Central American cities is the perception of insecurity resulting from different forms of urban violence. City zones and persons are characterised

and stigmatised along the security–insecurity divide. Again, symbolic borders are established based on appearance, skin colour, socio-economic origins, etc. (De Freitas 2004; Baires et al 2006). In this way, fear is the feeling that is progressively uniting inhabitants in cities. Fears are individually experienced, socially constructed, and culturally shared (Pedrazzini et al 2003). Fear and the feeling of insecurity constitute unprecedented forms of community within cities; through both of them, invisible internal borders emerge where subjects and zones are identified as responsible for violence (Martel 2006a).

The feeling of insecurity affects the quality of people's lives and weakens the social fabric. The tendency is towards growing distrust in the social environment; as a consequence, people look for some way to escape this perceived reality. Gated neighbourhoods are one option they turn to, in the hope of locking out social violence, at least from their residential space. However, this option is only available to people who can afford a place in a gated neighbourhood. This leads to a large gap between people 'included' in the ghetto and those 'excluded' from it.[8]

This perception leads people to mistrust the management of public institutions responsible for public security.[9] As indicated with regard to the public–private dichotomy, mistrust of the public administration is the reason why people increasingly turn to private solutions. The number of private security services has been steadily growing; a study carried out in Caracas identified more than 8 different security bodies, including private security companies, more than half of which were 'illegal', as they did not have official permits (De Freitas 2004).

As discussed above, the dichotomous relationships between security–insecurity and public–private generate forms of urban fragmentation that contribute to the deterioration of the social fabric. This is the case for all social groups, but it is experienced more dramatically by the urban poor, as explored by several studies summarised below.

26.3   Selected case study results

Within the framework of NCCR North-South research in Central America and the Caribbean, the territorial impacts of social exclusion were initially explored through an analysis of the increasing enclosure of residential areas in San Salvador and the growing privatisation of public spaces in Caracas,

both related to the increase of urban violence and perceived insecurity. Both are typical examples of the dichotomous security–insecurity and public–private relationships, mentioned above.

In San Salvador, Baires determined a clear trend towards controlling access to residential areas within the city by establishing physical barriers (Figure 1), even though this practice was not legally allowed. The required permits were not requested, nor was the action punished. An inventory of closed settlements was carried out in San Salvador in the year 2004, and a typology based on the income level of the households was established, showing that the trend affected all social strata. Data managed by the Planning Office of the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador (Oficina de Planificación del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador, OPAMSS) indicated that in 2004, 40% of the housing stock in San Salvador was located within a closed community. Interviews provided evidence that this trend was linked to fear; these results were supported by a statistical review. Moreover, the housing market was found to play a dominant role in reinforcing the trend.

In Caracas, De Freitas implemented an exploratory descriptive research project to analyse situations of violence and insecurity and their impact on the physical, cultural and symbolic spaces of the city. The research was carried out in the parish of San Bernardino, a sector of the city inhabited by people from all social strata and characterised by a presence of commer-

Fig. 1
Entrance to a gated community in San Salvador, El Salvador. (Photo by Sonia Baires)

cial and service activities, as well as significant public spaces (3.5% of total area). This qualitative study involved interviews with three categories of stakeholders (inhabitants, economic actors from the commercial and service sectors, and public officers and politicians); it also included a phase of non-participatory structured observation. Results indicated that there were perceptions of danger in the area, especially in relation to the poor neighbourhoods, where security measures were clearly concentrated. Public spaces were scarcely used by medium- and high-income groups, who preferred to use commercial centres as sociability territories. Recreational activities were mostly limited to daylight hours. There was no clear notion of public space, neither at the municipality nor at the police and institutional levels. Closing access to neighbourhoods was justified although it was not legal; it also contributed to raising real estate values.

In the second four-year phase of the NCCR North-South research programme from 2005 to 2009, projects aimed to evaluate how the patterns of both growth of urban gated communities and the renovation of historic urban centres related to social exclusion and segregation in different cities in Central America and the Caribbean, with special emphasis on the impact of these two patterns on public spaces and their role with regard to social cohesion.

Following the study by Baires, Ivonne Chain developed a research project entitled "Characterisation of Gated Urbanisation and Neighbourhoods as a New Residential Phenomenon in the City of Tegucigalpa" (Figure 2). She conducted an inventory of gated neighbourhoods for Tegucigalpa, Honduras, classifying them by physical elements, origination process, socio-economic category, type of security, and life style offered. Apart from mapping these neighbourhoods, she found that these closed communities originated in a type of social housing common throughout Honduras in the 1970s. These communities had then evolved into neighbourhoods that were closed for security reasons, finally becoming a residential trend for medium- and high-income classes during the 1990s.

As loss of public spaces within the neighbourhoods was found to occur both in centres and in areas at the periphery of Tegucigalpa, an ensuing project by Marysabel Zelaya, entitled "Urban Violence and Changes in Tegucigalpa, Honduras", is now looking at accelerated processes of spatial reconfiguration in these urban areas, focusing on the public as well as the residential areas. The project aims to understand how and why these places have

changed and how the process of change affects the use and meaning of public space for the people who use it. The research is based on three in-depth case studies of one neighbourhood located in the centre of Tegucigalpa and two at the periphery, of which one is an informal neighbourhood and the other consists of condominiums. Similar to the study conducted by De Freitas, this project takes a qualitative approach based on stakeholder interviews, with a view to deepening the understanding of the mechanisms underlying security–insecurity and public–private relations.

How can the current resident population of centrally located settlements – including the poorest – continue to live in historic city centres in which, under the influence of global economic dynamics, renovation has become the trend? Anabel Monterrubio is focusing on this key question in the case of Mexico City, increasing knowledge about how inhabitants create, live, socialise and work, as proposed by Pattaroni et al (2008). Using a historical reconstruction of housing processes, as well as stakeholder mapping and interviews, to date she has inquired into the role of public policies and the land market as external determining factors. She is also inquiring into the inhabitants' perceptions, values and evaluations regarding their habitat, as internal factors that influence decisions on whether or not to continue living in Mexico City's historic centre. Her current results indicate that institutional strategies (in terms of norms, intervention project profiles, and economic resources) have been crucial for the local population's ability to continue to live in the centre. In addition, daily resistance by individuals and households to official injunctions to move, reinforced by organised resistance, have been important tools. Social movements (housing NGOs and support from university projects) have been instrumental in promoting collective social

Fig. 3
Ciudad Perdida 9
in Mexico City,
seen from within
(A) and from out-
side (B). (Photos by
Laura Aguirre)

practices in search of public policy alternatives that support permanent resi-
dence of former inhabitants in the city centre.

Finally, Laura Aguirre is examining Mexico City's development model,
through a study of a poor neighbourhood enclosed within one of the wealthi-
est areas in the city and forgotten by urban development authorities until
now. This is the case of the neighbourhood called Ciudad Perdida 9, where
inhabitants perceive more advantages than disadvantages in living within
the area, because the precarious physical and social conditions are compen-
sated by better access to other benefits of an urban environment (Figure 3).

26.4   Conclusion

It is clear that the increase in violent behaviour and perceptions of insecu-
rity in the Central American and Caribbean urban contexts has modified
the character of social spatial segregation in the urban environment: it has
led to patterns of enclosure in residential areas and privatisation of public
space, leading in turn to increasing urban fragmentation. This phenomenon
confirms the existence of increasing social exclusion processes recently
observed and measured for several countries in the region by Pérez Sáinz
and Mora Salas (2007).

By definition, social exclusion precludes sustainable development, since it
introduces or increases social inequality, thus making it impossible for cur-
rent and future generations to benefit from access to sustainably managed

resources. In urban areas, exclusion takes place when the four symbolic territories established by Pattaroni et al (2008) become dysfunctional. What can be done to mitigate the resulting problem of urban fragmentation and disarticulation of the social fabric?

The research conducted in Mexico City by Monterrubio underlines the importance of adequate public social policies to regulate the functioning of land markets for dealing with the residential dimension of the problem. In addition, the results show that there is a true potential for controlling the negative impact of social exclusion when social movements work together with academic groups, promoting processes to improve social capital. Indeed, this case study highlights one means of achieving the development of areas in historic city centres in which the majority of the population – rather than only an elite – has access to resources. However, its scope is still limited to confined areas within the city. May it be generalised?

Further topics for exploration arise from the current state of the art and empirical results, with a view to sharpening the understanding of social exclusion processes and increasing the database upon which possible measures can be proposed for policy- and decision-making. Research findings highlight the dominant trends in the evolution of urban areas triggered by global processes and intensified by the weakness of urban planning as a public responsibility, particularly in large cities. They also uncover the strong impact of private planning on the urban space – one of the critical phenomena determining present unsustainable urban expansion patterns (Caballero Zeitún 2007). Public planning is facing the aggressiveness of private real estate investment, which is geared to maximising immediate earnings by redesigning the city according to private demand, rather than giving priority to public interest, which would entail building and protecting the collective patrimony.

Endnotes

[1] Sonia Baires, sociologist and researcher, participated in a PhD programme in Urban Studies at the National Institute of Scientific Research and the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada. Her research explores topics such as gated communities and urban fragmentation in San Salvador; violence, insecurity and public spaces; and social exclusion and borders in Central America.
    E-mail: sonia_baires@hotmail.com

[2] Maria Angelina Pérez Gutierrez is an architect and Senior Researcher at the Facultad Latinoamericana en Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in San José, Costa Rica. She is also Regional Coordinator of the Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS) Caribbean and Central America (CCA) of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South.
    E-mail: mperez@flacso.or.cr

[3] Elsa Lily Caballero Zeitún holds a PhD in Social Work and is Director of a Master's programme in Urban Management at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras. She is also a member of the Regional Advisory Board for the Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS) Caribbean and Central America (CCA) of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South.
    E-mail: zeitunlily@yahoo.com

[4] For Navez-Bouchanine (2002), urban socio-spatial fragmentation is a result of globalisation, as it causes more poverty where the spatial modes of activities are highly concentrated, generating fragmentation in urban agglomerations. The main criteria for this kind of fragmentation are social exclusion, spatial enclaves and the absence of mobility.

[5] Sharon Zukin (1991, p 41) reflects on Victor Turner's concept of liminality, in relation to what she calls 'urban landscapes'. According to her, "[n]ew urban spaces are formed, permeated and defined by liminality. All such spaces are 'betwixt and between' institutions, specially the sacred sphere of culture and the secular world of commerce". For a broader definition of liminality, see http://parole.aporee.org/info/

[6] This issue was studied in depth by Julio De Freitas for the case of Parroquia de San Bernardino in Caracas, Venezuela (Pedrazzini et al 2003).

[7] This entire section on symbolic dichotomies was first written in Spanish and is part of an article that is currently in process of publication (Baires, accepted).

[8] Studies on this issue carried out in San Salvador by Sonia Baires, covering the period between 1992 and 2005, identified 300 new gated communities, corresponding to 13.5% of the municipality's territory and 10,307 households, covering all social classes. Interviews revealed that the main justification for enclosure was perceived insecurity.

[9] Up to 60% of the people in the region are wary of the judiciary and security forces, according to a report on access to justice in Central America and Panama produced in 2000 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in conjunction with the Latin American Centre for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development (CLACDS) at INCAE and the Centre for Research in Law and Economics (CINDE) at Complutense University of Madrid (UNDP et al 2000).

References

Publications elaborated within the framework of NCCR North-South research are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Anderson B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Revised edition. London, UK and New York, NY: Verso.

* Baires S. Accepted. Exclusión social, fronteras internas y fragmentación urbana en Centro-américa. *Revista Centroamericana de Ciencias Sociales.*

Baires S, Martel R, Romero C, Sánchez C. 2006. *Violencia y espacios públicos: el caso del AMSS.* San Salvador, El Salvador: UCA Editores.

Basch L, Glick Schiller N, Szwanton Blanc C. 1993. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Territorialized Nation-States.* London, UK: Routledge.

Baumann Z. 1998. *Trabajo, consumismo y nuevos pobres.* Barcelona, Spain: Gedisa.

Blakely E, Snyder M. 1997. *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States.* Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, MA: Brookings Institution Press and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

* Bolay JC, Pedrazzini Y, Rabinovich A, Catenazzi A, Garcia Pleyan C. 2005. Urban environment, spatial fragmentation and social segregation in Latin America: Where does innovation lie? *Habitat International* 29(4):627–645.

Borsdorf A, Hidalgo R. 2007. New dimensions of social exclusion in Latin America: From gated communities to gated cities, the case of Santiago de Chile. *Land Use Policy* 25(2):153–160.

Byrne DS. 2002. *Social Exclusion.* Buckingham, PA: Open University Press.

Caballero Zeitún EL. 2007. *La construcción de ciudades vulnerables.* Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Alin Editores.

Caldeira T. 2004. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in Brazil.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Chossudovsky M. 2009. *The Globalization of Poverty and the New World Order.* Toronto, Canada: Global Research.

Clarke D, Bradford M. 1998. Public and private consumption and the city. *Urban Studies* 35(5–6):865–888.

Coy M. 2006. Gated communities and urban fragmentation in Latin America: The Brazilian experience. *Geojournal* 66(1):121–132.

Coy M, Pohler M. 2002. Gated communities in Latin America megacities: Case studies in Brazil and Argentina. *Environmental and Planning B: Planning and Design* 29(3):355–370.

De Freitas J. 2004. Caracas pública, privada y de nadie. *Comunicación* 127:20–24.

De Mattos C. 2009. *Globalization and Urban Revolution in Latin America.* Paper presented at a virtual course on Urban Violence and Insecurity: A Gender Perspective, organised by the Centro de estudios urbanos y regionales (CEUR) Argentina and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), from 1 July to 15 December 2009. Available from Sonia Baires.

FLACSO [Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales], UNDP [United Nations Development Programme]. 1995. *Análisis de la exclusión social a nivel departamental: los casos de Costa Rica, El Salvador y Guatemala.* San José, Costa Rica and New York, NY: FLACSO and UNDP.

Gacitúa E, Sojo C, Davis S. 2000. *Exclusión social y reducción de la pobreza en América Latina.* San José, Costa Rica: World Bank and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Also available at: http://www.flacso.or.cr/Exclusion-social-y-reduccion-d.102.0.html; accessed on 16 October 2009.

García Canclini N. 2001. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Gellert G. 2000. Las migraciones como estrategias de sobrevivencia de los excluidos y sus determinantes territoriales. *In:* Gálvez Borrel V, Gellert G, editors. *Exclusión social y estrategias para enfrentarla.* Guatemala City, Guatemala: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), pp 173–343.

Glasze G, Webster C, Frantz K. 2005. *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives.* London, UK: Routledge.

Hall S. 1996. Introduction: Who needs identity? *In:* Hall S, du Gay P, editors. *Questions of Cultural Identity.* London, UK: Sage, pp 1–17.

* Hurni H, Wiesmann U, Schertenleib R, editors. 2004. *Research for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change: A Transdisciplinary Appraisal of Selected Regions of the World to Prepare Development-oriented Research Partnerships.* Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 1. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia.

Koonings K, Kruijt D. 2007. *Fractured Cities: Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America.* London, UK: Zed Books.

Low S. 2004. *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Marks SP, Modrowski KA, Lichem W. 2008. *Human Rights Cities: Civic Engagement for Societal Development.* New York, NY and Nairobi, Kenya: People's Movement for Human Rights Learning (PDHRE) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN HABITAT). Also available at: http://www.pdhre.org/Human_Rights_Cities_Book.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Martel R. 2006a. De cómo las ciudades nos cuentan qué sociedades somos: notas sobre la cultura urbana. *Cultura* 94(September/October).

Martel R. 2006b. Notas sobre la solidaridad y la convivencia en el espacio público. Unpublished paper. Available from Sonia Baires.

Menjívar Larín R, Kruijt D, van Vucht Tijssen L, editors. 1997. *Pobreza, exclusión y política social.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

Navez-Bouchanine F. 2002. Emergence d'une notion: quelques repères historiques. *In:* Navez-Bouchanine F, editor. *La fragmentation en question: des villes entre fragmentation spatiale et fragmentation sociale?* Paris, France: L'Harmattan, pp 19–44.

* Pattaroni L, Kaufmann V, Pedrazzini Y, Bolay JC, Rabinovich A. 2008. *People and 'Territories': Urban Sociology Meets the Livelihood Approach in the South.* NCCR North-South Dialogue No. 20. Bern, Switzerland: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Also available at: http://www.north-south.unibe.ch/content.php/publication/id/2153; accessed on 16 October 2009.

* Pedrazzini Y, Baires S, De Freitas J. 2003. *Violencia, in-seguridad y transformación del espacio urbano en el contexto de la globalización. "Marco general" de la Línea de Actividad 3 IP5/JACS América Central y Caribe (ACC).* Bern, Switzerland: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Also available at: http://www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/publications/Infosystem/On-line%20Dokumente/Upload/LA3.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

* Pedrazzini Y, Bolay JC, Kaufmann V. 2005. *Social Practices and Spatial Changes.* NCCR North-South Dialogue Series. Bern and Lausanne, Switzerland: Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (LaSUR). Also available at: http://www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/publications/Infosystem/On-line%20Dokumente/Upload/IP5_SocialPractices_0105.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Pérez Sáinz JP, Mora Salas M. 2007. *La persistencia de la miseria en Centroamérica: una mirada desde la exclusión social.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Also available at: http://www.enlaceacademico.org/uploads/media/La_Persistencia_OK_01.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Pirez P. 2002. Buenos Aires: Fragmentation and privatization of the metropolitan city. *Environment and Urbanisation* 14(1):145–158.

Portes A, Dore-Cabral C, Landolt P. 1997. *The Urban Caribbean: Transition to the New Global Economy.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rodgers G, Gore C, Figueiredo J. 1995. *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses. A Contribution to the World Summit for Social Development.* Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Sassen S. 1998. Las ciudades en la economia global. *In:* Rojas E, Daughters R, editors. *La ciudad en el siglo XXI.* Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, pp 21–20.

Sen A. 2000. *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny.* Harvard University Social Development Papers No. 1. Manila, Philippines: Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank. Also available at: http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Social_Exclusion/Social_exclusion.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

Silver H, Wilkinson F. 1995. *Policies to Combat Social Exclusion: A French–British Comparison.* Discussion Papers Series. Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies.

UNDP [United Nations Development Programme], CINDE [Centro de Investigaciones en Derecho y Economía, Universidad Complutense de Madrid], CLACDS [Centro Latino-americano para la Competitividad y el Desarrollo Sostenible, INCAE]. 2000. *Acceso a la justicia en Centroamérica y Panamá: seguridad jurídica e inversiones.* San José, Costa Rica: UNDP.

Zelaya M. 2009. Barrios cerrados, inseguridad y espacio público en Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Unpublished PhD proposal. Available from Sonia Baires.

Zukin S. 1991. *Landscape of Power.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Zukin S. 1998. Urban lifestyles: Diversity and standardisation in spaces of consumption. *Urban Studies* 35(5–6):825–839.

27   Migration, Poverty, Security and Social Networks: A Central American Perspective

Abelardo Morales-Gamboa[1], Karina Li Wing-Ching[2], and Daniel Villafuerte Solís[3]

Abstract

This article provides a critical introduction to understanding the migration–poverty relationship from a different perspective, i.e. by focusing on the migration–livelihoods nexus from the point of view of social structures and people's living conditions. The discussion presented here is based on analysis of different analytical approaches to migration in Central America and the Caribbean, developed within the framework of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), an international research programme focusing on mitigating syndromes of global change. The present appraisal provides a broader explanation of the scope of relationships in the development of social life reproduction strategies, envisaging migration as an answer to problems of inequality and as a resource for poverty alleviation strategies, from a Central American perspective.

Keywords: Migration; poverty; development; livelihoods; security; borders.

27.1   The context

Central American countries are situated in the Caribbean Basin[4] in the tropical part of the continent, between the two large continental masses of North and South America. These countries have a geographical proximity to the United States and have been marked by a strong dependency on the U.S. for two centuries, owing to this superpower nation's foreign interventions and military invasions, which were aimed at maintaining its sphere of political and especially economic influence in almost all countries across the region.

The colonial past prior to U.S. influence also created differences between the mainland and insular territories. For instance, the Central American countries and Mexico, with the exception of mainland Belize, were Spanish colonies, along with Venezuela and, in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Puerto Rico; the remaining Caribbean islands were colonies of other European powers until not very long ago. In this framework, the geopolitics and the historical conditions of each of these societies gave rise to the establishment of national borders after each process of independence. These borders reflect the political fragmentation of the region, the weakness of its economies and political systems, and the existing features of the capital cities in these countries (Barrera et al 2004).

Up until the last quarter of the previous century, military governments and conditions of political instability prevailed in most countries of the region. Formal democracies were established at the end of the Cold War, but in many cases governance was hampered by weakness of the new democratic institutions. In recent decades, social inequality has been shown to be responsible for continual social conflict, upheaval and guerrilla movements. Its manifestations encompass a set of extreme differences in the distribution of wealth and, in addition, other forms of exclusion and semi-slavery of the indigenous majorities and people of African descent, especially in certain societies ruled by small white elites. These societies have also been characterised by gender discrimination, as women are subject to patriarchal systems.

In the recent context of globalisation, in most Central American countries social, ethnic and gender asymmetries have become more pronounced. As a direct consequence, promises of welfare for both men and women, respect for human rights and hopes of social equality have been left behind. On the other hand, the region has become one of the main sources of new international migration flows. Central America and Southeast Asia are among the

main providers of migrant labour for both the recipient economies in the North and for labour markets within the same region. This movement of people and labour has led to the establishment of complex migratory systems with characteristics that interact with the structural deficiencies that drive them and, in turn, new political borders and social divisions continue to be established.

According to statistical reports available from and compiled by the Population Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Latin American and Caribbean countries account for over 12% of international migrants in the world and they make up nearly 4% of the regional migrant population (ECLAC 2006). The greatest number comes from Mexico, followed by the Caribbean Community and Colombia (with approximately one million emigrants in each case). Countries such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay are nations with at least 8% to 15% of their population living abroad. Meanwhile, more than 20% of the Caribbean population is living outside their place of birth. More detailed data on immigrants and emigrants by country of residence and birth are given in Table 1.

In summary, the *Central American and Caribbean region* has been marked by processes of fragmentation, social polarisation and lack of governance. These conditions have caused a series of conflicts and political instability, and are among the causes that have generated heavy expulsion of population within a complex system of international migration. Far from resolving the structural and institutional weaknesses in the migrants' countries of origin, this complexity tends on the contrary to aggravate these problems by adding new factors of instability, conflict and insecurity.[5]

27.2   Poverty and migration: new insights

Research findings compiled to date in the region within the framework of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme have provided a wealth of important results regarding the nexus of migration and poverty (Cedano and Dilla 2005; Dilla 2006; Morales-Gamboa and Pérez 2006; Hostettler 2007); analysis of *migration* – understood as a form of mobility that constitutes an expression of social practices articulated within the framework of globalisation (Sassen 2006) – rep-

Table 1

Immigrants and
emigrants in Cen-
tral America and
the Caribbean
around the year
2000: minimum
estimates in thou-
sands of persons
and as a percent-
age of the total
population, by
country of resi-
dence (immi-
grants) and coun-
try of birth (emi-
grants).

Country	Total population (in millions)	Immigrants [a]		Emigrants [b]	
		Number (in thousands)	Percentage of population	Number (in thousands)	Percentage of population
Totals for the region	**523.463**	**6,001**	**1.1**	**21,381**	**4.1**
Costa Rica	3.925	296	7.5	86	2.2
Cuba	11.199	82	0.7	973	8.7
Dominican Republic	8.396	96	1.1	782	9.3
El Salvador	6.276	19	0.3	911	14.5
Guatemala	11.225	49	0.4	532	4.7
Honduras	6.485	27	0.4	304	4.7
Nicaragua	4.957	20	0.4	477	9.6
Panama	2.948	86	2.9	124	4.2
Mexico	98.881	519	0.5	9,227	9.6
Caribbean	**11.782**	**853**	**7.2**	**1,832**	**15.5**

[a] Data on immigrants in El Salvador and Nicaragua are taken from the 1990 censuses.

Source: ECLAC
2006, p 16.

[b] Estimates of emigrants are minimum numbers, since they cover a limited number of countries in Europe and Oceania.

resents an important contribution to a better understanding of the relationship between the *phenomenon* of migration and the production of new *livelihoods* – conceptualised here as new fields of social reproduction within a transnational dimension. Nevertheless, certain conceptual limitations underlying this relationship are of significant concern. We discuss these limitations below.

27.2.1   The migration–development nexus

Social analysis of poverty and migration has become more common in Latin America, especially because of the emphasis placed on remittances as a resource for bridging gaps in the social system (Maimbo and Ratha 2005; Hostettler 2007).[6] This approach seems to be an improvement, as it goes beyond the previous, rather negative, explanation of migration as resulting exclusively from the poverty of migrants and their families. So, although the rigidity of *developmentalist* thinking remains, studies of resources generated by migration as a means of overcoming poverty have introduced new discussions in many countries of origin.

The *developmentalist* approach has placed a very particular emphasis on migration, as it focuses on the effects of remittances in countries of origin. Kapur points out, for example, that "[a]s with the euphoria surrounding private capital flows in the mid-1990s, the attractiveness of remittances is in part a reaction to the failures of earlier development mantras" (Kapur 2005, p 339). In this regard, there is a clear link involving multiple dimensions of migration and development. However, the developmentalist approach applied to migration studies focuses on the assumption that resource flows from migrants could turn into potential assets that will allow societies of origin to overcome conditions of underdevelopment and poverty that gave rise to migration. Examples include remittances, social capital, and the development of productive skills.[7] As Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen suggest: "we can see them [remittances] as a way to rectify years of uneven development" (Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen 2004).

As a consequence, the developmentalist approach to migration and remittances has avoided analysis of multiple factors that interact within the transnational social fields in which migrants are embedded and the interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organised and transformed. Similarly, analysis of the strategies developed by migrants for management, transfer and use of resources obtained from migration – such as remittances – has been neglected. In this sense, the approach continues to ignore the social conditions under which such strategies are designed, on many occasions considering the migrant simply as *homo faber* or dollar-maker. In this scenario, an anthropological glance at the study of such linkages contributes to the acknowledgement of social networks as a key cultural resource that migrant people, families and communities have in developing new transnational livelihoods from migration (Lomnitz 2001).

From the point of view of this discussion, migration–development interactions should be studied from the analytical and methodological angle of inequality, rather than poverty. By contrast to the existing definition of poverty as a static condition, inequality in the proposed perspective is understood as a dynamic-relational category (Morales-Gamboa 2004; Pérez-Sáinz and Mora Salas 2007). The proliferation of studies on poverty has led to the adoption of a series of *developmentalist* and *functionalist* approaches, featuring very quantitative techniques (Gallardo and Osorio 1998). These are inadequate for measuring non-economic dimensions; yet, they still prevail, despite efforts towards more openness for qualitative research method-

ologies to improve the understanding of existing social interactions. Hence, many studies are still being reduced to the *quantitative* and *developmentalist* paradigm (Boltvinik 2003).

27.2.2   Migration, security and borders

The concept of *security* was also found to be of particular significance in the debate on migration in Central America and the Caribbean, mainly because it is associated both with migration and with a geopolitical approach beyond the migratory issue – a combination that translates into the reinforcement of border control within the study area. It therefore seems appropriate to suggest incorporating this topic in further research as well, with a focus on a critical analysis of *how* and *where* the concept of security is elaborated, as well as on the impacts of security on migrant households' projects. The rationale for this recommendation is based on the following findings.

Important evidence is being explored by Albrecht Schnabel and his colleagues from the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, who state that migrants, besides being affected by everlasting residential and labour insecurity, are often perceived as a threat by the inhabitants of recipient territories. In this context, the methodology of multi-stakeholder workshops can help to open up new dimensions of security, giving locals the chance to consider migrants as a solution instead of as a problem (Schnabel et al 2006; Schnabel et al, in preparation).

The role of frontiers with regard to demarcation of national territories, the rise of new forms of social inequality, and the enforcement of mechanisms favouring or hindering people's access to social and environmental resources became evident in research carried out by NCCR North-South researchers in border areas between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and in border areas of Central America. In this respect, but also in the context of social reproduction strategies, border areas have become scenarios for the redefinition of social practices (Cedano and Dilla 2005; Dilla 2006; Morales-Gamboa and Pérez 2006; Poschet 2006).

It is particularly important to re-examine the link between migration, borders and livelihoods (Thieme 2008), because "the boundaries of social fields do not necessarily overlap with those of nations. National social fields are those that stay within national boundaries, while transnational social fields connect actors, through direct and indirect relations, across borders" (Lev-

itt and Nyberg-Sørensen 2004). In a research project recently initiated by Jorge Angulo (2008), the idea is explored that rural populations in the Mexican and Guatemalan border areas have redeveloped their own social practices and strategies and become a regional society. This has enabled them to overcome distress caused by different natural events as well as the negative effects of economic globalisation – defined as the opening and deregulation of global markets.

A study by Haroldo Dilla (2006) is another important contribution to the debate on migration and borders: it examines urban borderland intermediation in the Dominican Republic. This study provides a significant analysis of the spatial, political and economic features of a border that went through a transition from a closed border (with Haiti) to one with increasing economic exchanges and interdependence between formal and informal economic activities. This opening was driven by market and commercial interests and therefore took place in a fragmented manner.

The research illustrates that in spatial terms the opening of the border between the two nations was accompanied by a profound regional restructuring, with the emergence of 'transborder corridors' consisting of urban networks with multiple inequities between subjects. Furthermore, the study describes how – even though the geopolitical borderline retained a major significance – major social and territorial transformations occurred that were governed by progressive formal and informal permeability of the border. This created a multiplicity of boundaries that both separate and unify the populations on the two sides of the border.

In addition to these findings, Lena Poschet (2006) provides significant evidence for how recent economic, political and societal transformation – brought about with the opening of borders between Haiti and the Dominican Republic – shapes the spatial and social development of the borderland towns of Ouanaminthe in Haiti and Dajabón in the Dominican Republic. In particular, the study explores the fact that the transformations resulting from the opening of borders have not helped to diminish existing inequalities between these neighbouring cities, nor have they strengthened social ties, despite existing functional economic interaction.

Consequently, this research illustrates how both towns on the border, Ouanaminthe and Dajabón, have developed particular forms of dependency. Whilst for a considerable number of Haitians it is important to cross over into

the Dominican city in search of better living conditions in terms of income, health care and education, for most of the residents of Dajabón consulted during the research, crossing the Masacre River into Haiti is not essential. The fact that most of these Dominicans have never been to Ouanaminthe must also be emphasised, along with a widespread fear about going there based on the belief that conditions in Ouanaminthe are unsafe and precarious.

Poschet also observed a process of internal segregation marked by internal characteristics of both populations, where functional connections were unavoidably governed by the progressive permeability of the border. Furthermore, the author points out that although bilateral trade represents a key source of revenue for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, findings show that for Haiti, in terms of Haitian migration flows, the Dominican Republic has considerable importance as a destination for the export of labour force. In this regard, Dajabón's bi-national market constitutes a crucial source of earnings for both border towns. In summary, this study demonstrates that analysis of borderland intermediation is relevant in studying the multifaceted interactions taking place in borderland spaces.

A study by Susana Martínez (2006) focuses specifically on the gender aspects of international migration: the author examined the labour situation of Guatemalan women doing domestic work in Tapachula in the Mexican province of Chiapas. Her current work explores the problems and perceptions of emigrant women from rural areas working in the domestic services sector in the borderland region between Mexico and Guatemala. The study examines the role of international migration from the gender perspective and as part of the livelihood strategies of the households to which the migrant women belong and which they leave behind when they emigrate.

27.2.3   Migration, livelihoods and social networks

The study of livelihoods and migration reveals a series of ruptures in traditional ways of interpreting social reality and social practices. One such rupture involves another view of *territorial order*, which is referred to at various levels in the transnationalisation of the social life reproduction rationale: society, locality and family. With the increasing openness of national economies and economic interpenetration, social networks have become weighty and extended. Hence, survival strategies and people's material and symbolic resources have also assumed a transnational linkage, resulting in the establishment of new scenarios of daily life and coexistence, but also of conflict (Morales-Gamboa 2007, 2008).

A second rupture, closely related to the previous, occurs between the *actor* and the *system* as an expression of *desocialisation* (Touraine 1999). The establishment of the well-known *transnational* social field approach is a demonstration of both the duality and the vital ambiguity of such a rupture. This rupture is noted in a social relationship marked by a polar or multi-local reality between the actor's place of origin and his or her place of residence, through which he or she travels under the effect of an osmotic experience, characterised by multiple or dual belongings (Benhabib 2005; Kaufmann 2008).

Concurrently, this osmotic experience relates to a third rupture, between 'social reproduction logics' and 'regulation mechanisms'. Despite the fact that migration plays a key role in maintaining the economic and socio-political order within a region, it is part of a rupture of the normative order and the established forms of regulation of social life. Migration is also an example of the current limitations in migrant people's exercise of rights and, therefore, citizenship. Migrants are prone to threats of rejection and control policies, as well as being a focus of xenophobia. In this sense, lack of access to justice, the rupture of social belonging patterns and the absence of political participation place migrant people at risk of losing their citizenship or of living in precarious conditions of citizenship (Morales-Gamboa 2008).

Another issue articulated in the study of migration and social exclusion within the NCCR North-South research programme is the concept of *citizenship*. Being poor and excluded puts migrants in a situation where they are not only *not* recognised as citizens, but where their human rights are also violated by the criminalisation of immigration. By contrast, a tolerant and inclusive civic culture would be more able to open its doors to new members because it would not doubt its own moral principles and values (Soysal 1994; Bosniak 2006).

27.2.4   Challenges for migration research in the region

Consequently, while a number of statistical, evidence-based research projects in the Central American and Caribbean region exist and suggest a link between the characteristics of migration and poverty, such associations do not turn out to be the most adequate way of explaining the existing connection between migration and livelihoods. It seems more appropriate to explore the issue of the relationship between migration and livelihoods, considering the conditions of social structure and transnational features that generate a variety of forms of inequality and social exclusion.

The concept of a 'culture of poverty' seems to have been evoked first by Oscar Lewis (1966), based on the idea that poor families and groups have a fairly simple system of values and that these people remain in poverty because of their adaptation to the burdens of poverty. However, understanding livelihoods from the point of view of social structure instead of the 'culture of poverty' concept provides further explanation of the scope of livelihoods in terms of generation of social reproduction strategies as a response to inequality and as a true resource for empowerment of the poor (Pedrazzini 2006).

The migration–livelihoods relationship, as examined in relation to the conditions of social structure, makes it possible to link the study of migration to systems of social differentiation, taking account of gender variables, ethnic characteristics, and the places of origin of migrant people. In this respect, studies of men's and women's participation in migration processes and its effects on households and domestic life assume greater significance (Angulo 2008).

Similarly, there are various considerations concerning a possible rationale for redesigning development policies to focus on the relationship between migration and development (Villafuerte Solís 2008). From the perspective of development, migration is considered a livelihood and transnational social practice – a matter that leads to reconfiguration of the nation-state space as an analytical category of social relationships. Therefore, a geo-economic and geopolitical view appears to be appropriate for characterising the phenomena occurring in the Central American and Caribbean region.

Consequently, it is important to re-frame the study of migration from the perspective of livelihoods. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to place this relationship within the framework of the historical specificities in which migration occurs as a product of new reconfigurations of social life reproduction strategies at the transnational level, with the intention of overcoming a strictly utilitarian and functionalist approach.

The following analytical scenarios allow us to embed the questions derived from further conceptualisation:

– The expansion of free trade and the recent signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) create new pressures that will have effects on the growth of migration flows into the U.S. labour markets. Despite the fact that these migration flows represent a solution to the crisis,

at the same time they create new forms of economic and political dependency. The region then falls into a trap where on the one hand it opens up its borders for free trade, generating processes of denationalisation of the economies and the disarticulation of local productive activities and, therefore, causing job losses. On the other hand, it implements border security measures to avoid population exodus to the United States.

– People are confronted with unemployment, abandonment of productive activities, and the risk of falling into extreme poverty, besides facing economic globalisation, trade liberalisation, economic deregulation, and increasingly intense and recurrent natural disasters, arguably due to global climate change. In response, they implement strategies such as international migration as a way to make use of social resources at various levels; they also implement family strategies, thereby boosting social networks and enhancing social capital (Angulo 2008).

– Since the migration process is the focal point of ongoing research, it is necessary to clarify that this issue involves territorial interdependence. Thus it becomes necessary to study households with regard to social environment, i.e. by implementing the notion of 'social structure', with the purpose of identifying the 'social exclusion' and 'social integration' dimensions of the current globalisation process and its effects on social life (Sojo and Pérez 2003).[8] Hence the way to approach the issue could be through 'family units', in order to observe their transformation and interaction with social structures.

As a result of these analytical scenarios, the following strategic research focus has been formulated by the NCCR North-South research team in the Caribbean and Central American region for Phase 3 of the NCCR North-South programme: identification and innovative promotion of social practices and mitigation of the effects of global change, through an analysis of livelihoods, strategies for poverty alleviation, and phenomena derived from migration practices.

27.3   Conclusions

Central American and Caribbean societies constitute a heterogeneous and fragmented region characterised by social polarisation and weak governance; where such conditions have stunted economic growth and caused con-

flicts, there have been wars – civil wars as in Central America during the 1980s – and continual political instability, as in Haiti. These developments have in turn generated heavy expulsion of populations, whether as refugees or as new international migration flows. This diaspora, far from resolving institutional and structural weaknesses in the countries of origin, has aggravated social inequalities and added new forms of dependency, instability, conflict and insecurity.

Although there is a common perspective suggesting a link between migration and poverty, an attempt to understand the relationship between *migration* and *livelihoods* from the standpoint of *social structure* and *living conditions* instead of from the perspective of a *culture of poverty*, allows for a broader explanation of the scope of such relationships in the development of social life reproduction strategies, while envisaging migration as an answer to problems of inequality and as a resource for empowering the poor. By re-framing the study of migration from the perspective of livelihoods, it is both possible and necessary to adopt a historical approach in order to analyse the dynamics of migration as a product of the reconfiguration of social life reproduction strategies at transnational scales, and in order to overcome strictly utilitarian and functionalist visions of migration.

In conclusion, the analytical relationship between migration, livelihoods and social practices allows for new steps to be taken in reflecting on the Central American and Caribbean region. If the results of previous phases of research are to be linked with ongoing research, it will be important to identify new thematic fields and scenarios of analysis related to the key problems in the region, under the theoretical and conceptual lens of the NCCR North-South.

Endnotes

[1] Abelardo Morales-Gamboa holds a Bachelor's in Sociology and in Sciences of Communication from the Universidad de Costa Rica, a Master's in International Relations and Diplomacy from the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica and a PhD from Utrecht Universiteit. He has been working as a researcher at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales in Costa Rica since 1989 and also held the position of Academic Coordinator. He has conducted research on socio-political processes in Central America, labour migration and border development. He has published on civil society networks and integration in Central America, Nicaraguan labour migration in Costa Rica, and cross-border networks, among others.
E-mail: amorales@flacso.or.cr

[2] Karina Li Wing-Ching studied International Relations at the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. Her focus areas are official development assistance and development cooperation, human rights, regional integration and project management. Currently she is completing a Master's degree in Project Management at the University for International Cooperation in San José, Costa Rica.
E-mail: likarina@gmail.com

[3] Daniel Villafuerte Solís is an economist and holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico. He currently works as Professor Fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies in Mexico and Central America, University of Science and Arts of Chiapas (National Researcher Level II). He has published several articles on regional, national and international issues related to regional development and rural development. In recent years his research has focused on issues related to new integration and globalisation processes viewed from the periphery; in particular he has been interested in studying integration between Mexico and Central America, and macro-regional projects such as the Plan Puebla Panamá. He recently formed a multidisciplinary working group to study international migration in Chiapas.
E-mail: dvillafu@prodigy.net.mx

[4] All countries, except for El Salvador, have coasts on the Caribbean Sea.

[5] Further elaboration of these ideas can be found in Villafuerte Solís and García Aguilar (2008). On violence and insecurity, see also Pedrazzini (2005).

[6] Silvia Hostettler conducted research on land-use changes, transnational migration and the impact of remittances in western Mexico for her PhD in Phase 1 of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme (Hostettler 2007). This research was based on a political ecology approach. The results show that the impact of remittances on land-use changes is variable and depends on the socio-economic, political and environmental context of the community as well as the individual situation of the migrant household.

[7] Further elaboration of these ideas can be found in Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen 2004.

[8] For a more extended analysis of such topics in the Latin American context we recommend the other articles compiled in Sojo 2003, especially Franco 2003 and Gordon 2003.

References

Publications elaborated within the framework of NCCR North-South research are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Angulo J. 2008. De las montañas de Chiapas a los Estados Unidos, pasando por el Soconusco. Las prácticas migratorias de los campesinos indígenas de Chiapas. *In:* Villafuerte Solís D, García Aguilar MC, editors. *Migraciones en el Sur de México y Centroamérica.* Mexico City, Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, pp 321–342.

* Barrera A, Bolay JC, García C, Hostettler S, Gerritsen PRW, Mejía R, Ortiz C, Sánchez M, Pedrazzini Y, Poschet L, Rabinovich A. 2004. JACS Central America and the Caribbean. Key challenges of sustainable development research priorities: Social practices as driving forces of change. *In:* Hurni H, Wiesmann U, Schertenleib R. *Research for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change: A Transdisciplinary Appraisal of Selected Regions of the World to Prepare Development-oriented Research Partnerships.* Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 1. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia, pp 293–327.

Benhabib S. 2005. *Los derechos de los otros. Extranjeros, residentes y ciudadanos.* Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Gedisa.

Boltvinik J. 2003. Tipología de los métodos de medición de la pobreza. Los métodos combinados. *Comercio Exterior* 63(5):453–463.

Bosniak L. 2006. *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cedano S, Dilla H. 2005. De problemas y oportunidades: intermediación urbana fronteriza en República Dominicana. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 67(1):99–126.

* Dilla H. 2006. *Urban Borderland Intermediation in the Dominican Republic: Three Case Studies* [PhD dissertation]. Lausanne, Switzerland: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL); also available at: http://www.ciudadesyfronteras.com/documentos/tesisharoldodilla.pdf; accessed on 14 August 2009.

ECLAC [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean]. 2006. *International Migration.* Latin American and the Caribbean Demographic Observatory Vol. 1. Santiago, Chile: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – Population Division of ECLAC and United Nations. Also available at: http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/8/27498/Observatoriodemografico.pdf; accessed on 14 August 2009.

Franco R. 2003. Major themes in the social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. *In:* Sojo C, editor. *Social Development in Latin America: Issues for Public Policy.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and The World Bank, pp 61–102.

Gallardo R, Osorio J. 1998. *Los rostros de la pobreza. El debate.* Mexico City, Mexico: Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara (ITESO) and Universidad Iberoamericana.

Gordon S. 2003. Social development and citizenship rights. *In:* Sojo C, editor. *Social Development in Latin America: Issues for Public Policy.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and The World Bank, pp 143–204.

* Hostettler S. 2007. *Land Use Changes and Transnational Migration: The Impact of Remittances in Western Mexico* [PhD dissertation]. Lausanne, Switzerland: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South.

Kapur D. 2005. Remittances: The new development mantra? *In:* Maimbo SM, Ratha D, editors. *Remittances: Development and Impact and Future Prospects.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, pp 331–360.

* Kaufmann V. 2008. *Les paradoxes de la mobilité.* Lausanne, Switzerland: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes (PPUR).

Levitt P, Nyberg-Sørensen N. 2004. *The Transnational Turn in Migration Studies.* Global Migration Perspectives No. 6. Also available at: http://www.gcim.org/gmp/Global%20Migration%20Perspectives%20No%206.pdf; accessed on 29 July 2009.

Lewis O. 1966. The culture of poverty. *In:* Gmelch G, Zenner W, editors. *Urban Life.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, pp 393–403.

Lomnitz L. 2001. *Redes Sociales, cultura y poder. Ensayos de antropología latinoamericana.* Mexico City, Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

Maimbo SM, Ratha D. 2005. *Remittances: Development and Impact and Future Prospects.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

* Martínez S. 2006. *International Migration on the Southern Border of Mexico: Guatemalan Women as Domestic Workers in Tapachula, Chiapas* [MSc research project]. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico: Centro de Estudios Superiores de México y Centroamérica (CESMECA), Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas (UNICACH). Available from Daniel Villafuerte Solís.

Morales-Gamboa A. 2004. *La formación de redes de activos sociales en las estrategias frente a la pobreza: el caso de León Norte en Nicaragua.* Final Report of the Becas research programme on poverty in Central America and the Caribbean. San José, Costa Rica: Comparative Research Programme on Poverty of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO-CROP).

Morales-Gamboa A. 2007. *La diáspora de la posguerra: regionalismo de los migrantes y dinámicas territoriales en América Central.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

Morales-Gamboa A. 2008. Migraciones, regionalismo y ciudadanía en Centroamérica. *In:* Villafuerte Solís D, García Aguilar MC, editores. *Migraciones en el Sur de México y Centroamérica.* Mexico City, Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, pp 49–75.

* Morales-Gamboa A, Pérez M. 2006. *Las prácticas sociales de transformación en el espacio urbano. El caso de la intermediación fronteriza entre San Carlos de Nicaragua y Los Chiles de Costa Rica.* Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South Phase 1 Final Research Report. San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

* Pedrazzini Y. 2005. *La violence des villes.* Paris, France: Editions de l'Atelier.

* Pedrazzini Y. 2006. *Joint Area of Case Studies Caribbean and Central America (JACS CCA): From Phase 1 to Phase 2 – A Series of Scientific and Institutional Transitions.* Paper presented at the JACS Horn of Africa 2nd Regional Workshop of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, Bahr Dar, Ethiopia, 21–25 February 2006. Available from Yves Pedrazzini (yves.pedrazzini@epfl.ch).

Pérez Sáinz JP, Mora Salas M. 2007. *La persistencia de la miseria en Centroamérica: una mirada desde la exclusión social.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Also available at: http://www.enlaceacademico.org/uploads/media/La_Persistencia_OK_01.pdf; accessed on 12 October 2009.

* Poschet L. 2006. *Villes à la frontière et transformation de l'espace: le cas de Haiti et la République Dominicaine* [PhD dissertation]. Lausanne, Switzerland: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).

Sassen S. 2006. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

* Schnabel A, Antillano JA, Granda Alviarez IC, Pedrazzini Y. In preparation. Operationalising human security in an urban setting: The experience of Caracas. *In:* Hurni H, Wiesmann U, editors. *Research for Development: A Synthesis of NCCR North-South Research, 2001–2008* [working title]. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 6. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia. Manuscript available from Yves Pedrazzini (yves.pedrazzini@epfl.ch).

* Schnabel A, Bürgi A, Pedrazzini Y, Shiferaw M, Iskakova GT, Supanaliev BT, Antillano JA, Granda Alviarez IC. 2006. *Operationalising Human Security for Livelihood Protection: Analysis, Monitoring and Mitigation of Existential Threats by and for Local Communities.* Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South Transversal Research Project. http://www.north-south.unibe.ch/content.php/page/id/78; accessed on 14 August 2009.

Sojo C, editor. 2003. *Social Development in Latin America: Issues for Public Policy.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

Sojo C, Pérez JP. 2003. Introduction: Reinventing the social dimension in Latin America. *In:* Sojo C, editor. *Social Development in Latin America: Issues for Public Policy.* San José, Costa Rica: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and The World Bank, pp 13–60.

Soysal YN. 1994. *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

* Thieme S. 2008. Sustaining livelihoods in multi-local settings: Possible theoretical linkages between transnational migration and livelihood studies. *Mobilities* 3(1):51–71.

Touraine A. 1999. *Crítica de la modernidad.* Buenos Aires, Argentina: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Villafuerte Solís D. 2008. Migración y desarrollo en el Área del Plan Puebla Panamá. *In:* Villafuerte Solís D, García Aguilar MC, editores. *Migraciones en el Sur de México y Centroamérica.* Mexico City, Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, pp 171–217.

Villafuerte Solís D, García Aguilar MC. 2008. *Migraciones en el Sur de México y Centroamérica.* Mexico City, Mexico: Miguel Ángel Porrúa.

28 Governance, Environmental Problems and Local Responses in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

Peter R.W. Gerritsen[1], Horacio Chamizo[2], Alejandra Guerrero de León[3], Sabine Masson[4], and Elizabeth Tilley[5]

Abstract

Development in the Mexican, Central American and Caribbean region today is heavily influenced by economic globalisation, causing transformations of its societies. Legal reforms, the retreat of the state and free trade arrangements strengthen the role of national and transnational actors but weaken local stakeholders. This has led to the exclusion of many local actors and has had negative impacts on the natural environment. The present article illustrates that social processes in the Central American region are highly differentiated, as they are influenced by a great number of different factors. Ongoing research seeks to analyse factors that delay or prevent solutions from being implemented or from being sustainable. It also aims to understand concrete responses and processes of social change among local actors. The article is based on a synthesis of several research projects focusing on governance, environmental problems and local responses, within a thematic framework developed by researchers participating in the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, a research programme on mitigating syndromes of global change. The framework was designed to enable an integrated approach to environmental problems and their underlying causes, and an analysis of local actors' responses regarding problems and solutions.

Keywords: Governance; environmental problems; local responses; Mexico; Central America; the Caribbean.

28.1   Introduction

We live in a highly globalised world characterised by increasing interdependence among nations. The term 'globalised' also refers to awareness of the world as a 'whole', redefining our thinking about many issues (Waters 1996). In the economic sphere, globalisation has to do with production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; it also relates to trade agreements and capital accumulation. In the political sphere, national and world governance are at issue. Finally, in the socio-cultural sphere, new expressions and symbols have emerged, which are exchanged at global scale through new patterns of social life (ibid.). The impacts of globalisation are multidimensional and affect multiple social actors, whose actions may take place at different organisational levels. In summary, globalisation impacts both daily social life and the natural environment.

The complexity of globalisation and its impacts represent a challenge to scientists seeking to promote sustainable development. Several academic institutions from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean[6] designed development-oriented research projects on sustainability issues within the framework of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme (Hurni et al 2004). This article presents work conducted within the line of research on governance, environmental problems and local responses; after outlining the overall design of the research conducted and clarifying some theoretical concepts, it presents results, synthesising them in a discussion and drawing conclusions.

28.2   Research design and methodology

The projects in our line of research explore the changes brought about by globalisation in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, and focus on the responses of actors and institutions to these changes, as well as on gaining a better understanding of governance processes related to environmental management, including the socio-cultural and health dimensions. Currently, these issues are being investigated in three graduate theses and one post-doctoral research project (Chamizo 2008; Guerrero 2008; Masson 2008; Salcido 2008). Although these projects apply different methodologies, they share an actor-oriented perspective, comparing views and strategies of different actors, such as farmers, politicians, scientists, and others. This article is the result of group discussions on results and theoretical concepts, held by

the authors during the period from October 2007 through 2008 and based on a draft paper that was circulated and modified by the participating authors, resulting in the current final version.

28.3   Theoretical concepts and empirical evidence

Nature, resources, actors and governance processes are central concepts in this article. Nature (or the environment) is understood as 'what is out there', i.e. the world surrounding human beings. Indeed, many natural attributes surround us, such as trees, crops, animals, land, soil, forests, air, etc. Nature can thus be considered a biophysical entity that allows human beings (i.e. actors) to produce, harvest, gather, or hunt, as well as to smell, taste, touch, hear, or feel (natural resources) (Ingold 1996). In relation to this concept of nature, an understanding of ecological evolution plays a crucial role. Social, cultural, political and economic relationships also need to be included in this framework. They vary according to geographic location, infrastructure, season and activities performed. In other words, nature is produced and reproduced through both ecological evolution and a historical process of occupation and transformation of space by an entire society; it is therefore the result of a historical synthesis of nature–society exchanges (Botkin and Keller 2005; Gerritsen and Morales 2007).

Anthropogenic activities can cause environmental deterioration, for example in the quality of air and water, through generation of solid waste and wastewater, as well as through soil erosion and contamination. The current origin of many of these problems is linked to globalisation (Gerritsen and Morales 2007; Hostettler 2007). One of the negative consequences of globalisation that can be observed is unbalanced appropriation of nature, challenging governments to design sustainable management systems. This involves renewing nature–society relationships; in this respect, transdisciplinary approaches to natural resource management are promising (Hurni et al 2004).

Local actors are of strategic importance in natural resource management since they have a vested interest in sustainable development. An actor's strategy is guided by values as well as potentials and limitations arising from the context in which action is embedded (Long 2001). The local context is the socio-physical space in which action acquires specificity. It not only contains local resources but is also the space where social processes such as

globalisation (as a whole) manifest their influence (Gerritsen and Morales 2007). Actors' strategies are dynamic; they change as a result of local and external processes. Moreover, the local context is not the exclusive space of one actor; on the contrary, a great many social actors encounter one another here. These encounters can be highly heterogeneous in nature and often include power struggles. Thus, the local context is an *arena* where actors negotiate values and worldviews (Leeuwis 2000). An actor's ability to influence the local context depends on their degree of agency, i.e. their knowledge of the (ecological, political and socio-economic) context and their ability to change it (Long 2001; Portner 2005; Bowen and Gerritsen 2007).

Mega-projects are a current trend in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; their aim is to optimise natural resource management in unexploited areas. They operate in highly strategic geopolitical spaces of great biological and cultural wealth. Efforts to strengthen these projects in public policies have been intensified during the past decade, as exemplified by the Plan Puebla Panamá (PPP), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the United States, Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (RD-CAFTA), all of which are specific to the region. These policies are characterised by a contradiction: on the one hand, they pave the way for the construction of dams, bridges, highways, harbours and other infrastructure, and also allow for the introduction of agro-industrial production systems or mass tourism projects. On the other hand, they focus on intensified conservation and the creation of protected natural areas. They are also accompanied by new discourses that focus on nature protection and renewed attention to indigenous cultures. Consequently, new types of projects are emerging, such as eco- and ethno-touristic development projects (UNEP 2000; Escárzaga and Gutiérrez 2005; Masson 2008). Conflicting interests among local, national and transnational actors generate contradictions among different types of projects. For example, transnational companies are exploiting protected areas for tourism, genetics, aquifers, mining, timber, and oil (Fundación PROLANSATE 2005; Viehweider 2007).

Within this context, sustainable development can turn out to be paradoxical. Projects and policies not based on indigenous rights and participation foster renewed expressions of racism and colonialism, and concretely threaten indigenous culture and territory (Minh-ha 1989; Restrepo 2004; Stavenhagen 2005; Masson 2006). Despite the recent approval of the Universal Declaration of Indigenous Rights by the United Nations, there are numerous violations against indigenous communities and organisations.

Governmental institutions play an important role in achieving sustainability. Often, however, problems in the local context are related to a lack of political will, insufficient promotion and low public awareness, poor policies at all levels, weak institutional frameworks, inappropriate and poorly utilised resources, and the absence of consideration of consumer preferences (Eawag/Sandec 2006; André de la Porte 2007).

Public policies can be understood as an interrelated set of decisions focusing on a specific area of social conflict or tension. Decisions are taken within a public institutional framework, which grants them enforcement capacity (Vallés 2002). Nevertheless, decisions should be adapted to the particularities of each locality. Thus conciliation among differing interests is important. Until now, many policies have been implemented in a top-down manner; this approach is based on the hierarchical primacy of (formal) authority with an autocratic management style and discontinuity between political administrative universes. In this model, hierarchical control is supposed to be sufficient to assure the desired effects (Meny and Thoenig 1992; Gerritsen and Morales 2007). However, collective actions developed in this way may fail to address the specific needs of certain actors, especially when representation is not – or only partially – recognised by political elites or (public or private) service providers. Such situations frequently lead to repressive action and human rights violations. Women's rights are especially vulnerable to such policies, which reinforce pre-existing gender differences (Masson 2008).

Current trends in Latin America, in general, and in the region under discussion, in particular, are geared towards privatisation of public services, assuming a progressive change in the role of the state regarding stewardship and regulation. However, the state often lacks capacity, and institutional design frequently does not favour market regulation (Chamizo 2008). Furthermore, the development of efficiency-oriented managerial models has displaced issues such as equity, sustainability, and resource access (UNEP 2000). Consequently, proposals for the democratisation of public management, which imply the development of citizenship in favour of equality and take account of the development of liberal democracies based on the participation of civil society, have become important. Such democratisation of public management has been carried out based on the design, implementation and development of the concept of governance (Chamizo 2008). In the present article we understand governance as the process of interaction between different actors for political decision-making within both formal

and informal institutional frameworks. Governance refers to government action that directs or guides interaction between actors towards solving conflicts and fulfilling needs (Kersbergen and Waarden 2001; Prats 2003).

From the perspective of governance, appropriate policy application relates to the formulation of objectives in such a manner that they can gradually be adapted to specific local conditions and thus are more easily linked to specific actor perspectives. Such adaptation not only depends on policy implementers but also on the context, the actors, and the particular social relationships constructed in the course of interaction (Vallés 2002). An institutional approach to actor coordination, including the participation of society at large, is required to find integral solutions to environmental problems that also allow for (active) inclusion of local actors' interests and perspectives.

28.4   Environmental costs and social problems

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, the environmental costs of globalisation are high and will further increase unless the issues of social problems, economic stability and urban growth are resolved (Barrera et al 2004; André de la Porte 2007; Gerritsen and Morales 2007; Hostettler 2007). The main environmental problems that affect populations in terms of food security and cultural sovereignty are: water pollution and depletion and conflicts deriving from water use and management; excessive exploitation of land and marine resources; loss of biodiversity and habitat degradation; overgrazing; erosion of soil and loss of nutrients; deforestation; atmospheric pollution; contamination from heavy metals, pharmaceutical and industrial products; and lack of urban solid waste management (UNEP 2000; Schwentesius et al 2003; Barrera et al 2004). Related to this, land privatisation and mega-project development in many countries influence access to resources and self-sufficiency among local actors. In Mexico, a clear example of this is the 1992 agrarian reform and the subsequent weakening of rural community structures, which facilitated land sale and purchase. In Guatemala, similar processes are occurring within the framework of the latest agrarian reform (Janvry et al 1997).

Economic globalisation also affects agricultural production through the transformation of traditional diversified farming systems into mono-cultures (Portner 2005; Gerritsen and Morales 2007; Hostettler 2007). For instance, in the Garifuna zone of the northern coast of Honduras, indigenous communities find that single-crop farming and tourism projects limit their ability to continue fishing or growing cassava and rice. Their access to both the

sea and the land is reduced, if not altogether made impossible, which in turn increases migratory flows (Masson 2008). Moreover, remittances are emerging as a major source of survival and are reinforcing further monetarisation of farming communities (Portner 2005; Hostettler 2007; Viehweider 2007).

An important cultural impact of globalisation is related to changes in local actors' worldviews regarding nature, which is being valued more in economic or instrumental terms, thus affecting ancestral visions and imagery (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). This impact has complex consequences, especially when it leads to a process of identity recovery by means of tourism projects, for example, as in the case of the Lenca Route in Honduras, where it generated intra-community divisions (Masson 2008).

Gender issues in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean are related to environmental problems. Reduced access to land is reinforced by gender discrimination that attributes land ownership mostly to men. Land privatisation represents a drawback for women's access to land (Arizpe 1989; Masson 2006). Current trends also reinforce gender differences with respect to food security and sovereignty: women are the ones who accept work overloads to provide family security, although they are first to suffer from food scarcity and its associated health problems. When new management schemes are developed for resolving environmental problems – for example, water contamination, reduced water availability or firewood scarcity – households are directly affected, particularly those managed by women. Women's health can be affected by pollution, but also by work overloads (Masson 2008).

Globalisation also has sanitary repercussions in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. In Costa Rica, almost 70% of the population have septic tanks, which is an appropriate solution when population densities are low; however, population density has increased, demanding new public regulations and policies. Despite this development, the regulatory framework established by the state has not changed, and continues to promote technologies that are inappropriate under the new conditions. Inadequate use of technology and lack of flexibility in public policies, also in terms of financial resources for infrastructure maintenance, have caused increased exposure to contamination and susceptibility to disease. It is usually women and children who are the most vulnerable, since they spend most of their time within their communities (Portner 2005) and come into contact with the environment more directly (e.g. when washing clothes or playing in contaminated water). Moreover, these groups generally have more limited access to health services (WSSCC 2006).

28.5   Responses from local actors and institutions

Globalisation has strengthened processes of migration by farmers and rural labourers to the cities in search of work, services and wealth (Portner 2005; Hostettler 2007). However, migrants in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean often arrive at their destination with no skills, no contacts and nowhere to live. As a consequence, they are forced to build their own shelters in the most marginalised areas of the cities: ravines, dumps, and the peri-urban fringes that no one else will occupy (Torres 2008). Without water or sanitation services, access to transportation, or legal access to services, the residents of these informal settlements (slums) live in dangerous, unhealthy, contaminated surroundings. The lack of political interest in these areas or of political will to change the situation manifests itself in appalling conditions: standing, undrained water favours the proliferation of malaria and dengue, open defecation causes a near-constant epidemic of diarrhoea and skin disease, women are routinely assaulted at night when seeking a place to relieve themselves, and 'merchants' of clean water charge up to 6800% of what someone connected to the city network would pay (Davis 2006).

However, these problems have not gone unnoticed, and there are options for solutions; in fact, there are many. Where there is no access to a well or an aqueduct, rainwater can be collected to meet domestic needs and, in certain cases, to serve as a source of drinking water, thus reducing the need to purchase water or carry it over long distances (Gould and Nissen-Petersen 1999). Light or energy for cooking can be generated using bio-digesters that simultaneously collect and sterilise faecal material, thereby improving the health and well-being of both the owner (the family) and the community as a whole (FAO 1996; Rose 1999). In this respect, it is important to note that the problems of improving environmental sanitation (i.e. sanitation, solid waste, drainage, and water) are not technical, but institutional, legal and psychological. They are not technical, because cost-effective, appropriate technologies exist for almost every situation; the problem is more often the reluctance of city engineers and planners to venture the unknown. Furthermore, the design of codes and laws in Mexico and most Central American and Caribbean countries is inspired by earlier colonial legislation; in many cases alternative technologies are not only considered unsavoury, but are downright illegal (Chamizo 2008). In Costa Rica, for example, only septic tanks and sewer systems designed according to strict regulations are legal: an enormous and unnecessary barrier to making any progress towards sustainable sanitation for vulnerable populations. Management of alternative

solutions and overcoming the taboos associated with 'shit' are harder still; nevertheless, confronted with the choice between dying in filth or taking action, communities have stopped waiting for long-promised sewers and have started to act. One approach is that of Household-Centred Environmental Sanitation (Eawag/Sandec 2006), which can take place in private and public spaces, and with or without governmental or non-governmental support. However, self-management solutions are based on the assumption that local interest organisations and appropriate tools exist. Failures of self-management projects are often related to contexts of oppression, insecurity and weak local organisation, all of which are symptoms that drove people to these places in the first place (Smith and Marin 2004).

The current situation is a waiting game played out between governments that have no interest in or resources for financing services for 'slums', on the one hand, and the residents who endure increasingly dismal living conditions, on the other. Only rapid dissemination of knowledge (and not improved technologies!), social marketing leading to problem awareness (hygiene promotion) and the rewriting of archaic codes and laws will free the roughly 30% (Schteingart 1989) of Latin American city dwellers from the unserviced environmental peril in which they live (Torres 2008).

It should be noted that despite the far-reaching impact of globalisation in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, a growing number of local actors are seeking alternative strategies to halt its negative effects (Toledo 2000; Gerritsen and Morales 2007). In rural areas, strategies seek to reinforce diversification, family employment and local resource use. These strategies arise not only in agricultural production, but also in the social, economic, technical and political fields (Toledo 2000; Portner 2005; Gerritsen and Morales 2007). Additionally, experience with these strategies demonstrates that it is possible to construct endogenous development models (Gerritsen and Morales 2007) which may serve as a platform for the design of new public policies that respond efficiently to the social, economic and environmental problems and necessities of each region (André de la Porte 2007; Hostettler 2007). Often, the design and implementation of these new development models, based on local actors' agency, productive autonomy and the creation of new rural–urban linkages, is an outcome of collective action of political organisations and social movements (Gerritsen and Morales 2007).

In Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, many social movements are facing the local effects of globalisation and actively seeking to transform

their local realities through sustainable alternatives, including public poli-
cies and institutions. Regarding natural resources, their orientation is direct-
ed towards defending their ecological, food and cultural sovereignty on their
territory. Their struggles have also generated new socio-cultural demands
that focus on self-determination (Diaz-Polanco 1999; Escárzaga and Gutiér-
rez 2005). Moreover, they address the issue of sustainability by resisting
land and resource privatisation and by proposing (and enforcing) other types
of management and a different type of society–nature relationship (Gerrit-
sen and Morales 2007).

28.6 Discussion and conclusion

In this article, we described research concerned with governance, environ-
mental problems and local responses in Mexico, Central America and the
Caribbean. We also presented the most important regional issues. Social
processes in Mexico and the various Central American and Caribbean coun-
tries are highly differentiated and are influenced by a great many factors.
Ongoing research is analysing these factors from the perspective of sustain-
able development.

The search for a (new) democratic governance model is a key issue, imply-
ing actor participation in supporting institutional frameworks that permit
increased local decision-making (André de la Porte 2007). Conflict reso-
lution as part of these democratic governance processes demands interac-
tion between multiple actors in order to guarantee human rights and fulfil-
ment of basic needs. Currently, both issues are pressing within the region,
and special attention must be paid to gender issues. Making gender-related
problems, activities and roles in sustainable development and democratic
governance processes visible is the first step towards achieving equitable
transformations and consequently equitable societies (Yuval-Davis 1997;
Pateman 2000; Kabeer 2005).

In summary, governance research should necessarily include the search for
sustainable development schemes that are constructed above all at the local
level, thus allowing for a more democratic society to develop in a healthy
environment. The acceptance of such representative democracy depends
on the participation of, and on trust between, the actors involved. In this
respect, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean are still barren ground.

Endnotes

[1] Peter R.W. Gerritsen works as a rural sociologist at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources–IMECBIO, South Coast University Centre, University of Guadalajara, in Autlán, Mexico. His research focuses on sociological aspects of natural resource management and rural development. He has been working in Mexico for the past 16 years.
E-mail: petergerritsen@cucsur.udg.mx

[2] Horacio Alejandro Chamizo García is a professor and researcher at the School of Health Technologies, at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Costa Rica. He holds a PhD in Government and Public Policy from the same university and a Master's degree in Public Health from the National School of Health in Spain. His initial Master's was in Geography at the University of Havana, Cuba. He has conducted research in over 20 projects and published over 50 papers on public policy, public health and environmental epidemiology.
E-mail: horacio.chamizo@ucr.ac.cr

[3] Alejandra Guerrero de León is a PhD candidate at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources–IMECBIO, South Coast University Centre, University of Guadalajara, within the framework of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. She works within IMECBIO's programme on Biosystematics, Ecology and Management of Natural and Agricultural Resources. Her project is entitled "Analysis of Water Governance Processes on the Santiago and Ayuquila Rivers in the State of Jalisco".
E-mail: guerreroleon40@hotmail.com

[4] Sabine Masson worked as a senior researcher within the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID). She is now an assistant professor and researcher at the Centre for Gender Studies LIEGE of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. Sabine Masson is conducting her PhD research in the field of the social sciences, specialising in gender, racial and post-colonial studies, with a focus on intersectionality. Her research focuses on social movements in Central America, especially indigenous women's organisations, as well as migration to Switzerland related to global change and international and sexual division of work.
E-mail: sabine.masson@unil.ch

[5] Elizabeth Tilley is Project Officer at the Swiss Federal Institute for Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag), in the Department of Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries (Sandec). Her research interests are decentralised sanitation technologies, nutrient recovery from sanitation products, and inclusive and accessible sanitation for different user groups.
E-mail: elizabeth.tilley@eawag.ch

[6] These institutions are included in the Joint Area of Case Studies (JACS) Central America and the Caribbean (CCA), a component of the NCCR North-South programme.

References

Publications elaborated within the framework of NCCR North-South research are indicated by an asterisk (*).

* André de la Porte C. 2007. *Integrated Water Resources Management: Limits and Potential in the Municipality of El Grullo, Mexico* [PhD dissertation]. Lausanne, Switzerland: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South.

Arizpe L. 1989. *Women in the Development of Mexico and Latin America* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias (CRIM) and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

* Barrera A, Bolay JC, García C, Hostettler S, Gerritsen PRW, Mejía R, Ortiz C, Sánchez M, Pedrazzinni Y, Poschet L, Rabinovich A. 2004. JACS Central America and the Caribbean. Key challenges of sustainable development and research priorities: Social practices as driving forces for change. *In:* Hurni H, Wiesmann U, Schertenleib R, editors. *Research for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change: A Transdisciplinary Appraisal of Selected Regions of the World to Prepare Development-oriented Research Partnerships*. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 1. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia, pp 293–327.

Botkin DB, Keller EA. 2005. *Environmental Science: Earth as a Living Planet.* 5th edition [1982[1]]. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

* Bowen S, Gerritsen PRW. 2007. Reverse leasing and power dynamics among agave farmers in western Mexico. *Agriculture and Human Values* 24(4):473–488.

* Chamizo GHA. 2008. *Analysis of the Management of Public Policies for Environmental Sanitation in Human Settlements in Costa Rica, in the Period 1998–2006* [in Spanish; PhD dissertation]. San José, Costa Rica: University of Costa Rica.

Davis M. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. New York, NY: Verso.

Diaz-Polanco H. 1999. *Regional Autonomy: The Autodetermination of the Indian People* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores.

* Eawag/Sandec [Swiss Federal Institute for Aquatic Science and Technology, Department of Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries]. 2006. *Household-Centred Environmental Sanitation* [in Spanish]. Dübendorf, Switzerland: Eawag.

Escárzaga F, Gutiérrez R, editors. 2005. *The Indigenous Movement in Latin America: Resistance and Alternative Project* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (UACM).

FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations]. 1996. *Biogas Technology: A Training Manual for Extension*. Kathmandu, Nepal: FAO and Consolidated Management Services Nepal (CMS).

Fundación PROLANSATE [Fundación para la Protección de Lancetilla, Punta Sal e Texiguat]. 2005. *Technical Report of the PROLANSATE Foundation Regarding the Environmental Impact Study of the Project Los Micos Beach and Golf Resort* [in Spanish]. Tela, Honduras: Fundación PROLANSATE. Also available at: http://www.scribd.com/doc/11564217/Respuesta-Prolansate-a-Los-Micos-Beach-Resort; accessed on 27 February 2009.

* Gerritsen PRW, Morales J. 2007. *Local Responses to Economic Globalization: Regional Products from the South Coast Region of Jalisco* [in Spanish]. Guadalajara, Mexico: University of Guadalajara, Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara (ITESO), Red de Alternativas Sustentables Agropecuarias de Jalisco (RASA).

Gould J, Nissen-Petersen E. 1999. *Rainwater Catchment Systems for Domestic Supply, Design, Construction and Implementation.* London, UK: Intermediate Technology Publications.

* Guerrero AA. 2008. *Analysis of Water Governance Processes on the Santiago and Ayuquila Rivers in the State of Jalisco* [in Spanish; PhD proposal]. Autlán, Mexico: University of Guadalajara and Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Available from Alejandra Guerrero de León.

* Hostettler S. 2007. *Land Use Changes and Transnational Migration: The Impact of Remittances in Western Mexico* [PhD dissertation]. Lausanne, Switzerland: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South.

* Hurni H, Wiesmann U, Schertenleib R. 2004. *Research for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change: A Transdisciplinary Appraisal of Selected Regions of the World to Prepare Development-oriented Research Partnerships.* Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 1. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia.

Ingold T. 1996. Hunting and gathering as ways of perceiving the environment. *In:* Ellen R, Fukui K, editors. *Redefining Nature: Ecology, Culture and Domestication.* Explorations in Anthropology. Oxford, UK: Berg, pp 117–156.

Janvry A de, Gordillo G, Sadoulet E. 1997. *Mexico's Second Agrarian Reform: Household and Community Responses, 1990–1994.* Ejido Reform Research Project. La Jolla and San Diego, CA: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies (USMEX) and University of California.

Kabeer N, editor. 2005. *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions.* London, UK: Zed Books.

Kersbergen K van, Waarden F van. 2001. *Shifts in Governance: Problems of Legitimacy and Accountability.* The Hague, The Netherlands: Social Science Research Council (MaGW) of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). Also available at: http://www.uu.nl/uupublish/content/NWOShiftsinGovernanceDefText.PDF; accessed on 28 July 2009.

Leeuwis C. 2000. Reconceptualising participation for sustainable rural development: Towards a negotiation approach. *Development and Change* 31:931–959.

Long N. 2001. *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives.* London, UK: Routledge.

* Masson S. 2006. Sexe/genre, classe, race: décoloniser le féminisme dans un contexte mondialisé. Réflexions à partir de la lutte des femmes indiennes au Chiapas [in French with English abstract]. *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 25(3):56–75.

* Masson S. 2008. *Conflicts on Indigenous Territoriality in Honduras: A Gender and Post-colonial Perspective.* Paper presented at the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South Site Visit at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on 21–25 April 2008. Available from Sabine Masson.

Meny I, Thoenig JC. 1992. *Public Policies* [in Spanish]. Barcelona, Spain: Ciencia Política.

Minh-ha T. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other.* Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

Pateman C. 2000. Feminism and democracy [in French]. *In:* Ballmer-Cao TH, Mottier V, Sgier L, editors. *Genre et politique: débats et perspectives.* Collection Folio/Essais. Paris, France: Editions Gallimard, pp 88–119.

* Portner B. 2005. *Land-use Strategies of Migrant and Non-migrant Households in Western Mexico* [MSc thesis]. Bern, Switzerland: University of Bern. Also available at: http://www.north-south.unibe.ch/content.php/publication/id/1967; accessed on 19 November 2009.

Prats JO. 2003. The concept and analysis of governability [in Spanish]. *Revista Instituciones y Desarrollo* 14/15:239–269. Also available at: http://www.grupochorlavi.org/php/doc/documentos/Elconceptoyel.pdf; accessed on 27 February 2009.

Restrepo E. 2004. Biopolitics and alternity: Dilemmas of the ethnicization of the black Colombians. *In:* Restrepo E, Rojas A, editors. *Conflicto e (in)visibilidad: retos en los estudios de la gente negra en Colombia.* Colección Política de la alteridad. Popayán, Colombia: Editorial University of Cauca, pp 271–300.

Rose GD. 1999. *Community-based Technologies for Domestic Wastewater Treatment and Reuse: Options for Urban Agriculture.* Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

* Salcido S. 2008. *Governance of Water Management in the Municipalities of Unión de Tula and Zapotitlá de Vadilla* [in Spanish; MSc proposal]. Autlán, Mexico: University of Guadalajara and Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. Available from Peter Gerritsen.

Schteingart M. 1989. *The Producers of Habitable Space: State, Enterprise and Society in Mexico City* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: El Colegio de México.

Schwentesius R, Gómez MA, Calva JL, Hernández L, editors. 2003. *Can the Countryside Endure More?* [in Spanish]. Texcoco, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo and La Jornada.

Smith S, Marin L. 2004. Water and the rural poor in Latin America: The case of Tlamacazapa, Guerrero, Mexico. *Hydrogeology Journal* 13:346–349.

Stavenhagen R. 2005. The emergence of indigenous people as new political and social actors in Latin America [in Spanish]. *In:* Escárzaga F, Gutiérrez R, editors. *The Indigenous Movement in Latin America: Resistance and Alternative Project* [in Spanish]. Puebla, Mexico: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (UACM), pp 49–61.

Toledo VM. 2000. *Peace in Chiapas: Ecology, Indigenous Struggles and Alternative Modernity* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and Ediciones Quinto Sol.

Torres HG. 2008. *Social and Environmental Aspects of Peri-urban Growth in Latin American Megacities.* Paper presented at the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Population Distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and Development, New York, 21–23 January 2008. Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/ EGM_PopDist/P10_Torres.pdf; accessed on 27 February 2009.

Tuhiwai Smith L. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.* London, UK: Zed Books.

UNEP [United Nations Environment Programme]. 2000. *World Environmental Perspectives: Latin America and the Carribean* [in Spanish]. Mexico City, Mexico: Mundi-Prensa.

Vallés JM. 2002. *Political Science: An Introduction* [in Spanish]. 2nd edition [2000[1]]. Barcelona, Spain: Ariel Ciencia Política.

Viehweider T. 2007. *Bahía de Tela: Honduras and the Advancement of the Plan Puebla Panamá* [in Spanish]. Eco Portal.Net. El Directorio Ecológico y Natural. http://www. ecoportal.net/Contenido/Temas_Especiales/Economia/Bahia_de_Tela_Honduras_y_ el_avance_del_Plan_Puebla_Panama; accessed on 27 February 2009.

Waters M. 1996. *Globalization.* London, UK: Routledge.

* WSSCC [Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council]. 2006. *For Her It's the Big Issue: Putting Women at the Centre of Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene.* Geneva, Switzerland: WSSCC.

Yuval-Davis N. 1997. Women, citizenship and difference. *Feminist Review* 57(1):4–27.