SÍNTESIS
En este artículo, se hace referencia a las tendencias estructurales que se reflejan en las respuestas de los jóvenes excluidos denominados Latinos (hispano-hablantes), que abarcan desde niños de la calle hasta jóvenes radicales (dentro de bandas o fuera de ellas) y finalmente a los emigrantes. Estos últimos encaran un desafío inusual como resultado de ser indocumentados, forzándolos a buscar la movilidad dentro de un sistema formal que bloquea su camino. Se revisan estas tendencias a través de una visión “positiva”, centrándose principalmente en los jóvenes Latinos que están utilizando diferentes estrategias para luchar contra la exclusión social. El objetivo es analizar la temporalidad paradójica, que indica que a medida que se aprende más, se vuelve más distante la posibilidad de transformar los problemas apremiantes de la sociedad. Se intenta indagar sobre la manera adecuada intervenir, utilizando un mayor conocimiento, sobre la alarmante situación de uno de los grupos sociales más excluidos, los jóvenes Latinos y también la manera de alertar y visualizar las formas de integrar a aquellos jóvenes que emigran y se convierten en indocumentados.

FROM EXCLUSION TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: THE CASE OF LATINO YOUTHS

ABSTRACT
In this article, I refer to structural tendencies reflected in the responses of excluded Latinos youths, who range from street children to radical youths (gangs or not) and finally to migrants. The latter, face unusual challenges as a result of being undocumented, forcing them to pursue mobility within a formal system that blocks their way. I review these tendencies through a “positive” lens, focusing mainly on Latino youth who are using different strategies to fight social exclusion. I aim to raise the paradoxical temporality, which indicates that as we learn and analyze more, we tend to move further away from the possibility of transforming pressing problems in society. I raise the question of how to intervene using more knowledge in the alarming situation of one of the most excluded social groups, Latino Youth and also of how to alert and visualize ways of integrating those youth who migrate and become undocumented.

Palabras clave: Jóvenes, exclusión, violencia y migración internacional

Key-words: Youths, exclusion, violence and international migration.

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This article focuses on a priority topic of interest during recent years of research—integrating two realities of Latino youths: those disadvantaged surviving in the Latino metropolis and those who migrate to the United States.

By outlining social tendencies, I aim to show trends that most disadvantaged youths follow within their original countries in response to their conditions. We know that a small group of excluded youth usually becomes active in formal society, but a significant number of them experience ongoing exclusion. In the worst case scenario, Latino youths stay trapped as street children, living without alternatives. For them, the major means of survival appears to be recycling street trash. They live in very poor conditions and die at an early stage of life—physically and socially—as juvenile prisoners.

The two contrasting social trends are characterized either by

1- Youths becoming informal or illegal workers, that are increasingly incorporated into the informal and illegal economy of Latin American cities, characterized by daily improvisation and often violence. This trend reflects the growing number of children and youth living in extreme poverty and exposed to the risk of misery, violence, and sometimes death.

2- Or, by contrast Youths migrating abroad (R. Hernandez 1999); (Lopez-Castro 2007); (Kandel and Massey 2002). That increasingly decides to go in search of adventure, work, opportunities, and alternatives—at least provisionally—becoming an immigrant in urban areas of the United States.

The migration process offers a possibility for youths to go further the structural exclusion, and restrictions of the border to enter the international labor market. Then, as an immigrant face daily challenges as a result of being undocumented and being active workers in a hostile environment. Despite these adverse conditions, they offer some evidence of social mobility within a formal system in which their progress is largely blocked.

In the long road, I seek to connect the problems faced by youths currently living in the Latin American metropolis to those encountered by the Latino migrant youths in United States, in link with the process of globalization.

A number of authors in Latin America have done ethnographic work that demonstrates the first tendency already mentioned (Sanchez-R 2006; Sanchez-R, Pedrazzini 1998; Zubillaga-Cisneros 2001; Briceño-Leon-Zubillaga 2001; Briceño-Leon 2006; Marquez 1999; Pedrazzini 2006; Tavares 2002). In general, the globalization of society has resulted in the globalization of social problems, and the social inequalities and exclusion are now characteristic of urban areas around the world. The differences from one country to another are primarily expressed in terms of the proportions of population living in poverty and the relative number excluded from highly specialized job markets.

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1/ Informal work can be defined by a gradient of activities, from the simple trampa o mata tigre to extreme activities related with a criminal economy.

2/ The thoughts presented here are influenced by the work experience and research done with youths and children who live in Latino metropolis as well as those young Latinos who migrated to America.
The information technology revolution and the restructuring of capitalism have induced a new form of society, the network society characterized by the globalization of strategically decisive economic activities (Castells 1997). In today’s Information Society globalization has generated a tendency toward social exclusion, which has in turn affected the youngest inhabitants of this world (M. Castells 1998). In Latin America especially, the existing conditions of poverty and social urgency have increased dramatically, with youth being excluded from the formal mechanisms of society while at the same time generating a perverse attraction to radical actions and high risk activities (Sanchez and Pedrazzini 1992-1998); (Pedrazzini 2005).

All countries and territories are influenced by this dual logic, owing to the operation of transnational networks and dynamic factors of globalization, which yield social segments and territories that, are segregated in the interior of each country, region, or city. Of course, the relative number of excluded people varies greatly depending on the region of the world where competition operates (M. Castells 2001); but the condition of Latino youths living in large metropolitan areas is so quite alarming. In situations of extreme social urgency, declining socioeconomic mobility, and crisis, the situation of children and youths drifts strongly towards exclusion, reinforcing the polarization already mentioned. At the same time privileged social groups are incorporated within the new technologies of information and their associated mobility ladders are differentiated from the poor who remain excluded and further from integration.

Globalization also, speeds up flows of capital, information, and population. Within this dynamic process, some Latino youths seek greater opportunity by leaving behind their origins of exclusion and sometimes violence and strike out on their own upon one of the most important adventure that life offers them: migration to the north. Others decide on an immediate exit, which usually means joining informal and illegal economic activities and using violence without negotiation because there is no time for mediation.

In a dynamic that link globalization and international migration, transnationalism captures the reality of social life in a globalizing market economy (Sassen 2007); (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998) have labeled international migration as “a globalization from below” recognizing the fact that is the practical instrument by which ordinary people often respond to profound structural shift in national and international circumstances in motion by new patterns of global trade and investment under a philosophy of neoliberalism (Massey, Sanchez-R and Behrman 2006)

In previous work, I have argued that the expression of urban violence is not an isolated act since it is fast becoming part of interconnected activities that traverse all levels of society. Informal and illegal economic activities are generating a multi-plural world in which a perverse criminal economy has compromised different levels of society (Sanchez-R 2006).
The following table indicates the number of murders per 100,000 people in four selected countries in Latin America. In this data, Colombia has double the rate of murder, compared with Venezuela, San Salvador and Brazil, leaving Mexico with the lowest rate. However, if we combine the two types of violence, murders and aggravated assaults, Mexico takes the first place, followed by Colombia, Venezuela and then San Salvador.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Murder/100.000</th>
<th>Assault</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>22.98</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>69.98</td>
<td>93.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>14.11</td>
<td>185.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Salvador</td>
<td>38.80</td>
<td>63.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>33.20</td>
<td>105.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: From Interpol Crime and Society
http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/rwinslow/index.html

Although there is no direct correlation between excluded youths and criminal responsibility, there is an alarming majority of murders concentrated in younger ages from segregated neighborhoods, either as a result of gang conflict or as a repressive police intervention. There are some worldwide estimations pointing out that every day 565 youth between ages of 10-29 were murder. In the year 2000, a number of 199,000 youths died as a consequence of violence giving a rate of 9.2 murders for every 100,000 inhabitants. This rate varies between continents from 1 murder by 100,000 persons in Europe, 11 in United States, 17.6 in Africa, and 34.6 in Latin America. In general youth violence has become a very important problem in Latin American countries, where rates of murders are the most elevated in the world. Colombia has 84.4; El Salvador 50.2; Brasil 32.5; Venezuela 25 and México 15.3 (OMS, 2002) in (Briceño-Leon 2007).

Recent information from the CICPC\(^3\) Venezuela shows that irregular groups committed 305 kidnappings in the year 2007. Most of them occurred in states bordering Colombia, such as Zulia (81), Barinas (37) and Táchira (39). Newspapers mentioned data from a survey implemented through the popular network, which reported 4375 crimes in the Municipio Sucre-Miranda State\(^4\) in which 83.2% of the perpetrators were youths younger than 25 years old and 80% of the crimes were murders. The Venezuelan Observatory of Violence, which tabulates the number of crimes committed in Venezuela in the year 2006, registered 12,237\(^5\), representing 61% of the total of number of threats against human security.

4/ Including the barrios, La Dolorita, Caucaguita, Barrio Unión, José Félix Ribas, Julián Blanco, and San Isidro.
The structural trends

Further on, I will review the two dominants trends that characterized urban Latino youths, both in countries of origin as well as in their destination to United States. For this review, I will used indicators to sustain the principal argument, combining different sources of information to compare, social trends observed consistently over time and across different countries.

Disadvantage children and youths

My intent here is not to dissect the problems of street children and youth but only to establish a relation between their undocumented conditions, having no identity and name, and the inevitable legal repercussions. A lack of documents condemns them throughout their lives, from a childhood in which they are already illegal because of wandering the streets and lacking a home to the first encounter with police, where street children are considered guilty of an offense by the legal and repressive system. We are witnessing an incongruity of illegality, the impossibility of returning to the nucleus of the family or integrating into the school system: being a transgressor in the street without documents.

The current legislation used to solve problems today has overlooked the possibility of integration to the system. Legislation needs to be transformed and rethought, from new perspective. Past laws implemented to control children and youths from the streets might have worked as a reformist policy in an era during which numbers were controllable and the problem was marginal. In this case, the state assumed and absorbed the problem in a variety of ways. In the twenty-first century however, it is unthinkable to apply the same policy of integration. It is impossible for youths to return to the traditional family structure, given that they are on the street for survival purposes and thus “by choice.” Returning to school or traditional institutions of integration is practically impossible without identity documents. It is impossible to obtain documents if the parents do not register their children. It is impossible to be registered if there is no father, and—sometimes—the mother does not know how to do it; therefore, it is better to forget altogether. To treat the problem as an individual or minor one is not feasible because these youths are already social actors of the urban metropolis. There are by now 100 million children who live partially or totally on the streets of Latin America. Currently are two generations raised on the street, including boys, girls, adolescents, and young teen mothers with babies. The population of the street is the living and walking misery of the large Latino urban places. New legislation is needed to allow for the regularization of identities, so that given name and surname can be registered. With an identity, one might dream of possibly incorporating into formal society.

With their dirty metropolitan faces and lack of identification papers or memory of roots, (which they have no intention of remembering) changing facts by any means so as not to regret anything, when they are exposed to the formal elements of society and mistreated. Without established identities, they live the worst as a routine, and when the worst get even worse, they die skinny, malnourished, misunderstood, and toothless (Sanchez R, 2001). In Latin America, the problem of

6/ The “Ley de Menores.” Consejo Venezolano del Niño.
8/ We recommend reconsidering the laws in order to create new possibilities of integrating for everyone who is condemned because they were born and grew up an informal, illegal life—without identity papers or original registration.
the street children reflects the poverty in which the majority of the urban population lives, as well as the social inequalities that are increasing every day. Nevertheless, the official position is to find a solution through reform-minded interventions, which made some sense at a time when the problem involved only a few children, and it was possible to image that street children might return to their original families. In this approach the child’s family is considered to be responsible, without any real understanding that the poor family in barrios is not necessarily the typical nuclear family, and that those families that survive are constantly transforming themselves, adapting to ever worsening conditions. The continuation of this type of intervention, with the illusion of a return “home” is in fact impossible, and will continue to be a means without results. Holding the poor family responsible for the presence of street kids in Latin America is part of the ideology that poor themselves are to blame for these problems (Wacquant 2001).

The policies of intervention that seek to “reform” children living on the streets (as if their existence represents mistaken or errant behavior, or that they were “born delinquents”) using methods of “assistance” is a nice way of approaching reality yet it has not solved the problems of child poverty and has in fact multiplied them. What is urgently needed is a change in the visualization of the problems, as well as an acceptance that the growing conditions of poverty will lead to a progressive increase in street children, as well as the adult homeless population. We need, new ways of integrating to society, as well as new ways of allowing the young population on the street to obtain rights to formal identities and citizenship, two minimum requirements for existence. These youth must be recognized as human beings, and as the future of society.

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF INFORMAL AND ILLEGAL WORK (SOMETIMES VIOLENT)

In an informal life situation, where tricks and improvisation are a part of the knowledge learned from childhood, along with a nonexistent formal way to get out, most living in situations of scarcity became involved in an alternative world, due to an urgent need to not only socialize but also have a long-term employment. Among boys, the corner was a school for his father and his siblings; now it is for him and his buddies. His family is his gang; his work is robbery, arms dealing, drugs selling, cars jacking, kidnapping, and the extreme murder as a “sicario.” He knows that death is by his side as a companion and shadow; life is right now, and the future is the present time. These are generations with no future (Salazar 1999). For poor Latino youth, success is often based on a radical rejection of poverty, working with fast cash instead of living with a dream of a promising future that was never attained by past generations, based on the simple logic that the dream will never arrive.

En general two basic structural elements shape the experiences of Latino youths. On the one hand, the precarious conditions of poverty have obvious effects on children, especially those who were poor during early childhood. On the other hand, both children and adults who raise them are increasingly experiencing the impact of the global economy when they attempt to find and sustain employment. Both factors produce youths and, in turn, adults who are increasingly excluded from formal
employment sector and the mainstream culture more generally. For poor youths in the barrios, the underground economy offers one of the only viable forms of employment.

In other words, the conditions of poverty create a unique “sense of urgency” among youths in the barrios and inner city (Y. Pedrazzini and M. Sanchez R 1992/1998). This sense of urgency gives rise to alternative forms of socialization provided by the street, which substitute for the socialization traditionally provided by the family, school, and community. Traditional schooling becomes increasingly irrelevant when young children, especially boys, see few opportunities in the formal sector and plenty of opportunities in the underground economy. The family can no longer offer boys the skills needed to survive in the conventional world, in part because the adults who raise these children are themselves becoming increasingly disconnected from the economic and social mainstream. Thus, youths look for role models among their peers, who valorize a set of behaviors and beliefs that undergird new mechanisms for social mobility in the informal economy. Latin American youths from the barrios learn the tricks of the only trade available to them. On the streets, adolescents are first introduced to the potential attractions of this new form of social mobility, and it is on these streets that they move through adolescence into adulthood.

As Castells (1998) notes, “the process of social exclusion and the insufficiency of remedial policies of social integration lead to a key process of perverse integration referred to the labor force in the criminal economy.” If new legitimate mechanisms of integration, which are necessarily different from the existing ones, are not created in society then integration will only happen through the informal and illegal sector. In this case, the opportunities of finding illegal and violent work activities will become even stronger since there will be more young people who are excluded.

The ones who leave to try out their luck in the North

Without getting into the details of why migration occurs, it is evident that Latino migrant youths often experience exclusion and poverty, both socially and economically, as well as violence in their country of origin. As a result, they envision the American urban space not only as an immediate escape from their conditions, but as an ideal place with more opportunities (Massey, Durand, Malone 2002).

It is not only forces of expulsion that explain youth migration to the north, of course. Without denying those forces, other factors of attraction that play an important role, including the information age, the values from the north that are wide-reaching, the patterns of success as well as the main interest of leaving, adventure, and being able to make it. In the long term, there is also the recognition of success and upward mobility in their countries of origin through labor migration abroad. As Massey (2007) mentioned in a recent work, “…at the individual level, potential migrants are pushed by hard times, a bourgeois model, which was based on the conjugal family, school, and industrial work (Ariès, 1993b).
a lack of jobs, or by a shortage of good jobs that provide desired social and economic rewards. The economic pulls attract migrants in ways that complemented the variety of push factors.”

In order to represent the importance of the migration, I tabulated different sources of information by age and time of immigration. For Mexico, which represents the most significant source of Latin American migrants to United States, I use data from the Mexican Migration Project. This source provides us with detailed information by date of the last trip to United States. In this case, I use a sample limited to persons who migrated between 1990 and 2006 and were less than 30 years old.

If we consider the total of 9397 persons who declared a last trip between 1990 and 2006, the Mexican data shows a huge proportion of young immigrants less than 28 years old. Here we observed that 30% are youths less than 21 years old, and 35% between 22 and 30 years old, suggesting that international migration has become alternative way out for Latinos youths.

For the others countries, I rely on the 5% sample of the IMPUMS 2000 data.

The following graphs also show how younger ages are important for immigrants from other countries. Fifty percent of the immigrants from Brazil were between ages 13 and 27 years old, and 18% were younger than 12 years.

Immigrants from Colombia show similar age compositions, with 33% being between the ages of 13 and 27, and 21% under 12 years old. Venezuelans show higher proportions in these age groups, with 37% aged to 27 years and 26% less than 12 years old.

Although these data illustrated the second structural trend that we discussed in this article, it still requires in-depth and detailed future research and evaluation, with the inclusion of variables related to socioeconomic status and years of education, both of which would allow differentiating between immigrants.

Finally and as a conclusion remarks, I refers to some important aspects that Latino Youths bring with them in the process migration.
Informal Knowledge Constitutes a Form of Human Capital That Each Young Migrant Brings with Him or Her

This kind of knowledge has been learned through socialization in the barrio during a “learning by doing” process within an informal world, both in economic and social relations. This is a combination of human and social capital. Here social capital is understood as a process that facilitates access to benefits, not as a concrete object appropriated by individuals or a network (Fernandez Kelly et al., 1995). These learned abilities and skills (“detreza”) are part of the human capital acquired and highly used by migrant youths to become used in one way or another to a new job.

From the Latino metropolis non-functional by nature and with services crisis, to the functional American city.

The young Latino migrant arrives in a great American city with an important knowledge previously gained. Born and raised in a world of informality and improvisation where adventure is common for the youth, improvisation is the basis of support; tricks and inventiveness as well as cultural knowledge bring beneficial advantages in the labor force when applied in an urban functional world.13

13/ The youth, who starts as a dishwasher in a restaurant and in less than a year becomes a chef assistant, is able to do that as a result of his abilities to solve small tasks by improvising spontaneously without previous request. In the same way, consider the youth who starts moving cars in a parking lot and ends up as the owner’s personal assistant with important tasks such as casing check or making deposits in the bank.
Connections and solidarity networks
For the Latino youth, solidarity and social connections are ways of life that are adopted during early childhood. A young man placed in the urban barrio, where he was born and grew up, is the result of the solidarity of many people. It starts with the invasion of a land and then to the construction and stabilization of housing. (Sanchez R 1993) The knowledge of a social network and solidarity connections become incorporated in the process of socialization and growth (Flores 2005).

The help and identification with similar others in the street, as well as the cultural background of improvisation that brought from the Latino metropolis, become, upon arrival, an important source of capital to overcomes the difficulty of mobilization in a new city where symbolism and signs are in a completely unknown language. Even though all of these factors are obstacles, they do not prevent the youths from progressing in their jobs.

The young migrant of urban Latino origin usually has acquired capital, through processes in the urban milieu in the original country. The historical precedent—capitalized history in collective memory—comes from the rural-urban migration when the migrant arrives in the great capital completely unprotected. Prior connections and networks allow migrants inclusion through invasions and construction of homes on private or public (ejidal) lands.

The original adaptation to a hostile and difficult environment and permanent improvisation under conditions of social urgency define the beginnings of the Latino’s knowledge of the metropolis. The child, young person, or adult acquires and utilizes this socialization and skills from the moment he or she arrives in a new place. From the beginning, any young Latino migrant in an American metropolis will have access to social capital that will allow him or her to move easily in an urban place where effectiveness dominates chaos. From a position of daily improvisation, insecurity, and insufficiency, the young migrant moves into an urban space of practicability, services, opportunities, and work. Whether an identity status is in order or not does not appear to be important. In any event, this is a common aspect of the new paradox of transnational identity and migration.

THE LATINO IDENTITY AS A TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY
With globalization, transnational dimensions that go beyond borders, countries, regions, and even localities become important. Transnational identities challenge older historical notions of territory and national boundaries—indeed, they question the national identities themselves, yet at the same time, they re-situate national identities toward other identities.

Within the past years, a new transnational Latino identity has emerged in the United States. Instead of invalidating the specific national identity, this new identity intensifies the ethnic as well as cultural, social, and political values. A Latino...
identity, which does not consider group and color differences from country to country, gives added strength to solidarity and aid networks, magnifies values as well as cultural and ethnic elements, and helps the young migrant to integrate and develop more networks. In some cases, networks arise from local initiatives in the migrants’ countries of origin, on through formal or informal international organizations such as churches. New identities are perceived; they are built on connections to transnational networks that are based on essential idea of the merging ethnicities. As a result, new common transnational arena is discovered. To identify oneself as Latino means evoking a past full of oppression characterized by an origin of exclusion, corruption of power, a full range of cultural elements of music and dance, and pride from being part of and representing an ethnic group that reinforces a mixed origin (Massey and Sanchez-R 2006).

In our ongoing research we consider how the transnational Latino identity strengthens or weakens over several generations. We do not believe that the transnational Latino identity is conflicting with work and social integration, but rather in transforming however, it is facing and transforming the traditional process and concepts of assimilation in ways.

THE SITUATION OF UNDOCUMENTED LATINO YOUTH

The purpose here is not to glorify or generalize working conditions in US metropolitan areas. However, in the best scenario, young Latinos face a situation in which they are good worker and sometimes students with potential, capacity, and aptitude. They cover working schedules of more than forty hours per week, paying dues and taxes that that are directly subtracted from their checks by managers, without any social protection because of their undocumented status. This worker contributes to the economy through work and human capital, which was acquired from the informal sector at home. However, they do not enjoy the privileges of minimum social protection that the system offers to other workers and citizens. Likewise, as urban residents, they pays regularly for rent and other social services. The system should find a way to adapt and accommodate the young undocumented migrants in order to facilitate their long-term integration into society (Massey, Durand, Malone 2002).

A FINAL REMARK

As final remark, I would like to refer to possible path scenarios by immigrant Latino youths. If current conditions of exclusion are not transformed and the mechanisms of integration remain void, we may find a reproduction of the original situation in the long term, yielding either a mobilized clash, or in the worst-case scenario, a radical tendency toward violence and illegal activities as a way out.

Under these circumstances, the Latino immigrant youth and the new Latino generations in the United States, both of whom are undocumented and persecuted, would experience exclusion and discrimination from the traditional institutions of the
society and they would respond perhaps, like those experiencing disadvantages and exclusion in the Latino metropolis. If conditions ameliorated in the sense of open mechanism of social integration, we can assist to the expansion of tendencies and characteristic dominant in the Latino population legally stable in United States.

Lastly, the argument that I presented hopefully will drive to different research projects with other migrant’s youth coming from and to different countries.

Also the insufficient existence of data, justify the creation of quantitative and qualitative sources of information allowing future research to clarify the connection between exclusion — violence and migration, as well as detail evidences on the inclusion of these youth on the international labor market.

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