From Latin Americans to Latinos: Latin American Immigration in US: the Unwanted Children

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"Migration is a one way trip. There is no "home" to go back to". Stuart Hall[1]

"Minorities and majorities emerge explicitly in the process of developing ideas of number, representation, and electoral franchise in places affected by the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century, including satellite spaces in the colonial world […] But minorities do not come preformed. They are produced in the specific circumstances of every nation and every nationalism. They are often carriers of unwanted memories of the acts of violence that produced existing states, of forced conscription, or of violent extrusion as new states were formed. And that is because minorities are not born but made, historically speaking. […] So, rather than saying that minorities produce violence, we could better say that violence, especially at the national level, requires minorities." Arjun Appadurai[2]

Abstract

It is my understanding that Latin American immigrants in the United States, during the contested process of becoming Latinos (US citizens or the offspring of Latin Americans born in US) are for the most part socially portrayed as unwanted, messy children who need to be educated before they can become American citizens. Whether they can be called subjects of diaspora or just traditional immigrants, they surely produce and generate acts of resistance.

On one hand, Latin Americans in United States minimize, in general, the appropriation of English as their second language, and consequently, the culture of the metropolis. This fact makes their ability to function within the limits of the adopted new land obviously difficult. On the other hand, this situation promotes many acts of symbolic resistance by the establishment (to settle English as the official language; a metallic wall along the Mexican border). Both examples are symbolic expressions of a society in fear of turning their racial and cultural identity upside down. As unwanted children, Latin Americans are seeking economic survival within the unfriendly limits of global markets, challenging borders and rules, while stretching the laws of welfare and education. In the majority of cases they provide cheap and reliable labor. This situation grows as Latin Americans/Latinos become the largest minority in the United States.

In this article I will explore how globalization,[3] a term that is replacing "modernity" (Monsiváis, 2003, 283),[4] is not only a contradictory process, as Stuart Hall states, due to the co-existence of central and vernacular varieties of the big phenomenon under the name of modernity.[5] It also houses, in my opinion, a contradiction in itself when it comes to accept the consequences that are growing in its womb.

Modernity and Globalization: the Simultaneity of Non-Simultaneous Realities.

It can be said that the upside of globalization is that central cultures are impacted, almost cannibalized, by their own policies. Starting with modernity, we have to remember that it was

[1] Quoted by Iain Chambers. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. (London and New York: Routledge. 1994), 9.

[2] Arjun Appadurai. *Fear of Small Numbers. An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2006), 42 and 45-46.

[3] I use the US spelling of the term "globalization."

[4] Carlos Monsiváis briefly explains the succession of both terms in theoretical discourse: modernity and globalization. The first became more a cultural significant while globalization is the icon of 20th-century, as he says. ("La modernidad a destiempo," in *Fronteras de la modernidad en América Latina*, eds. Hermann Herlinghaus and Mabel Moraña. Pittsburgh: ILLI, 2003, 277- 283.

[5] Hall, Stuart. "Pensando en la diáspora. En casa, desde el extranjero", in *Heterotropías: narrativas de la identidad y alteridad latinoamericana*, eds. Carlos A. Jáuregui y Juan Pablo Dabove. Pittsburgh: ILLI, 2003, 477-500.

always a central project for the West which, according to Marshall Berman and other theorists, not only implies the promotion of modernization and the technologization of central and local markets. Modernity also includes the ideology of progress. In some places of the world, it became a political ideology in the second half of the nineteenth century, especially in the case of the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and his famous dichotomy of civilization and barbarism. The author chose this dualism to show the need that Latin American new republics had to face in order catch up with the central powers (Europe and eventually the US). According to the Argentine writer, teacher, politician, and president of his country, progress was the main value and a necessary achievement. In those days progress meant several things: modernization, democracy, the development of urban societies, the advancement and acquisition of new technologies, liberalization of markets and extended education, among others values. The project of modernization also involved the welcoming of masses of immigrants to Argentina. That aspect of modernity was supposed to enrich the culture and economy of the New World with the old wisdom of the European spirit, especially from those immigrants from the north of Europe. But instead, Argentina received poor immigrants mostly from Spain and Italy, along with Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Middle East. In late 1800s and early 1900s the results of such ideology sometimes were different from what the provincial writer and teacher imagined.

Early modernity started in the sixteenth century with scientific and geographical discoveries, the ascension of capitalism, urban societies, and new philosophies and perspectives in religion. America was the main discovery of those times, and cultural diversity emerged as an enormous challenge**.** The industrial revolution represented the second stage of modernity, and along with the empowering of a new social class, the *bourgeoisie*, it also represented a new stage in terms of

the opening of markets and the need for natural resources. Again, the challenge of diversity showed up when the progress of colonialism made clear that those areas rich in resources also carried within new peoples, cultures, and languages.

Around the nineteenth century central Western societies realized that one of the consequences of modernity was the progressive although problematic implementation of the process of democratization. It came along with the development of a very powerful mass media, the presence of a middle class that grew strong, and all that was accompanied by the development of social behaviors such us consumerism. As Marshall Berman puts it:

> The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle; immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people from their ancestral habitats, hurtling them halfway across the world into new lives (Berman, 1982, 2).

These phenomena affected the majority of Western countries from the beginning of modernity until the present day, in a process that evolved into new formulations at every stage. From the beginning of the sixteenth century until today, the advancement of modernity was closely connected to capitalism, and movements of migration and diaspora are also an important part of globalization. In cases of problematic economies, these processes of relocation overseas act as safety valves in poor countries, which are not able to afford social crises (Trigo, 2003, 55).

According to Frederic Jameson, globalization is a “communicational concept, which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings” (Jameson, 2003, 55). The advancement of communication habits on a world scale facilitates an increase in the control of financial investments and strategies, and it creates a world that tends to become uniform, through

Americanization (or *Macdonaldization*, as Stuart Hall wrote). Modernity once had a center; globalization doesn't (Hall, 2003, 495).

Latin American cultures witnessed all these stages, but those countries also suffered another main contradiction: the alternate presence of tradition, indigenous cultures, various languages, and beliefs dwelling together with the wild impact of new technologies. In addition to this, Western religions exist interweaved with ancient, indigenous cultures, in a constant and renewed processes that could be called *transculturation* or, eventually, *mestizaje*, after careful analysis, according to Antonio Cornejo Polar (1995, 102). At the same time, Latin American countries also witness the broadening of new markets, the expansion of means of communication, and the appearance of innovative cultural products and artifacts, some of them coming from central cultures. Nowadays, the European and American lifestyle exist alongside traditional indigenous cultures; they may interact by merging into one another or they may remain in limited cohabitation, barely recognizing each other while sharing the same physical and political space. The advancement of globalization carries within different means of production and sometimes coexisting in the same culture, ancient methods of cultivation are applied along with sophisticated technologies. On the same note, another fact to be taken into account is the presence of barely respected indigenous languages that are constantly being challenged by Spanish, and eventually, English. Finally, another example of the complicated and contradictory meaning of globalization in Latin America are the multiple forms of cultural intolerance toward traditional cultures by the *criollo* descendent population, today landowners, politicians, and businessmen, individuals who belong to a class that is in control of political institutions and the media. These two realities live together in Latin American local cultures, creating a multiple and

versatile experience of what several authors call *modernities* in plural (Martín Barbero, 260; Hall, 495). This cultural co-habitation was interestingly formulated by Aníbal Quijano. He explains that while history in Europe or the US is sequential, in Latin America it is simultaneity of cultural realities, as well as a sequence of events and processes. We could say that history and time run at different paces and some processes that take place in central cultures, in Latin American exist together, as part of coincident and at the same time unequal, contradictory, but simultaneous realities (Quijano, 90, 60-61).

In this complicated cartography of modernity, whether it is central or local, American, European or Latin American, one consequence that even Marshall Berman pointed out and that was visible at the early stages of the period as well as in the irruption of globalization, was the mobilization of crowds from one part of the world to another. Migrations, thus, are an unavoidable aspect of modernity and they increase in times of globalization. With this thought in mind, it is imperative to highlight that the main contradiction lies in the fact that central markets and centers of power will ultimately become victims of their own unexpected chain reaction: the expansion of global markets has an impact on (and eventually erases) local means of production. Due to this fact, those populations providing goods and services, those peoples whose living is depending on some kind of crop, factory or service provided to hegemonic countries will suffer economic distress. Wayne A. Cornelius and Philip L. Martin analyze the connection between the NAFTA agreement and the increased or decrease in rural Mexican migration to US. A substantial change in the situation was expected by both the Mexican and American governments: “NAFTA-related economic displacement in Mexico may yield an initial wave of migration that should soon diminish if the jobs that these migrants seek shift to Mexico” (Cornelius and Martin, 1993, 484).

This situation poses a new venture for central cultures, while they watch their familiar structures, institutions, and languages being altered and appropriated by individuals who are not easily discernible by original citizens. Immigrant flows arrive sometimes on foot, or almost drowning on a raft because of hunger, illness, or impossibility of succeeding in any way in their homelands, aiming at rich countries as main enclaves. Their Third World citizens' imaginary is born as a virtual desire for other imaginary, the one as "central subjects." Global times lend those dreams to peripheral subjects through movies and mass media in general, or in everyday experiences in their own countries, and peripheral subjects become witnesses of American or European citizens as subjects of privilege. Central cultures produce dreams and myths (the American Dream, the Melting Pot) of success, fairness and equality; one day those images are active in the mind of the poor. Migrant subjects are in fact following the rules of a global process that they learned to survive, turn around, and manipulate sometimes in ways that those powers that produce such discourses and institutions that are supposed to represent them cannot even begin to imagine.

Once the project of migration is embedded in a given society that is going through difficult times, it is possible to see long lines of prospective immigrants at the doors of the embassies of US, Spain, France, etc. In global time media images and news fly fast and dreams grow faster, along with the willingness to believe that the solution for lack of education, loneliness, deception and poverty can be found in another place. It may be surprising to learn how metropolitan societies do not foresee this coming as an expected consequence of their own actions and discourse. The host society (mostly US or Europe, but not exclusively) is required to learn about

a new challenge: how to live with a new reality, while facing the distress of being invaded by languages, peoples, cultures, and practices that are not recognizable by central citizens and that will require institutional action, tolerance and new resources.

The Unwanted Children

In the case of the US, somehow a new version of modernity exists alongside American modernity. American citizens are being surprised every day by the unexpected sight of Mexican style murals in the streets of Los Angeles; Guatemalan workers take over American neighborhoods, churches, and schools while riding packed cars early in the morning to go to work in groups. Some of these subjects are undocumented or can be suspected of carrying forged papers in order to get one dollar per bucket of fruit collected in the fields nationwide in the United States, where they work as migrant workers. In other cases, the wages that Americans are not willing to make at fast food places represents more than the minimum salary that can be earned in several Latin American countries. Sending money overseas has become a great loss for US markets while it is an important source of income in several Latin American nations. While this process unfolds, dangerous gangs, some of them originally born at the center of political revolts in El Salvador, become challenges for US police. Americans wake up every day in the city of Miami, accepting the fact that, since decades ago, it became an Spanish speaking American city and the urban enclave of Cuban immigrants. Those Cuban exiles that arrived in the early sixties were subjects of what Juan González calls “red carpet wave of immigrants”.

> The 1959 revolution, however, sparked immediate flight. Some 215,000 left for the United States in the first four years. Thousands more went to Spain and Latin America. That first wave was composed of the most wealthy: managers of U.S. corporations, the officers of dictator Batista´s army and police, doctors, lawyers,

> scientists, and their families. Metropolitan Miami's Hispanic population skyrocketed from a mere 50,000 in 1960 to more than 580,000 in 1980.
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> "Few immigrant groups have commenced their economic adaptation to American life form a position of such relative advantage," wrote sociologist Alejandro Portes in a study of Cubans and Miami. The U.S. government provided a shell full of government assistance programs under the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, programs that Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latinos never received. The refugees became instantly eligible for public assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, free English courses, scholarships, and low-interest college loans. They could secure immediate business credit and start-up loans. The state of Florida went even further–it provided direct cash allotment**s** for Cuban families. Dade County opened civil service lists to noncitizens. The University of Miami Medical School even started special programs to help Cubans meet licensing requirements. (González 2000, 100-111).

Probably the main, unacceptable challenge that the current US society has to face is the unstoppable illegal transit through the US border, the *mojados* who dare to strive for the American way of life and risk too much to get, sometimes, too little.[6] There are several implications each time a Latin American decides to cross the US border illegally (by sea, by land, by air). They defeat the long wall along the US-Mexican border whose extended construction was approved by the US Congress in 2006. Once inside, they have to face the process of patronization/imposition of English as the official language, as has happened in several states or cities in the US. Immigrants (whether they are undocumented or not) find themselves being subjects of *demonization:* the immigrant is seen as a potential delinquent, a terrorist or a social weight for health, education, and welfare. We can consider globalization a symbolic expansion of patriarchal bonds; these hordes of immigrants willing to eat a wedge of the cake in the feast of the rich are the unwanted children of a process that they did not create but to which they are reacting. As unwanted children do once they are at home, they claim their place, as privileged as the rest of the crowd under the same roof. I do not think that I am stretching the psychological concept of parenthood at this point, especially if we think that it has been a traditional practice and part of the colonial discourse to address and treat the Indian, the

[6] According to President George W. Bush there are 12 millions illegal immigrant in U.S. (Interview with Univisión, 3/8/2007).

slave, and the colonial subject in general as minors, as happens even today with women in some societies or in particular circumstances. In the imaginary of central cultures *otherness* is sometimes a synonym for inability to manage problems, so it requires a protective action. However, this step may be delayed when those who are claiming rights and benefits are not seen as an active, necessary, wanted part of that society.

When Latin Americans become Latinos the nature of the problem grows in the womb of the central power and produces its own contradiction. Instead of acknowledging this fact, even from the beginning of the historical process, the common reaction is the rejection of the Hispanic immigrant who carries *otherness* within his or her temporary baggage. As unwanted children, once that they are living in the house, there are few options for hegemonic subjects but to deal with a visitor who usually, though not always, has come to stay. Despite the motherly nature of the metaphor, this analysis does not apply Freudian theory to a complex sociological, economical and political problem. Mostly, I intend to deal with the metaphor as is: as a fertile image that carries within the idea of protection, cohabitation, un/willingness, contradictions, and conflictive identities at large.

I find it imperative to focus attention on the meaning of the metaphor of Latin American immigrants as unwanted children dwelling in the belly of the most powerful nation in late modernity. First of all, we have to consider the fact that residents of Hispanic communities that are evolving in the US, arrive as illegal immigrants, trespassers through a high security border, by sea, by air and by land, challenging authorities, laws and agreements. Following the pattern of unwanted children, they arrive unexpectedly with plans for a long stay. Secondly, Hispanic

immigration in general is made up of poor, non-English speakers (usually they are not even planing to learn the language) and, in addition to this, they are a population phenotypically different from the average American citizen. Third, it is necessary to remember that they carry religious beliefs that are not necessarily mainstream in the American society due to the fact that most of them are Catholics but they also practice traditional religions and ancient creeds that have survived all forms of colonialism. In other words, these unwanted 12.5% of the US population represent a challenge that the host society was not supposed to face.[7] What to do with a growing population that proved to be, against the official acknowledgment, an indispensable work force in businesses and farming? The answer to this question is one of the main problems that future US government will have to face.

I am going to review a statement that I have already posed as matter for debate some paragraphs above. I understand that these migrant subjects are not necessarily subjects of diaspora. Even considering the symbolic powerful meaning of that word and the strong national connotations of the term, these subjects are in some cases migrants, in other cases immigrants, and some of them would fall into the category of diasporic subjects, and even exiles. A migrant subject is one that will not assimilate to the new culture, someone who is "always in transit" (Trigo, 2003, 56). There is even a "migrant condition" according to Cornejo Polar, which generates a "diffuse and heterogeneous subject: the migrant subject" (1995, 104). Cornejo Polar addressed the question of the internal migration from the *sierras* to the shores in Perú; however, the feeling of being an outsider is a condition that the Peruvian critic applies in order to define a human type who will not confuse the experiences in the new place with those that belong to an original locus in the

[7] http//www.census.gov

past. That particular situation makes this subject, in a way, a privileged one due to the fact that this person has various, eventually, cosmopolitan experiences, and various voices. On the other hand, an immigrant is someone who will assimilate to the new culture and physical enclave while still having a sense of belonging to the original culture. Those are the subjects who may not come back to their homeland, subjects who will always speak in the language of the adopted culture. A third category would be the term of diaspora, which involves, as William Safran thinks:

> …expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland –its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not –and perhaps cannot be- fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulted from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home as the place to which they or their descendants would or should eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally and vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (1991, 83-84)

For further reassurance, Safran expresses that "The Hispanic (or Latino) community in the United States has not generally been considered a diaspora" (Safran, 1991, 90). He explains this fact as a variable situation for the different groups of Hispanic immigrants. He assures that in the case of Mexican immigrants in the US, some of them were there before the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty[8] and due to it they lost their status as owners of the land and masters of their own culture, Safran considers that Mexicans in the US today are "assimilating at a steady pace" (Safran, 1991, 90). He also remarks that they do not

[8] "The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty finally forced Mexico to relinquish that half of its territory that was the least densely populated and that included the present-day states of New Mexico, California, Nevada, parts of Arizona, Utah, and the disputed sections of present –day Texas. Also included in 1848 treaty was the crucial 150-mile-wide Nueces Strip, between **the [?]** Rio Grande and Nueces rivers" (González, 2000, 44).

"cultivate a homeland myth […] perhaps because the homeland cannot be easily idealized." While being an interesting comment that should not be discarded, it may seem inaccurate for readers of Gloria Anzaldúa and her claim for Aztlán as a mythical homeland.[9] Safran does not takes into account that most of the Mexican cultures lost their sense of belonging to their native homeland centuries ago, along with several other Latin American nations. The conquest, the Spanish empire, and different sorts of colonialism and neocolonialism detached these original inhabitants of these lands from a sense of national pride, because their nations disappeared long ago. In the imaginary of *mestizo* cultures in Latin America, there has since long ago been no going back. One could say that some Latin Americans live in a permanent diaspora, even in their own lands.

Safran also elaborates on the case of Cubans in the US who are willing to consider themselves as subjects of diaspora. He analyzes their particular, sometimes privileged situation as immigrants and he realizes that "as time passes, the Castro regime endures, and as Cubans become more involved in United States politics, the myth of return becomes attenuated with the second generation". The remaining question to these observations is: doesn't this happen to every group? It is easy to assume that a new generation renews the commitment to its parents' agenda regarding national matters and transcultural identities. Even when I find some of Safran's opinions matter for further discussion, I agree that we may have doubts about the nature of the Cuban early immigration, the "red carpet" stage, as González calls it, but the majority of Hispanic immigrants should not be considered subjects of diaspora. Some of the Latin American population arrived in the US in situations of exile (such is the case during the 1980s and 90s

[9] Aztlán is the Southwest of US " the land of herons, land of whiteness, the Edenic place of origin of the Aztecs". (Anzaldúa, 1987, 4)

arrivals of subjects from Latin America who were fleeing countries ruled by brutal dictatorships); most of them were "white collar" immigrants and some of them returned to their homeland when democratic governments took over. On the other hand, some sections of Latin American groups, in some places in US, and in some cases, may feel they are diasporic subjects.

It is important to add, before progressing with this thought, that white-collar immigrants are also a numerous and important sector Latin American immigration. They usually arrive with student or professional visas or under other kinds of arrangements, aiming to work in business or in academic positions and they represent a lesser problem for the Citizenship and Immigration Services. Even the quota that CIS establishes for the H1 B visa was raised last year of 2006, once it was filled before the summer, in order to benefit this sort of immigration from various countries. What is upsetting the American imaginary about the kind of nation that it was supposed to be rather than the diverse American nation that is becoming is the presence of poor, sometimes barely educated Hispanics who walk along the highways or streets to go to work.

There is neither religious nor political reason in the daily adventure of illegal crossing the US-Mexican border, the US-Canada border, "la herida abierta," open wound, as Anzaldúa calls it, "1,950 mile-long open wound" (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2). It is the same case in the long lines of Latin Americans waiting in despair in US customs at any airport or arriving at the Florida beach on a raft, hoping to be subjected to the "Dry feet policy" that will allow Cuban *balseros* to stay in the promised land.[10] With the exception of Cubans, the rest are not necessarily dreaming to go back to their homeland as a nation in the future; they do not necessarily gather in the new land to

[10] Roberto Iraola, "Freedom and the "Wet Foot, Dry Foot" Policy, *Jurist. Legal News and Research,* 5/1/2006, http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2006/05/freedom-and-wet-foot-dry-foot-policy.php

reinstate their political agenda or to keep their religious and national traditions fresh, as diasporic subjects do. They just want to send money home, and any form of repetition of homeland traditions, celebrations, even language and religions, work more as strategies of survival, refusal to blend in with the American society or just nostalgic need of the *patria* than the necessity of tending the fire of the lost nation waiting overseas. The migrant's presence is increasing every day: they are willing to go back to the place they call "home," to build a house there or to open a business in their hometown. Their presence in the US is usually illegal and, as migrants, they are not hoping for integration; they want very often to come back, as they eventually will do, and they may even pass the border illegally back and forth, repeating the dangerous experience as a lifestyle.

It seems that the experience of globalization will allow them to perceive their lives in a rather transitory way; in this sense they share the exile experience. Edward Said wrote "Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience" (Said, 1984, 170). In most of the cases of Latin American immigration there are no nostalgic tales of impossible returns as cultural patterns of *migrancy*.

By these means, subjects of *migrancy* (a form of migration, where the individual never assimilates to a place and never goes back to the homeland) understand the new country as what I call an "enclave of negotiation" which is neither a definite place to stay, nor a place that they would call "home." It reminds me of a station that may become a permanent site but may also be

a transitory shelter, where all connections ought to be transitional and temporary.[11] This space in between two solid places (the homeland and the host country) is a new reality, a virtual space that people carry as new forms of cultural and emotional nomadism. Immigrants, blue or white collar, from all cultures, always managed to transfer their feelings of identity to new spaces of dwelling, tinting those new experiences in the new enclave with a new sensibility and imprinting, even as an unconscious exercise, modifications in the identity of the new land. Neither the guest nor the host will be able to be the same once they have come into contact in the streets or at work. The migrant will learn to resist the change, will delay the sorrow, and will work hard to understand a faulty existence. The hosts feels uneasy due to the fact they are being required to live in a "taken home," like in a mystery movie, by an unknown presence who speaks a different language and who has to be addressed as an "alien." It is a quiet, slow process that is spread in everyday life everywhere, until a voice is raised and walls are built in order to try to stop the discomfort of the situation. As Stuart Hall points out, we once thought that identities were stable and organized and then we learned about differences and abundance, and cultures all over the planet are diversifying every day.[12] He mentions a process of *minorization* of old, traditional, metropolitan societies in the hands of minorities that do not stay in ghettos but travel the city, the great scenery of diversity.

Another issue that the American society addresses with honest concern is the need for an education for a population that, after all, is residing next door in the same neighborhoods

[11] See the considerations around the choice of an enclave in US in Edward Funkhouser and Fernando A. Ramos. 1993. "The choice of Migration Destination: Dominican and Cuban Immigrants to the Mainland United States and Puerto Rico". In *The International Migration Review.* Vol. 27, 3: 537-556.

[12] "Las identidades, que se pensaba estables y organizadas, están viniendo a llorar en las rocas de una diferenciación proliferante. A todo lo largo del planeta, el llamado proceso de migraciones libres y forzadas está cambiando la composición , diversificando culturas y plurailizando las identidads culturales de la vieja nación-Estado de los antiguos poderes imperiales, e inclusive del propio globo" (Hall, 2003, 494).

although not always contributing to taxes for education, social security and public needs as the majority of American citizens does. One of the main issues that have been addressed in the last decades is the language in which those students should be taught, and how to keep their bilingualism alive. As an unwanted child is educated, language is one of the first aspects that the parents face, even when the resistant child refuses to learn. Following with our initial metaphor, the Latin American immigrants, these unwanted children, may eventually refuse to speak in the language of the country chosen as enclave. One of the reasons why this happens is because some of them belong to less educated layers of their native societies. "The English language is an important cultural symbol for this society, which legislators feel is threatened by a growing Spanish-speaking minority" (Huss, 1990, 142). According to this, the challenge of a second language, as prestigious as they may perceive the English language (the language of Hollywood, the language of money, and the language of power) to be, may wrongly represent an unrealistic target in their imaginary.

> Imagine a Central American male, 30 years old, who illegally crosses into the United States via the border between Texas and Mexico. There is a 60% chance he is Mexican, although if he goes to Washington D.C., he is most likely Salvadoran. If he attended elementary school at home, he probably left school somewhere between the 3rd and 6th grades. If he can read and write English, there is an 80% chance that he is proficient below the 8th grade level, most likely below the 4th grade level. In the United States he works as an unskilled laborer, living in a "shadow culture" where his goal is not to assimilate into the American mainstream, but to remain undetected by the INS. Within this world, his ticket to employment is most likely a falsified Social Security card. His goal is to earn a living but keep no records –to exist day to day without establishing an identity that leaves him vulnerable to being found and deported. (Huss, 1990,148).

On the other hand we do not have to forget that as soon as they arrive in the US they are usually inserted in preexisting networks of compatriots and the use of English language will be reduced to a minimum. Even their children, once they enter school, may fall under the same understanding. However, all these situations carry exceptions, and some white collar or even

blue collar Hispanic immigration will stay in US while their children will become Latinos (transcultural subjects, English speakers). Very often these children will be able to understand Spanish or they will keep the language as their own, or as the language of the culture of their parents, and they will eventually become educated American citizens. But the first generations of unwanted children, if they get to speak English, they may distort the language, sometimes turning it into a hybrid product that will coexist with the original language.

> "For the modern metropolitan figure is the migrant: she and he are the active formulators of metropolitan aesthetics and life styles, reinventing the languages and appropriating the streets of the master […] It is to speak the languages of modernity and cultivating the city according to different rhythms, making it move to a diverse beat. It is to speak the languages –linguistic, literary, cultural, religious, musical –of the dominator, of the master, but always with a difference. Language is appropriated, taken apart, and then put back together with a new inflection, an unexpected accent, a further twist in the tale." (Chambers, 1994, 23)

As unwanted children, these Hispanics, undocumented immigrants in the US, will challenge the limits of social security, health services, education, and the law itself. Knowing the strategies to survive in their societies, usually not friendly to their basic needs, these newcomers challenge the limits of the tight but shaky social services, social security and a very faulty health organization nationwide. The US government reacts negatively while, at the same time, it applies policies that are willing to contemplate minorities as equals. Programs such as ESL, present in the majority of schools, the protection of welfare, the (problematic) access to some kind of medical services, help this unexpected crowd to cope with a reality that sometimes reminds them of home, of the American dream. Some of them end up living a life in the projects, facing a different kind of poverty, in a transplanted environment.

Conclusions

Hispanic immigration (mostly its blue collar component) comprehended something that the highest levels of central cultures in US did not notice. They understood the basic rules of agreements like NAFTA; they saw the openness that the globalization offers as a system of exchange and transformations, not necessarily as a set of promising options. Once these poor crowds understood these realities intuitively or not, they filtered through the cracks of a new economic, political and cultural form of staging power and economy in a way that the ideological gurus of the phenomenon are still unable to weight. These crowds are the essence of modernity and globalization, and it seems very interesting the ways they intensify what Arjun Appadurai calls fear of small numbers. All forms of colonization, formal or informal, dealt with the colonial subject addressing them as minorities. In the case of these transplanted Hispanic subjects residing in US, who are becoming necessary while being rejected and distrusted, we find that they are being treated, socially speaking, by an official discourse as unwanted children. They may represent solutions for basic problems (they work for a small wage) but they refuse to live as a humble, silent crowd, and they explore their way through this new society in a quiet but uncomfortable way, while inhabiting a constant border that some of them may consider their new land.

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