

INCLUDING MIGRATION IN
THE DEVELOPMENT CALCULUS:
The Dominican Republic and Other Caribbean Countries*

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MIGRATION, REMITTANCES, AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: MEXICO AND THE CARIBBEAN BASIN COUNTRIES. Edited by Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Sidney Weintraub. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991. Pp. 209. \$47.00 paper.)

LOS DOMINICANOS EN PUERTO RICO: MIGRACION EN LA SEMI-PERIFERIA. Edited by Jorge Duany. (Rio Piedras, P.R.: Huracán, 1990. Pp. 132. \$12.95 paper.)

THE MAKING OF A TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY: MIGRATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. By Eugenia Georges. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Pp. 270. \$37.50 cloth.)

BETWEEN TWO ISLANDS: DOMINICAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION. By Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia R. Pessar. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991. Pp. 247. \$40.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)

LOS INMIGRANTES INDOCUMENTADOS DOMINICANOS EN PUERTO RICO: REALIDAD Y MITOS. Edited by Juan E. Hernández Cruz. (San Germán, P.R.: Centro de Publicaciones de la Universidad Interamericana, 1989. Pp. 96. \$7.50 paper.)

SMALL COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL LABOR FLOWS: EXPERIENCES IN THE CARIBBEAN. Edited by Anthony P. Maingot. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991. Pp. 266. \$53.50 paper.)

CAPITALISTAS DEL TROPICO: LA INMIGRACION EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS Y EL DESARROLLO DE LA PEQUEÑA EMPRESA EN LA REPUBLICA DOMINICANA. By Alejandro Portes and Luis E. Guarnizo. (Santo Domingo: FLACSO, 1991. Pp. 115.)

Study of development in the Caribbean Basin is incomplete without considering the socioeconomic impact of international labor migra-

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tion on this region, which is defined here as including Mexico, the Caribbean archipelago, Central America, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. Most of the seven books under review deal with the specific case of the Dominican Republic and in doing so bring new theoretical sophistication and depth to examining the link between migration and development. In this way, they expand understanding of the present-day Dominican reality, which involves massive migration by Dominicans to the United States—mainly to New York but also on a smaller scale to Puerto Rico. The Dominican experience suggests parallels with other Caribbean societies that are experiencing similar processes of penetration, incorporation, and out-migration, hence the inclusion in this review of the two volumes edited by Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Sydney Weintraub and by Anthony Maingot.

The Dominican Case

The authors writing on the Dominican experience under review here all adopt the historical-structural approach in examining the large-scale displacement of islanders that began in the mid-1960s. This theoretical framework analyzes macro-level forces propelling out-migration as a collective response to capital restructuring and the resulting political, social, and economic consequences for the Dominican Republic. The historical-structural approach highlights class relations in both the sending and receiving societies as well as the division of labor between the peripheral and core states. This kind of analysis is intended as a corrective for the neoclassical framework used in mainstream economic studies of migration, which conceptualize the individual as the unit of analysis and consider leaving one's homeland in the Third World as a rational response to labor-market needs in the First World.

The macro-level forces shaping emigration are highlighted by these authors, who also add nuances to their discussions by including the intermediate social processes of households, networks, and classes involved. The monograph by Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar provides the most elaborate theoretical framework for examining the impact of migration on the Dominican Republic by focusing on social structure, the nature of the republic's role in the world economy, state development policies (especially in agriculture and industry), and the relation of classes to state policies, given that policies affect the selectivity and type of migration.

Central to understanding the forces propelling rural-to-urban migration and subsequent out-migration to the United States are structural changes in the Dominican economy such as import-substituting industrialization, commercialization of agriculture, the shift to export-promoting industrialization in free-trade zones starting in the 1970s, and the overall economic crisis of the 1980s. These forces are also pertinent in

studying the integration of women into the labor force as domestics, factory workers in Dominican *zonas francas*, and employees in the manufacturing and service sectors in New York City.¹

Yet all these studies stress that economic factors alone do not explain Dominican or other international labor migration. When individuals begin to migrate, social networks soon form and immigrant communities develop their own dynamics and patterns of recruitment. Most of these authors also add a political dimension to their analyses by discussing Rafael Trujillo's policy of essentially forbidding emigration for all but the Generalissimo's closest allies and the subsequent events of the 1960s. Specifically, the authors highlight Trujillo's assassination in 1961, the civil war and U.S. intervention in 1965, the return of Joaquín Balaguer to the presidency in 1966, and changes in U.S. immigration policy coupled with the U.S. consulate's easing of visa requirements in Santo Domingo at that time. Elaborating the political context contributes to a fuller understanding of what sparked the massive outflow from the Dominican Republic, starting in the mid-1960s.

In a related point, all of the studies suggest (most explicitly in Eugenia Georges's analysis) that labor migration is part of the economic growth model of the Dominican state. Emigration serves several purposes: it removes pressure from officials to establish effective policies that would create jobs, slows the rate of population growth, and garners crucially needed foreign exchange in the form of remittances. Although island officials (like their counterparts in governments worldwide) would be unlikely to admit that emigration is an essential element of their development strategy, these analyses make it clear that Dominican elites view large-scale emigration as the major solution to the unemployment crisis and continued labor migration as essential for survival of the Dominican state.

Beyond such agreement on the general theoretical orientation, each study has objectives of its own. Consequently, the most salient conceptual issues differ in each work. These key concerns will be highlighted for each work reviewed.

Grasmuck and Pessar's *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration* offers the most comprehensive treatment of Dominican

1. See, for example, Isis Duarte, "Household Workers in the Dominican Republic: A Question for the Feminist Movement?" in *Muchachas No More: Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Elsa Chaney and Mary García Castro (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1989), 197–219; Helen Safa, "Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean," in *Women, Employment, and Family in the International Division of Labour*, edited by Sharon Stichter and Jane Parpart (London: Macmillan, 1990), 72–96; Andrés Dauhaire, hijo, Elizabeth Riley, Rita Mena, and José A. Guerrero, *Impacto económico de las zonas francas industriales de exportación en la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Economía y Desarrollo, 1989); and Bernardo Vega, *En la década perdida* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1991).

migration in examining the structural effects of both urban and rural migration, the nature of the Dominican community in New York City, and the phenomenon of return migration. The authors argue that most Dominican migrants are urban dwellers from the middle or working class, sectors that receive much of the analysis. A primary contribution is their placing the issue of immigration squarely in the context of national development and raising the difficult question, "Who benefits from migration?" The authors conclude that any answer can only be provisional because both the nature of labor exports and the manpower needs of the sending society can change over time.

Grasmuck and Pessar examine the role of remittances in the rural sites studied and conclude that in general, migration has contributed to the decline of the traditional agricultural sector. Most investors are "risk-averse," including Dominicans abroad who want to invest in agriculture at home. They are attracted to cattle raising for export markets, an activity supported by state policies. These policies, however, contribute neither to large-scale job creation nor to food production for local use.

While all the studies under review are sensitive to gender relations (an appropriate focus given that the majority of Dominican migrants are women), *Between Two Islands* devotes the most systematic attention to the subject. Grasmuck and Pessar argue that women who migrate to New York and have jobs outside the home find a new autonomy and equality in decision making that they are reluctant to give up in order to return to the Dominican Republic. The authors hypothesize that because of this issue of gender politics, migration may lose its character as a collective and unifying household project for social mobility, a premise evident in much previous literature on migrant households.

In their analysis of the Dominican community in New York City, Grasmuck and Pessar reassert that most persons in the migrant stream were urban, employed, and members of the middle or lower-middle classes. Moreover, the diaspora community was better educated than Dominicans as a whole. Thus *Between Two Islands*, along with all the studies on Dominican migration under review here, corrects the commonly held assumption that migrants are typically the poorest in their societies. Furthermore, migrants who came from rural settings were most likely to come from households with relatively privileged access to resources. Even in studying the undocumented Dominican population in New York City, the authors found that popularly held assumptions must be modified because the *indocumentados* in their sample were more likely to come from urban backgrounds and have more education than their legal counterparts.² Incorporation of illegals into the labor market, how-

2. Other researchers have argued that the illegal immigrants in New York City were from backgrounds similar to those of legal migrants because they often came from the same

ever, was likely to differ from that of legal migrants. Significantly, Grasmuck and Pessar found that gender had a stronger negative influence on labor-market outcomes in New York than did legal status; that is, women workers were more likely to end up with lower wages and worse working conditions than their male counterparts, even if the women were legal immigrants and the men were not.

While Dominican migration is not circular in the sense of Mexican seasonal migration, a number of Dominicans do return home to live after years in the United States. Grasmuck and Pessar found that although these individuals generally return to a middle-class lifestyle (their original goal in emigrating), their search for work back home is not easy, and their ability to maintain this lifestyle is "fragile." These findings support the argument put forth most clearly by David Bray in 1987 that typical Dominican migrants, at least in the 1960s and 1970s, adopted a proletarian strategy in the United States in order to maintain their middle-class status in the Dominican Republic.³

Between Two Islands makes an important theoretical contribution to the literature on international labor migration and the ethnography of transnational households. In offering a comprehensive overview of Dominican migration, it can serve as a much-needed text on the subject. The major problem is that the study is dated without acknowledging its limitations. The picture presented of Dominican emigration to New York City as overwhelmingly urban and middle- or working-class captures the process during the 1960s and 1970s. But as the country's economy declined in the 1980s, emigration spilled over into all sectors of the society.⁴ For example, the 1980s witnessed the rapid growth of migration in *yolas*, unseaworthy small boats that are routinely overloaded in transporting thousands of Dominicans on the illegal and treacherous trip between the republic and Puerto Rico. Thus the merit of Grasmuck and Pessar's *Between Two Islands* is found in its value as history rather than as an accurate representation of processes occurring in the 1980s and beyond.

In contrast to Grasmuck and Pessar's breadth of research sites, Eugenia Georges offers depth in her focus on the sending side of the

family. See Vivian Garrison and Carol Weiss, "Dominican Family Networks and United States Immigration Policy," in *Caribbean Life in New York City: Sociocultural Dimensions*, edited by Constance Sutton and Elsa Chaney (New York: Center for Immigration Studies, 1987), 235–54; and Demetrios Papademetriou and Nicholas DiMarzio, *Undocumented Aliens in the New York Metropolitan Area: An Exploration into Their Society and Labor-Market Incorporation* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986).

3. David Bray, "The Dominican Exodus: Origins, Problems, Solutions," in *The Caribbean Exodus*, edited by Barry Levine (New York: Praeger, 1987), 152–70.

4. See Franc Báez Evertsz, "Migración internacional y política de migración: viejos enfoques y nuevas tendencias," *La Revista de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales, USAD 4* (Jan.–June):45–64.

migration continuum. *The Making of a Transnational Community: Migration, Development, and Cultural Change in the Dominican Republic* examines Los Pinos, a rural area in the central mountain range near Santiago. Georges thus describes and analyzes the impact of migration on one community, particularly in the context of changing state agricultural policies starting in the mid-1960s.

Although less than a third of Dominican out-migration was rural during the period of Georges's research (1952 to 1981), it was nonetheless important to study both kinds of migration as they affected the republic and highlighted the trend toward rural disintegration throughout the region. In past examinations of rural communities affected by large-scale out-migration, a key question has been whether the process ameliorated or exacerbated social and economic inequality in the sending communities. Generally speaking, international migration seems to have exacerbated these trends, although Georges argues the point less forcefully than Grasmuck and Pessar. The reason may be that Georges focused on some of the income-generating activities in the informal sector of Los Pinos, which expanded with migrant investments. A key point in *The Making of a Transnational Community* is that while emigration and investment in informal-sector activities improved the current living standards of many in the community, in the context of peripheral capitalist development, it did not effect structural changes in the economy that would provide for long-term productive employment.

Like Grasmuck and Pessar, Georges examines gender relations in her study. She finds, for example, that rural men and women take different routes during migration. Women are more likely to migrate to an urban area in the republic before moving on to the United States, while men were more likely to migrate directly to the United States. Georges also found that the out-migration of husbands from Los Pinos actually reinforced traditional roles for the wives, who were often forced to live with relatives and subjected to intensified village scrutiny. Finally, as the informal sector in the local economy grew with migrant remittances, jobs were created primarily for men. For women who stayed in the villages, the chief employment option (at least in 1981) was to work as domestics.

Remittances and migrant investments are the main subject of Alejandro Portes and Luis Guarnizo's *Capitalistas del trópico: la inmigración en los Estados Unidos y el desarrollo de la pequeña empresa en la República*.⁵ Adopting a theoretical framework taken from modern economic sociology, Portes and Guarnizo focus on the immigrant as a profit-seeking individual. But diverging from neoclassical interpretations of migration, the individual is portrayed as enmeshed in a dense network of social

5. This study was published in English in 1990 as Occasional Paper no. 4 by the Department of Sociology at The Johns Hopkins University.

expectations and obligations. Hence all economic activities must be analyzed in their social context.

Portes and Guarnizo were especially interested in how the shift from state-sponsored import-substituting industrialization to export-oriented industrialization in the Dominican Republic changed the types of investment opportunities available to return migrants. The authors also wanted to determine how this change has been reflected in the sector of small enterprises linked to migration. They argue that remittances can play a significant role in entrepreneurial development. For example, in 1988 alone, 13 percent of the Dominican Republic's gross domestic product came from remittances, with some of the money being used to capitalize small firms. Portes and Guarnizo note that earlier studies have criticized the role of remittances, viewing them as being spent on consumption or to run small retail shops or personal services that provided only a few jobs for family members.⁶ This kind of interpretation suggested that migrant remittances may enhance the well-being of families but can work to the detriment of sending communities.

In their pilot study conducted in the late 1980s and presented in *Capitalistas del trópico*, Portes and Guarnizo examined the processes linking the Dominican community in New York to their native country. Specifically, the authors analyzed the roles played by Dominicans in the New York labor market, the destination of their transferred resources, and the economic sectors affected most back home. Portes and Guarnizo documented a thriving ethnic enclave in New York City and found that remittances sent to urban areas in the Dominican Republic were being invested in manufacturing and financial services sectors, where jobs were provided for nonfamily members.⁷ Unfortunately, Portes and Guarnizo also found that these enterprises had few backward economic linkages with productive sectors in the Dominican economy. The authors conclude nonetheless that these migrant-sponsored and -administered firms, although only a minority of enterprises in the small business sector, represent enough entrepreneurial initiative to be considered in national development policies.

Dominicans in Puerto Rico

The contributors to *Los dominicanos en Puerto Rico: migración en la semi-periferia* also adopted the historical-structural approach as part of

6. In addition to the work of Pessar, Grasmuck, and Georges, see for example, Franc Báez Evertsz and Francisco D'Oleo, *La emigración de dominicanos a Estado Unidos: determinantes socio-económicos y consecuencias* (Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, 1985); and Douglas T. Gurak and Mary Kritz, "Dominican and Colombian Women in New York City: Household Structure and Employment Patterns," *Migration Today* 10, nos. 3-4 (1982):14-21.

7. On the Dominican ethnic enclave in New York, see Roger Waldinger, *Through the Eye of the Needle: Immigrants and Enterprises in New York's Garment Trades* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

their theoretical framework. In addition, they borrowed concepts from world-systems theory, suggesting that Puerto Rico should be considered an intermediate-level country in the international division of labor. Thus the contributors make the somewhat controversial claim that Dominicans in Puerto Rico represent a case of migration to the semi-periphery, which differs from migration to the core. It is true that Dominicans are likely to be integrated differently into the Puerto Rican and New York labor markets because the jobs available to them in Puerto Rico are in low-end services while the New York jobs are found in the semi-skilled (blue-collar) category. Still, it is probably not analytically useful to push the claim that the Puerto Rican economy differs from that of the United States. Puerto Rico does not experience an autonomous process of capital accumulation as do semi-peripheral Brazil and Mexico. In short, the Puerto Rican economy simply cannot be analyzed outside its U.S. context.

Theoretical concerns aside, the empirical findings in *Los dominicanos en Puerto Rico* on the growth of the Dominican community in Santurce (a section of metropolitan San Juan) make a valuable contribution to the literature on the Dominican diaspora. These findings should also help allay the growing xenophobia in Puerto Rico toward Dominicans. The richest essays in data are the second one by volume editor Jorge Duany and the third by Duany and César Rey. These researchers focus on the origin and social composition of Santurce's Dominican population beginning in the 1970s, the labor market in Santurce, and Dominican adaptation to Puerto Rican society. Compared with Dominicans in New York City, Santurce's Dominicans are less urban, less educated, and less skilled. Yet their rate of participation in the labor force is higher in Puerto Rico than in New York. The characteristics of the Dominican population in Santurce again contradict the notion that immigrants are the poorest members of their societies. Although Dominicans fleeing to Puerto Rico, especially those arriving in yolas, are likely to be worse off than those who fly to New York, they are still not the poorest in the republic.

In examining the labor market in Santurce, Duany and Rey found that Dominicans work mainly in nonunionized construction jobs or in low-end services like domestic work and thus help keep Puerto Rican professional and business families functioning. In short, Dominicans are not taking away jobs from Puerto Ricans but are doing the jobs that Puerto Ricans are no longer willing to take. The essay by Luisa Hernández Angueira is also useful in focusing on Dominican women under forty, who make up roughly 60 percent of the Dominicans in Santurce.

Los inmigrantes indocumentados dominicanos en Puerto Rico: realidad y mitos, the slim volume edited by Juan Hernández Cruz, is a compilation of papers presented at a conference held at the Inter-American University in 1987. Because several of the contributors to this collection (Jorge Duany, César Rey, and Ramona Hernández) also appear in the Duany volume,

some degree of overlap exists between the two works. The first essay by Juan Manuel Rivera González and the second by Fernando Pérez Memén introduce a theme being sounded frequently in the Dominican Republic: that a long history of two-way migration exists between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and that at the beginning of the twentieth century, many Puerto Ricans who migrated to the Dominican Republic to find work did not enter legally. The essay by José del Castillo summarizes his detailed review of the literature on Dominican migration first published in 1987.⁸ His more recent essay adds useful data on Dominicans in Puerto Rico. The contribution by Duany and Rey stresses the social barriers that undocumented Dominicans are likely to face in becoming part of Puerto Rican society. Finally, the piece by Ramona Hernández looks at the labor market for Dominicans in New York City, emphasizing the role of women in the city's manufacturing sector. Her useful overview also raises important research questions about the future of Dominican migrants in the city. Will their migration experience resemble that of Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth century or that of Puerto Ricans at mid-century, or does the Dominican experience represent a new model of migration as the twentieth century comes to a close?

Migration in a Larger Regional Context

The Dominican experience with migration and development can also be placed in a larger regional context to gain potential answers to key research questions. The final two works under review, *Migration, Remittances, and Small Business Development: Mexico and the Caribbean Basin Countries* and *Small Country Development and International Labor Flows: Experiences in the Caribbean* are the fourth and fifth volumes of the six-volume series entitled *Development and International Migration in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Basin*, edited by Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Sidney Weintraub. This series grew out of a mandate from the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). As part of the concern with controlling undocumented immigration, the U.S. Congress went beyond passing a law providing amnesty for certain classes of workers and sanctions for employers hiring illegals to create a commission to research and report on the determinants of undocumented migration in the Western Hemisphere. The stated goal was to identify economic policies that could be implemented with U.S. cooperation in the sending nations to reduce pressures to emigrate. A key question for all the contributors to the series was whether development strategies in the sending countries need to be changed before emigration will slow and if so, which

8. *La inmigración dominicana en los Estados Unidos*, edited by José del Castillo and Christopher Mitchell (Santo Domingo: Editorial APEC, 1987).

strategies are the most effective? Tentative answers were provided in a compilation of research of impressively high quality.

The six-volume series focuses on the link between development and migration. Much of the data come from Mexico because Mexicans account for 70 percent of all unauthorized immigrants to the United States. The fourth and fifth volumes differ in their primary focus on the link between development and migration in Central America and the Caribbean. *Migration, Remittances, and Small Business Development*, edited by Díaz-Briquets and Weintraub, examines the role such remittances play in developing small businesses in the sending countries. Unfortunately, the small-business sector is not defined consistently throughout the essays. Yet however defined, small businesses were found to provide employment opportunities in both the formal and informal economies, especially in urban areas of Mexico and the Caribbean Basin. The essays show the overall importance of remittances to these economies and their under-used potential for creating more local jobs.

A key goal of *Migration, Remittances, and Small Business Development* is to ascertain how remittances could be increased. Significantly, the contributors found that policies in most countries in the region actually discourage migrants from investing their savings at home. In El Salvador, for example, remittances represented the country's main source of foreign exchange by the late 1980s. Yet Salvadoran government efforts to use remittance flows productively were almost nonexistent compared with official measures to promote nontraditional cotton exports. Similarly, the study on the Dominican Republic showed that the government could do much more with remittance policies. The essay by Wilbert Bascom on the English-speaking Caribbean demonstrates that misguided policy making is not limited to the Latin countries in the region. Two types of policies are needed to utilize migrant remittances more effectively: internally oriented policies could divert more remittance income to the small-business sector, while externally oriented policies could encourage more remittances from abroad. The most important policies are the ones, internal and external, that attract remittances through official channels.

The fifth volume in the series, *Small Country Development and International Labor Flows: Experiences in the Caribbean* edited by Anthony Maingot, surveys a broader range of development issues and potential responses. Two essays in the Maingot volume examine the declining agricultural sector in the Caribbean, one by Fernando Ferrán and Patricia Pessar focusing on the Dominican Republic and the other by Frank Alleyne on the English-speaking Caribbean. The contributors are especially concerned about unequal distribution of land, paucity of credit for small-scale producers, and the problem of agro-industries producing for export but lacking links with the domestic agricultural sector. Other essays in the volume look at tourism, export initiatives based on natural resources, and the shift from

import-substituting to export-processing industrialization. All the essays detail effectively how these economic changes may augment or lessen the need for migration.

Conclusion

Several of the books on Dominican migration and the two volumes in the series on development and international migration end with policy recommendations for lessening migration pressures and maximizing use of the resources of those who have migrated. All authors make the point that migration from the Caribbean, Mexico, or Central America is not an effective remedy for the critical shortage of jobs at home, which requires rethinking the course to be charted by national development policies. Furthermore, as is made clear in the contribution of David North and Judy Whitehead to the Maingot volume, calls for changes must address not only policies in the labor-exporting countries but also those in the host countries. Such changes would include recognizing the role played by diasporas in the host countries.

First of all, the sending countries need to develop a systematic focus on migration in order to grapple with the question of who benefits from migration, at least at specific times. In rural communities, for example, much evidence indicates that migration contributes to the well-being of migrant families but often to the general detriment of the sending communities. In studying the Dominican Republic, Grasmuck and Pessar point out the apparent contradiction that in the 1960s and 1970s, the better-off in society were migrating. Thus the state policy of promoting relatively costly higher education when many of the well-educated were leaving might not have been the best way to meet the needs of the country as a whole. Furthermore, as Franc Báez stresses in his 1991 article, home country governments that lack an articulated migration policy cannot easily serve as advocates for migrant communities abroad.⁹

All governments in the Caribbean could do more to channel migrant remittances into productive uses and to entice skilled and entrepreneurial individuals to come back home and benefit their native country. Here innovative monetary and fiscal policies and increased technical assistance in various ventures initiated by migrants themselves would help. Second, these studies make it clear that the nature of development strategies in the Caribbean Basin leave room for cooperation with the United States on reducing pressures to emigrate. Portes and Guarnizo as well as other analysts assert that the U.S. government should adopt a program of subsidized credit for developing small enterprises and make

9. Báez Evertsz, "Migración internacional."

aid available to public technological and vocational schools in the Caribbean Basin.

Together, these seven books contribute significantly to the fields of Dominican studies and international labor migration. They shift the focus in studying migration away from the individual by emphasizing the economic, social, and political factors that provide the context for the decision to migrate. These studies also detail the social networks that arise in the process. Thus all of these works highlight the transnational nature of labor migration. The challenge now is for officials in Mexico, the Caribbean countries, and the United States to react to these new transnational communities with creative policy responses. A more cooperative attitude between governments will help to maximize benefits for individual workers and families as well as for the sending and receiving societies.