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The Argentinean experience in the collection and compilation of
statistics on international migration *

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INTRODUCTION: Migration Patterns in Argentina

International migration is a complex social process which is historically linked to the development of the Latin American countries. To those of the Southern Cone in particular, it has reflected and continues to reflect the economic, social and political imbalances between countries and regions.

It is useful to identify three migration stages connected with different phases in the Argentinean development.

Between 1870 and 1929 there was large-scale immigration from overseas, predominantly by Europeans, which was fostered by policies clearly formulated to attract immigrants owing to the need to populate vast territories and consolidate the new national State. In that period, immigration played a major role in Argentinean development. Subsequently, during the post-war era, there was a second and a final wave, albeit smaller than the previous one.

It is possible to distinguish a second stage between 1930 and 1960, during which Argentina adopted, unlike the earlier agro-export model, a development strategy based on import substitution, promoting the development of national industries. Along with these changes, there was rapid urbanization in a context marked by internal migration to the large towns accompanied by border movements, which took place essentially between border areas.

The third stage began in the late 1960s with the emergence of two major migration patterns, which became more intense in recent decades, one involving immigration from neighboring countries, and the other one emigration, most of it to the United States of America, and later to other destinations such as Spain², other European countries and Canada. Why the Argentineans have chosen Spain is explained, in part, by the possibility of many emigrants of acquiring the nationality of their ancestors, protagonists of the old European immigration.

A characteristic worthy of highlighting is the growing heterogeneity of the universe of Argentinean emigrants: until the 1970s scientists, professionals and technicians predominated. Later, these flows were increased by those citizens persecuted by the military dictatorship of the mid-70s. During the 90s, the persistent economic deterioration contributed to an increase and a greater social diversification of the flows, although there remains a high proportion which holds high professional qualifications.

At present Argentinean emigration seems to be in decline as a consequence of the recent economic improvement.

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² Spain presents a higher stock of Argentineans than the United States. Around 90,000 lived in the United States in the year 2000 (Current Population Survey) and 103,831 in Spain (2001 Census). The Statistics on Residential Variations from Spain show that the arrival of Argentineans intensified since 2001 increasing the figure to 226,548 at the beginning of 2004. Their presence also has greater impact in Spain, where they represent 4.8% of those born abroad.

Although the migration from neighboring countries dates back a long way, in the last decades it became more pronounced and assumed increased visibility as a result of two factors: a) the disappearance of migration flows from overseas and b) its high concentration in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. Argentina was historically the main destination of intra-regional migration, becoming the heart of the small migratory subsystem of the Southern Cone. In addition, in the last decade, a notable increase has occurred in the number of immigrants from the rest of the American continent, in particular from Peru.

The economic regime established during the 1990s and its final crisis in 2001 led to a sharp contraction of employment and to an increase of poverty that involved wide population sectors. This unfavorable scenario in case of boundary migration is reinforced with the end of the currency convertibility that reduces the possibility of sending remittances to the origin countries.

The results of recent research³ reveal that the crisis discouraged new arrivals but did not provoke massive returns. The bordering country migrants remain in the Argentinean labor market at the cost of precarious, unstable and poorly paid jobs.

I. POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

1. Policies and administrative practices to monitor the inflows/outflows and the stay/residence of foreigners

The Argentinean migration policy is set according to what was established by the Law 25,871, which was approved by the National Congress on December 17, 2003 and promulgated by the National Executive Power, becoming effective since January 20, 2004.

Any foreigner —defined as a person born abroad not holding the Argentinean nationality— who wishes to settle in the Argentine Republic, should be admitted according to one of the three Visas or “migrant categories” established by the Law cited above: **Permanent residence, Temporary residence or Transitory residence.** (See specifications in Table 1).

It is important to make clear that in Argentina there also exists the category of “**Provisional residence**”, which is not strictly a migrant visa but a legal status granted to immigrants while they are applying for the permanent or temporary residence. It expires after 180 days, is renewable until a final resolution is issued, and enables the holders to remain, leave and re-enter the national territory, to work and study during the period it is in force.

The administrative function of granting visas falls under the responsibility of the National Direction of Migrations from the Interior Ministry and can be requested either through the Argentinean Consulate in the applicant’s country of residence or within the national territory.

The policy provisions govern the stay/residence and the entry/exit of foreigners for different purpose under the migrant categories previously mentioned are also the responsibility of the National Direction of Migrations, due to the fact that this responsibility is not delegated to other agencies.

³ Maguid y Arruñada (2005): “The crisis impact on immigration from border countries and from Peru towards the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area” in Magazine *Estudios del Trabajo* No. 30. Buenos Aires; Cerrutti y Maguid (2006) “Labor insertion and income of border migrants and from Peru” in CEPAL’s magazine, in print.

Within the Argentinean Territory, the status of residence can be changed through an application filed in the National Direction of Migrations.

As explained later, there exist special regulations and a program for the citizens of Member and Associated States of the Common Market of the South (**MERCOSUR**) with the aim of facilitating the migratory regularization.

1.1 Visas

Table 1 shows the definition, the eligibility criteria and the maximum duration for the three visa categories listed above.

Categories of Visa	Definition and Eligibility criteria	Maximum duration
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	- Children of Argentinean natives or citizens, who were born abroad. - Foreigners who are either spouses or parents of Argentinean citizens. - Foreigners who have a temporary residence and qualify for changing to the category of permanent resident.	No Limit
TEMPORARY RESIDENCE	a) Nationality: Natives or citizens of Member States and Associated Members of the MERCOSUR (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) ⁴	2 years, renewable.
	b) Migrant workers: those who enter the country to perform any legal and paid economic activity.	3 years, renewable
	c) Rentiers: those who afford their stay in the country with own resources brought from abroad, from any type of legal income originated in a foreign country.	3 years, renewable
	d) Retirees: those who collect a pension either from a government, international organizations or private companies, for services lent abroad, which allows a regular an permanent income in the country.	3 years, renewable
	e) Entrepreneurs and investors: those who bring their own assets and capital to develop economic activities of interest for the country.	3 years, renewable
	f) Scientists and highly qualified staff: those who perform scientific, research, technical activities, or who are consultants hired by public or private entities to carry out jobs in their particular field of expertise. It includes directors, technicians and administrative staff from foreign entities transferred in order to fill positions in their companies in Argentina.	3 years, renewable
	g) Sportsmen and artists: hired due to their expertise by an individual or legal entity that develops activities in the country.	3 years, renewable
	h) Religious authorities and members of religious denominations officially recognized: those who enter the country in order to develop exclusively activities related to their religion.	3 years, renewable
	i) Patients under medical treatment: those who enter the country to be assisted in health problems. In the case of under aged, disabled or sick who require companions, this authorization will be extended to the latter.	1 year, renewable
	j) Scholars: those who enter the country due to academic agreements among institutions of further education in specialized areas.	1 year, renewable
k) Students: those who enter the country to attend secondary, further education, university or specialized courses as regular students in either public or private institutions officially recognized.	2 years, renewable	

⁴ See description of the National Migration Documentation Program “Patria Grande”.

	l) Refugees and Asylum-seekers: those who were acknowledged as refugees or asylum seekers according to the international conventions signed by the country.	2 years renewable
	m) Other humanitarian reasons: Foreigners who claim humanitarian reasons that justify special treatment, according to the judgment of the National Direction of Migrations.	Without specification
	n) Special: Those who enter the country for non- contemplated reasons in the previous clauses and that are considered of interest by the Interior Ministry and the Foreign Affairs Ministry.	Without specification
TRANSITORY RESIDENCE	a) Tourists; b) Passengers in transit; c) Short- distance movements across border zones ⁵ ; d) Crewmembers of international transportation; e) Seasonal migrant workers; f) Scholars; g) Medical Treatment; h) Special: Foreigners who claim reasons that justify, according to the National Direction of Migrations, special treatment.	90 days

1.2 *Bilateral and Regional agreements, Legislation and Programs that facilitate citizens of member states to stay, travel, study or work in Argentina*

- **Regional Agreements**

In March 1991, the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay signed the Treaty of Asunción, thereby setting in motion the regional integration process whose aim was the formation of a common market, known as MERCOSUR. Bolivia and Chile were subsequently included as observers, with increasing involvement.

Recently other countries have joined the MERCOSUR: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Thus, those ten countries which are part of the MERCOSUR practically compose the Latin America's Southern region, with the exception of Guyana and Surinam.

Migration movements have intensified in recent decades despite the persistent restrictive national migration policies and the fact that the treatment of the migration variable within MERCOSUR has become limited virtually to issues of border control.

However, in the early years of this century there has been a qualitative advance in the political perspective of migration in the region with the establishment of an agreement that facilitates the movement, and residence of nationals of the State parties.

In December 2002, the “**Residence Agreement for the Nationals of Member States of the MERCOSUR**” was signed by the Presidents of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The Agreement applies both to those wishing to enter and those already residing in one of the State parties, irrespective of the migration status under which they entered. With the sole criterion of nationality and subject to presentation of identity documents of their country of origin, immigrants qualify for temporary residence for two years, which can subsequently become permanent.

⁵ It includes residents of border areas who visit the neighboring country during the day to work, shop, visit friends or relatives, seek medical treatment, for education or to participate in leisure activities.

The Agreement establishes their right to move freely within the receiving country and to have equal civil, social, cultural and economic rights as nationals; it also provides for equality of treatment under labor legislation, especially in connection with conditions of employment and social security. Right of residence is extended to members of immigrants' families regardless of their original nationality.

It establishes the right to transfer remittances to countries of origin, the right of immigrants' children to their own identity and their right of access to education, even in cases where their parents are in an irregular situation.

It defines measures for preventing illegal employment, including penalties imposed on employers, rather than on the immigrants, and on persons or organizations profiting from trafficking immigrants or from employment in abusive conditions.

The Agreement was ratified by all countries, which endorsed it by a national law, with the exception of Paraguay who has not completed this stage yet.

- **Bilateral Agreements**

It must be highlighted that due to its multilateral nature, the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement must be ratified by all countries in order for it to be in force. That is why, and given that Paraguay has not ratified it yet, Argentina has signed bilateral agreements with Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Peru while the agreement with Paraguay is currently being negotiated.

Through these agreements the right to residence on the basis of the nationality criterion is established and they guarantee that the Argentinean who enters or lives in those countries have the same treatment as their nationals on Argentinean ground.

- **The new Migration Law in Argentina**

The case of Argentina warrants special treatment since it is the only country which recently made substantial amendments to its migration legislation, taking steps towards implementing the MERCOSUR Agreement on Residence.

Historically, policies of promotion and tolerance with regard to European immigration have been accompanied by other highly selective policies for bordering countries. However, the build-up of illegal migrants, in particular during the military dictatorships, gave rise to various amnesties aimed at alleviating the situation of illegality, the majority being implemented under democratic governments in 1958, 1965, 1974, 1984 and 1992.

In 1981, at the time of the last military dictatorship, the General Migration Act was adopted with a political strategy based on a national security doctrine that denied undocumented migrants the right to engage in remunerated occupations and access to health care and education, and laid down a series of requirements that hampered their regularization. That law remained in force for more than 20 years, albeit accompanied by bilateral agreements and measures which from time to time lessened its discriminatory aspect.

It was not until December 2003 that a new Migration Law (25871) was promulgated. It adopted the same residence criterion based on nationality and is fully consistent with the principles and rights established for migrants in the MERCOSUR Agreement on Residence.

Also, the Migration Department is no longer permitted to detain and expel illegal migrants, such action now requiring the intervention of the Judiciary. It is also laid down that the treatment of foreigners is to be governed by the most favorable terms set out in the Act or in specific agreements.

Thus the country experiencing the greatest impact from regional migration is precisely the one which appears to have been promoting changes to facilitate the entry of immigrants and the regularization of those already established. These changes have occurred following the severe economic crisis of 2001, which brought about the end of currency convertibility, and Argentina can therefore be assumed not to expect any rise in immigration as a result of greater liberalization.

It is unquestionably seeking to increase the transparency of the situation of those who are already there, implementing the plan described below for a large-scale regularization process starting from 2006.

- **National Program of Regularization of Migratory Documents “Patria Grande”**

In order to implement the new law and the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement, Argentina has launched the **National Program of Regularization of Migratory Documents “Patria Grande”** aimed at the insertion and integration of the population coming from Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, which are the Member and Associated States of the sub-regional integration treaty, facilitating their access to residence.

The main objectives of the Program are: a) to regularize all the immigrants from the countries mentioned above who are in an irregular situation; b) to adopt the criterion of “MERCOSUR citizenship” for the settlement of those immigrants in the country, and c) to reduce the incidence of non-recorded labor and promote access of migrants to health, education and social security.

To sum up, the program aims at providing transparency to an already existing situation, given that most of these immigrants entered the country as “tourists”. As a consequence, a great number of undocumented migrants accumulated due to the impossibility of meeting the previous residence requirements – work contract, application at the Consulate in the country of origin, etc.

The Program aims at making contact with the migrant and reaching the greatest number of undocumented people through the participation of Municipalities and NGOs across the country. Moreover, the paperwork and applications are simplified: in the first place a “provisional residence” is granted on the sole basis of the presentation of the identification card issued by the country of origin. Later, once the rest of the documents are presented —birth certificate, certificate of judicial and police records, affidavit of arrival in the country— a two-year temporary residence is granted, which can be renewed or changed to a permanent residence status.

The Program is having a great impact. Between April and October 2006, in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, 286,000 people applied and already have a provisional residence. From November it will extend to the rest of the country.

Native citizens of extra-MERCOSUR countries who wish to regularize their migratory situation must submit a series of personal documents common to all types of applications and, in addition, the documents proving the eligibility of each migrant for the category of admission under which the residence is requested.

1.3 Border control

Both foreigners and Argentinean citizens must complete the same forms when entering or leaving the country. The only difference is that when a foreigner enters, the Migration Authority at the border assigns him an entry category.

Three types of forms are used depending on the mode of transport and port of entry:

- a) Entries and departures form: it is applied to people who enter or leave the country, in airports and seaports. The form is filled in by passengers.
- b) Statement of Passengers: It is applied to people who travel on collective means of land transport across land borders. It is filled by the transportation company.
- c) Entries and Departures Register: It is applied to the people who cross land borders by car or other sort of non-collective transport. The authorities in charge of border control fill it in.

The collection of statistics at the border is mostly based on administrative criteria; consequently, some information is not gathered. For example, the intended length of stay, the country of arrival or departure and the previous residence in it, the country of usual residence, etc. In the Section related to Sources we will explain the limitations of the data gathered on international migration at the border.

1.4 Administrative registration system

Foreigners who wish to remain in the country for over three months must apply to the National Direction of Migrations in order to obtain a provisional, temporary or permanent residence. Thus, they are enrolled in the Residents Permits Register, from that organization. When foreigners leave the country, they are not required to de-register (report their departure/absence).

2. Policies/administrative practices to monitor the inflows/outflows of citizens

There is no register to monitor the migration of citizens. They are not required to de-register before leaving the country if they intend to stay abroad for a specified period of time or to obtain clearance to travel abroad. The returning citizens are not required to register either.

3. Terms used in our country in reference to duration of stay for foreigners

We use the terms “temporary” and “permanent” as follows:

- Temporary: One to three years of residence, it is renewable.
- Permanent: Residence without limit.

Notice that the definition is related to the type of visa or category of admission. This criteria differs from the one adopted by the United Nations (1998)⁶, because it does not involve a minimum period of stay in the country of destination.

⁶ United Nations (1998): “Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Rev.1.

4. Benefits and costs of immigration/emigration in our country

According to Dr. Ricardo Rodríguez, National Director of Migrations of the Interior Ministry of the Argentine Republic⁷, the current Argentinean official policy in the matter, has given a fundamental turn, assuming a positive approach regarding the benefits of immigration. In this way, the country aims at a broad migration policy which is expected to bring advantages originating in the migrant's access to legal status, who will achieve a full integration to the receiving community. In that sense, both the 25871 Migration Law and the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement express that spirit and intentionality, emphasizing the protection of social, labor and cultural rights of migrant people and their families.

The cost of immigration, particularly irregular immigration, is the marginal insertion of the migrants in the labor market in informal, precarious jobs with low wages. This situation is not only harmful to the immigrants but also contributes to lower the working conditions and remunerations of the whole workforce, in particular of the most depressed sectors.

With regard to the emigration of Argentineans, it is seen as a considerable loss, particularly concerning the most qualified human resources, according the *brain drain* perspective. On the other hand, it is claimed that the scientists who emigrated can contribute to the development process of their homeland through "income return devices", with their knowledge and technologies.

5. Policies adopted to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs in Argentina

As stated above, the Argentinean government devised the National Program of Regularization of Migratory Documents "Patria Grande" to regularize the migration status of foreigners native of the MERCOSUR Member and Associated States.

With regard to emigrants, some policies have been strengthened to protect their integration abroad, respect for their human rights and the maintenance of links with their countries of origin by facilitating the transfer of remittances, their political participation in national elections and the exchange of skills in the scientific and technological fields.

In particular, regarding the highly qualified emigrants —scientists, technicians and researchers— the failure of return policies led to reinforcement linking and cooperation programs aiming to build up the society of knowledge, considering that the emigration of Argentineans should not necessarily be a loss and that their achievements abroad could be used to contribute to the technological and economic development of the country. Such an example is the RAICES (roots) program, implemented by Argentina's Secretary of Science and Technology, created in 1992 and that has grown in importance since 2003, broadening its scope. Apart from forming a database, it develops a campaign of contact with researchers who live abroad in order to broaden and improve the exchange with the local research communities.

⁷ Rodríguez, R: "Una experiencia argentina para América del Sur: Plan Patria Grande", paper presented at the Encuentro Iberoamericano sobre Migración y Desarrollo, Madrid, July, 2006.

II. MEASUREMENT OF MIGRATION

- In Argentina the concepts of “place of usual residence” and “duration of stay” intervene to define international migrants. But the predominant concepts are “country of birth” and “citizenship”.

We define an immigrant as a person who is born in a foreign country, who is not an Argentinean citizen and usually resides in our country, or expects to do so for a period of over six months. However, to measure international migrant stock we use the concept of “country of birth” because neither our censuses nor our household surveys collect or gather information on citizenship.

- The information on actual duration of stay is available from the last Population Census and from the Permanent Household Survey. In both sources it is derived from the question: “place of residence five years ago” and, in the case of the Census, also from the question on the year of arrival in Argentina.
- Information on intended duration of stay is used to identify migrants when they apply for a visa, so as not to consider either tourists, persons in transit or excursionists as immigrants. This is not obtained through any source of data.
- Argentina does not use indirect sources to measure specific segments of migrants.
- Argentina allows dual or multiple-citizenship, but no information is captured.

III. SOURCES OF DATA

1. Data sources for international migration statistics

a) **Registration at national consulates**

The Argentinean citizens whose usual residence is abroad should register at the consulate of the Argentine Republic in each country. Although this register is favored by the fact that it allows Argentineans who are abroad to vote in national elections, it is very incomplete and therefore underestimates the stock. In order to improve it the government carries out communication campaigns. There is no systematic information published.

b) **Register of refugees/asylum seekers**

The Refugee Eligibility Committee (CEPARE) together with ACNUR keeps a full register of refugees that is published at the Interior Ministry’s website. (www.mininterior.gov.ar). Statistics on applications filed for acquiring refugee status, of the cases accepted by nationality, of those denied, and of the resignations to this status are displayed until the year 2006.

Table 2. Information on data sources for international migration statistics

Data source	Responsible institution/agency (a)	Whether used for measuring:			Whether data are on:	
		(b)			(c)	
		Stock	Inflows	Outflows	Foreigners	Citizens
Administrative registers						
Population register						
Register of foreigners						
a) Registration at national consulates						X
b) Register of Refugees/asylum Seekers	Refugee Eligibility Committee (CEPARE) constituted by the National Direction of Migrations and the Foreign Affairs Ministry	X			X	
Other administrative sources						
c) Residence permits	National Direction of Migrations				X	
Work permits						
Application for asylum						
Exit permits						
Clearance of migrant workers						
d) National Program of Migratory Regularization: Patria Grande	National Direction of Migrations	X Irregular Immigrants			X	
Border statistics						
e) Border collection (entry/exit forms)	National Direction of Migrations		X	X	X	X
Border sample surveys						
Others, specify:						
Household-based field inquiries						
f) Census	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC)	X			X	X Natives
g) Household surveys	INDEC	X			X	X Natives
h) Complementary Migration Survey	INDEC	X			X	

c) Residence permits

The unit of register is the application forms, not the people. Thus, the same person can be entered in the system more than once. Besides, as it is not updated with the dropout from the register due to change in migration category, departure or death, it does not allow to obtain the stock of legal immigrants, displaying an overestimation of the latter. At the same time, it necessarily underestimates the total stock of migrants since it does not count the irregular ones. Data regarding the identification of people, the date of arrival in the country and some of their attributes such as sex, age, nationality, occupation, educational attainment, and others are collected. This information is not disclosed.

d) National Program of Migratory Regularization: “Patria Grande”.

A complete register of the applications and of the assigned migration categories is kept. Updated statistics by nationality, sex and age are disclosed. This register will allow to know the quantity and some socio-demographic characteristics of those immigrants who had been without papers.

e) Border collection (entry/exit forms)

Border collection has been considered a major source of information on international migration flows. It should not only enable the knowledge concerning the immigration of foreigners but also the one on native emigration. If the collection had an appropriate coverage they should count all the entry and departure moves and allow estimates of the net migration of foreigners and citizens.

However, they present serious limitations due to various factors. The extension of Argentina’s border with almost 260 crossings of different types⁸ and the emphasis placed in the control and administrative duties over those of statistical ones, favor omission and under-recording. Particularly in the land borders it has been proved that usually the arrivals of foreigners is better recorded than the departures, leading to an over-estimation of the balance of foreigners in the country. The opposite takes place in the case of natives, where the departures are better recorded than the entries, a situation that results in an over-estimation of the emigration of nationals.

Other limitations derive from the fact that in some land borders the short-distance movements across border zones are included, whereas it is a type of movement that should not be counted in the migration statistics due to the fact that they are circuits within border zones. In addition, the information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the people which is possible to record with certain reliability, is limited to age, country of birth and of residence, because other data such as occupation or reason for traveling, are not completed with the required rigorousness as to be of use for statistical purpose.

In the Argentinean case, not in all forms appear the country of usual residence, which is crucial information to determine if a movement constitutes international movement. Moreover, no migration condition is applied to the nationals nor to the foreign residents who leave the country, which makes it impossible to distinguish a tourist from an emigrant. A category of admission is assigned only to the foreigners who arrive.

The production of statistical information based on the border collection system has serious problems both in the availability of updated data and in the heterogeneity of their quality according to the type of port of entry/departure. Thus, the information is available for the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (BAMA) border points and for some of the 55 computerized crossings. In the rest, the migration officials fill abbreviated forms, whose reliability is low.

The INDEC publishes periodically through its website www.indec.mecon.gov.ar the statistics corresponding to BAMA’s airports and sea ports (Ezeiza International Airport, Jorge Newbery Airport and Buenos Aires Port). The entries and departures are presented by nationality, origin and final destination of the journey. The gross population interchange of these three checkpoints reached almost 8 million people during the year 2005, most of these were tourists. Ezeiza Airport accounts for 90% of the air travel of the country.

⁸ Argentina has borders with Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. From a total of crossings, 109 are land borders, 19 are sea ports, 88 are fluvial ports and 44 are airports.

The INDEC expects to cooperate further with the National Direction of Migrations to improve the quality, coverage and production of statistics. For many years, it has been in close connection to this organization in order to obtain information on the movements in the main checkpoints, for designing the sample of the Tourist Survey. As a result of this exchange the Institute publishes the above mentioned data on its website.

f) Census

The deficiencies in the information coming from the entry and departure records led to a generalized use of census to calculate the stock of immigrants, defined as all persons who have Argentina as country of usual residence and whose place of birth is located in another country⁹. Also to learn about changes in its composition by period of arrival; their demographic, social and economic characteristics in contrast with those of the native population and to investigate the returning natives.

The Argentinean censuses have incorporated since 1970 the same questions to identify the migration status of people and the duration of residence: “**place of residence**” because they enumerate *de facto population*; “**place of birth**”; “**residence abroad five years prior to the census**” and “**year of arrival in the country**”. The three first questions allows for the recording of each country. Given that in all the previous censuses the percentage of non-response detected in the question on the year of arrival in the country was very high, in the 2001 census the design of the cell was improved in order to highlight all questions related to migration and the way of inquiring about the duration of residence shifted to: “How many years have you lived in Argentina?” In spite of this, the non-response was so high that it prevented the use of this information to classify immigrants according to period of arrival.

The information is available on the INDEC website, where there are tables with the socio-demographic and economic characteristics by country of birth (detecting neighboring countries and countries with greater presence). Moreover, a database with census data in REDATAM format is published, which allows users to perform all processing they require.

Regarding the emigration of Argentineans, no official statistics have been published. This is an issue that has drawn growing interest, and there are publications with results from academic research, which use information from the IMILA Program of CELADE and from the United States and Spain’s national censuses.

g) Household surveys

The Permanent Household Survey¹⁰ (EPH, Encuesta Permanente de Hogares) has become an important alternative source for the follow up of international migration trends during the inter-censal periods and to further the analysis of the migrants’ socio-occupational characteristics. Its main advantage is that they allow a more exhaustive study of the work conditions, the quality of labor insertion, the income level and the poverty of the migrating and native population, and as a consequence, to identify the situations where the migration gap is greater. As these surveys have become multi-purpose, including special modules on various issues such as poverty, labor precariousness, housing, health, education, etc., they represent a

⁹ The censuses did not include the question on citizenship, with the sole exception of the 1980 census.

¹⁰ The survey manages to capture the bordering migrants and allows for the analysis of their characteristics provided they are considered as a whole, without identifying country of origin. The structure by sex and age group of these migrants in October 2001, from the EPH, is similar to the ones shown by the Census on the same date. Similar results are drawn from the comparison with the 1991 Census.

remarkable improvement in the possibilities of researching these dimensions concerning international immigration.

The survey has been conducted twice a year since 1973 and became continuous since 2003; it is administered in 28 urban agglomerates, which cover 70% of the total population of the country. Databases with trimester information are available and it is possible to combine them in such a way that observations are not repeated, in order to obtain a greater number of immigrants along one semester or a year.

However, it presents various limitations. In the first place, due to the fact that the bordering migrants and those from Peru—who form the greatest number and most representative of the recent migration—constitute a relatively small population, the size of the sample, even combining different trimesters, does not allow for desegregation by country of origin. In the second place, it lacks information on the period or year of arrival of the migrant, which makes it impossible to find out their composition by duration of residence in Argentina and to test hypotheses referred to the process of “assimilation” of the migrants to the society of destination. The migration question it asks are: “place of birth” and “residence abroad five years prior to the survey”.

The main results of the survey are published by trimester and although only a few tables on international migration are included, there exists a user’s database available at the INDEC’s website. This source enables research on the characteristics and types of labor insertion, and income of immigrants and their gender gaps.

h) Complementary International Migration Survey (Encuesta Complementaria de Migraciones Internacionales (ECMI))

The Complementary International Migration Survey was part of the 2001 National Census of Population, Households and Housing and its objective was to further the information of census data concerning the population born in neighboring countries, by knowledge of attributes of their spatial mobility scarcely studied until the present.

What is new about the Survey is its complementary role to the Census, which was given both by the concept design and by the origin of the sample. From the point of view of the concept design or framework, the data from the survey did not replace those of the census, but included information which, by its own nature, the census could not gather. From the point of view of the sample, having recorded for the universe of the population in Argentina the variable *country of birth*, the 2001 Census became the sample framework from which eighteen independent samples were drawn, from households with at least one member born in a neighboring country - Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. Each of these foreign communities was addressed in the jurisdictions where they achieved their highest representation according to the 2001 Census.

The ECMI recorded, among other issues, information on the socioeconomic profile of the bordering population in Argentina; the year of arrival to the country; the existence of migratory networks; the characteristics of the last residence in the country of birth; the itinerary which the migrants followed within the Argentinean territory; the circuit between Argentina and the country of birth or other places; economic exchanges which could have accompanied the circulation of people and the accounting of remittances sent back to the country of birth.

The communication of the results, which includes tables controlled by period of arrival, was carried out through a special publication¹¹ and on the INDEC'S website.

2. Activities to improve the measurement and compilation of migration statistics

The INDEC has planned to develop a series of activities in order to improve the statistics on migrant flows and stock so as to devise a Statistical System on International Migration. It is urgent to develop joint efforts with the National Direction of Migrations both to improve the completeness and quality of the Entry and Departure registers and to produce reliable statistics. On the other hand, it is required to harmonize the questions drawn from censuses and surveys for characterizing the immigrants in order to guarantee follow up during inter-censal periods. It would also be advisable to include migration modules regularly in the Household Survey, taking a broadened sample that allows for the treatment by nationality and period of arrival, to further the knowledge on immigration, inquiring on aspects related to migratory networks, remittances, will or intention to return, etc.

In reference to emigration, although there is a fruitful relationship with CELADE for obtaining data on the Argentinean citizens living in other American countries, the strengthening of links with statistical organs of the main destination countries would facilitate the analysis of outflows and of Argentinean stock abroad.

¹¹ INDEC; (2006) *National Census of Population, Households and Housing, 2001. Complementary Survey on International Migrations*. Series 7 N° 2, Buenos Aires.