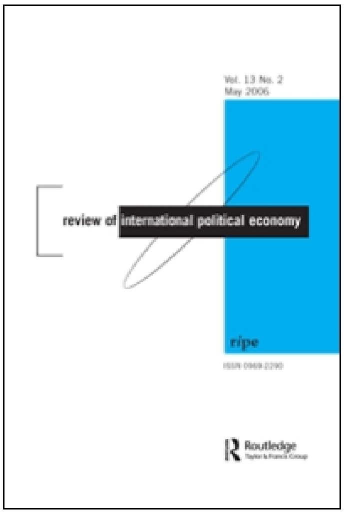

Review of International Political Economy
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713393878

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Online Publication Date: 01 May 2009

To cite this Article Phillips, Nicola(2009)'Migration as development strategy? The new political economy of dispossession and inequality in the Americas',Review of International Political Economy,16:2,231 — 259

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09692290802402744

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09692290802402744

Review of International Political Economy 16:2 May 2009: 231–259

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Migration as development strategy? The new political economy of dispossession and inequality in the Americas

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ABSTRACT

In the context of a severe contraction of 'development space' for Latin American and Caribbean economies in the global political economy, we are witnessing a novel and increasingly explicit articulation of migration as a national development strategy by governments in the region. This is particularly pronounced in the Caribbean basin (defined to include Mexico). In response to the shifting shape of the transnational division of labor, the core development strategy that is being articulated is one of insertion into transnational supply chains on the basis of the provision of labor, in the sense *both* of populating the new transnational professional workforce and of ensuring a continual supply of cheap, low- or unskilled, often undocumented workers to a huge range of sectors in cities and outside them. This article contends that what is thereby put in place is a new political economy of inequality in the Americas, through which a dominant, transnationalized form of 'accumulation by dispossession' can be reinforced and deepened. This transnationalized form of accumulation by dispossession combines, in highly contingent ways, with the distinctively 'nationalized' governance of migration to constitute a contemporary political economy of migration in the Americas in which the developmental potential of labor mobility is subject to profound constraints.

KEYWORDS

Migration; transnational division of labor; labor mobility; development; inequality; Americas; Caribbean basin.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is once again facing a crisis of development. In 2005–6, growth rates lagged behind those of emerging economies in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe and, except in certain pockets, indicators of social and human development were uninspiring and levels of inequality remained the highest in the world. At the

Review of International Political Economy
ISSN 0969-2290 print/ISSN 1466-4526 online
http://www.informaworld.com
DOI: 10.1080/09692290802402744

same time, a range of development strategies, particularly those based on various forms of low-cost manufacturing, have been rendered obsolete or profoundly threatened by a combination of shifts towards multilateral liberalization, the elimination of bilateral margins of preference with the US and EU and the emergence of disabling competition from China in third markets. Put together, these shifts constitute an important exacerbation of the severe development problems that characterize the Latin American and Caribbean region, especially the long-term process of de-industrialization, the profound limits to the competitiveness of export sectors and products, the lack of higher value-added production capabilities and the persistent inadequacies of education, infrastructure, institutions and savings rates.

In short, we are witnessing a pronounced contraction of existing and potential development spaces for Latin America and the Caribbean in the global political economy (Phillips, 2008). This contraction is especially severe for the economies of the northern part of the region (that is, the wider Caribbean basin, encompassing Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean islands). In this context, one of the development strategies that is emerging and crystallizing most visibly in the Caribbean basin, and indeed in some other parts of the region, is articulated around migration – that is, around the export of both skilled and unskilled labor. Migration processes are of course in no way new in the region – quite to the contrary. But what *is* new, and striking, is that migration is being articulated increasingly explicitly not only as the dominant foundation of the insertion of the region's economies and societies into the new transnational division of labor, but also as a dimension of formal, national 'development strategy' by governments and policy makers. In other words, governments in the Caribbean basin (and indeed elsewhere in Latin America) are starting to devote sustained attention to the elaboration of coherent and purposeful migration policies, a novel trend which should be understood in the context of the recent emergence, only from around the mid-1990s onwards, of a key concern in policy and academic circles with the potential connections between migration from poorer to richer countries and development in the countries of origin (see Skeldon, 2008; also Global Commission on International Migration, 2005; Lucas, 2005; United Nations, 2006; United Nations Population Fund, 2005). This article sets out to explore the contours of this trend and its significance for our understandings of the relationship between migration and development, on the one hand, and, on the other, the contemporary political economy of development in the Caribbean basin.

In this context, the central arguments it seeks to advance are three-fold. First, the core development strategy that is being articulated around migration in the Caribbean basin is one of insertion into transnational supply chains on the basis of the provision of labor, in the sense *both* of populating the high-skill, high-wage sectors of the global economy and of ensuring a continual supply of cheap and low- or unskilled workers to a huge range of sectors in cities and outside them. Concomitantly, migration has become the key mechanism through which the labor requirements of the US economy and particular transnational production processes are met. Yet what is thereby put in place is a new political economy of inequality in the region, through which a dominant, transnationalized mode of 'accumulation by dispossession', to borrow David Harvey's (2003) phrase, can be reinforced and deepened. Harvey's development of this concept rests upon the theoretical heritage of Marx's notion of primitive accumulation, and denotes in his formulation a notion of the coercive appropriation of surpluses, with a particular (although not exclusive) emphasis on the violent appropriation of land and property that is intrinsic to the historical socio-spatial process of 'creative destruction'. Choosing not to subscribe to the same theoretical apparatus as that which sustains Harvey's original elaboration of the concept, I use the term here slightly differently, to point to the transnationalized processes which drive the intensification of social stratification, facilitated increasingly and in large part through global migration. The underlying process of dispossession is associated with the unrelenting 'downward' pressure on the material and social conditions of migrant workers, in the interests of furthering accumulation at the level of both the national economy and the firms, employers and other social groups that are imbricated in and benefit from these processes. The articulation of migration as a national development strategy is in this sense representative of a transnationalized (and regionalized) form of uneven and unequal development, which I conceive here both in these social terms and in the spatial or territorial terms associated with the inequalities between national economies and societies which result from the often massive export – and absorption – of workers from the capital-poor areas of the global 'periphery'.[1]

The second argument relates to the place of the national in this transnationalized form of accumulation by dispossession. Expressed perhaps nowhere more clearly than in the political economy of migration, our considerable scholarly energies have been devoted, particularly since the early 1990s, to understanding the progressive transnationalization of economies, social groups and, more broadly, development processes. Yet, in the justified haste to identify and understand the proliferation of socio-spatial forms associated with the restructuring of the global political economy, there is a tendency among theorists of transnationalism to understate the fundamental ways in which 'the significance of the national is now ever more tightly linked to other, supra- and sub-national scales of political-economic organization than was previously the case' (Brenner, 2008, forthcoming; also Brenner, 2004; Jessop, 2002; Sassen, 2006). In other words, too little attention is afforded to the ways in which transnationalized social groups and development processes are at the same time embedded in other national – and highly nationalized – territorial and social contexts.

In the present context of migration, the transnationalized form of accumulation by dispossession is profoundly 'nationalized' in two senses. First, national states and other national socio-political forces condition the material and social circumstances of migrant workers and, by extension, those of other groups in society both within and beyond national borders. National states must in this sense be understood as retaining the institutional and political capacity to shape the forms of uneven development and accumulation by dispossession that occur within and beyond their national borders (Brenner, 2008, forthcoming) – an insight which issues a compelling challenge to the less nuanced versions of the transnationalization thesis. Second, migrant communities are 're-embedded' in a social and political context shaped by highly nationalized principles of governance, which interlock and intersect in ways which strongly condition the material and social conditions of migrant communities: on the one hand, the distinctive political economy of accumulation on which the national economy rests; on the other, the highly nationalized principles of governance associated with national security and national culture.

The third argument is that the intersections of the transnationalized form of accumulation by dispossession and the nationalized re-embedding of migrants and development processes constitute a contemporary political economy of migration in which the developmental potential of labor mobility is subject to severe constraints. It should be clarified that my argument here is not one which posits that migration is 'bad' for development – emphatically the opposite, although that is a topic for elaboration elsewhere. Rather, my argument is that that the particular nationalized ways in which migration is governed, in the context of the particular contemporary form taken by the global division of labor, give rise to a situation in which the developmental potential of migration is, at the current juncture, profoundly limited for the national and transnationalized societies of the Caribbean basin.

This is most clearly the case if we think of development in national or territorial terms – the conventional framework for thinking about development and inequality – inasmuch as the contemporary governance of migration acts in important respects not to the benefit but to the developmental detriment of the sending countries. If development is defined instead, or as well, in terms of the material conditions and social circumstances of individuals and groups of people occupying both national and transnational spaces, the argument is a little less stark. Migration clearly offers a significant enhancement of earning capacity for vast parts of the world's population, such that much attention is justifiably being devoted to the potential developmental gains of allowing greater labor mobility (see Pritchett, 2006; World Bank, 2005).[2] Yet, if we take development as premised on a broader conception of individual and collective welfare, opportunity and freedom, then the formal and informal governance of migration in the US (and indeed elsewhere), rooted in transnationalized and nationalized processes of accumulation by dispossession, can only be understood as placing severe limits on the developmental potential of labor mobility for both migrants and non-migrants. In other words, *under present conditions* the effects of migration on both national development in the sending countries and the welfare and life chances of the citizens of a particular country, regardless of their geographical location, are unfortunately by no means as positive as is sometimes assumed, particularly in international policy debates.

The article develops these arguments in three sections. The first locates migration from the countries of the Caribbean basin to the US in the context of global economic restructuring and the shifting transnational division of labor. The second outlines the manner in which governments are beginning to articulate migration as a national development strategy, and explores the limits of the developmental potential of migration by mapping the contours of the new political economy of inequality that is emerging in the region. The third section offers concluding reflections.

GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING, MIGRATION AND THE REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION

The contours of global restructuring are well known and do not require lengthy rehearsal here. They revolve around the emergence of and concentration of power in mobile transnational capital, which facilitated the construction of globally integrated production and value chains and, with them, what was initially termed a 'new international division of labor' (NIDL) (Frobel *et al*., 1980). The central insights of this conceptualization illuminated the movement of transnational industrial capital to what was then labeled the 'periphery' and the concomitant positioning of services as the fastest growing sectors of many of the old 'core' economies, alongside the concentration in these zones of technology and knowledge as the foundations for reconfigured economic activity. Going beyond these notions of an 'international' division of labor, seen to rest on an outdated and territorialist center–periphery dichotomy, later theorists of globalization and transnationalization have correctly stressed that the contours of uneven development are as much – or indeed much more – social than territorial, and that its impact manifests itself in ways that cut across societies, countries and regions. Subsequent work has therefore proposed reformulated notions of a 'global' or 'transnational' division of labor, which could reflect better the transnational and global nature of capital accumulation and its attendant social projects (in particular, Caporaso, 1981; Cohen, 2006; Mittelman, 2000; Robinson, 2004).

For our purposes, the matter of concern is the supply and utilization of labor in this pattern of global restructuring. Its implications for migration take a number of forms. First, the manner in which mobile transnational capital seeks out low-cost manufacturing sites and 'lands' in particular zones in particular territories is strongly associated with both internal and international migration. The unprecedented scale of internal rural–urban migration in China, internal migration in countries of the Caribbean basin to the border zones associated with export-processing activities and patterns of international migration provide ample evidence of the impact on migration of the relocations of transnational capital and the reconfigurations of global production chains.

Second, the tertiarization of economic activity in the 'core' economies has generated a surge in demand for employment in service sectors, particularly in what we have come to call the world's 'global cities' (Sassen, 2001). This process is easily grasped through the lens of the 'Baumol effect' – William Baumol's (1967) seminal insight that the sectors in an economy which come to dominate employment are those characterized by low, not high, productivity growth and intrinsic labor intensity, namely, services. The expansion of very high income jobs in key sectors of these new knowledge economies has in this way been accompanied by a severe contraction of traditional middle income jobs, both blue and white collar, and an arresting increase in low wage jobs in a range of services sectors, giving rise to a prevailing 'hour-glass' pattern of labor demand and a highly segmented labor market (Bauder, 2006; Sassen, 2001). This expansion of low wage service sectors in the major cities of the primary receiving countries has in turn been fueled mainly by 'fresh international migration . . . and by part-time, perhaps normally female, employment' (Cohen, 2006: 169). The 'coherence' of this form of labor market segmentation has been widely recognized, encapsulated by Pierre Bourdieu (2002: 40) in his contention that the immigrant labor force arises not only from the creation under neoliberalism of a 'global reserve army of labour', to use Marx's phrase, but also from the demand of business and professional elites for a labor force of 'disposable, temporary, single workers with no families and no social protection . . . ideally suited to providing the overworked executives in the dominant economy with the cheap and largely feminine services they need'. Moreover, the forms of institutional, social and cultural regulation of labor markets that emerge from this form of segmentation tend to devalue labor in the secondary segments of the economy – overwhelmingly, in contemporary labor markets, the labor of migrants – at the same time as they act to valorize labor in the upper segments (Bauder, 2006, forthcoming).

To illustrate: in the US, data on the evolution of the labor force for 2006 demonstrated not only the continued increase in the share of the workforce occupied by foreign born workers (to 15.3% in 2006), but also, more significantly, the proportionally lower levels of employment of foreign born workers than native born workers in management, professional and related occupations (26.4% of foreign born and 36.4% of native born workers), and their higher levels of employment in service sectors (22.5% of foreign born versus 15.4% of native born workers). These include food preparation and serving-related jobs, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations. Foreign born workers are also more likely to be employed in natural resources sectors, construction and maintenance occupations (16.5% versus 10%), and production, transportation and material moving occupations (16.7% versus 11.9%) (United States Department of Labor, 2007). Hispanic workers in 2006 represented some 50% of this foreign born labor force and some three-quarters of the total population of undocumented workers. The profile of Mexican workers illustrates starkly these trends in labor market participation. Less than 6% of Mexican immigrants occupy professional or executive positions, and conversely were estimated in 2004 to account for 20% of all groundskeepers, 14% of food preparation workers, 11% of janitors, 10% of heavy truck drivers and 8% of waitresses and waiters (US-Mexico Binational Council, 2004: 5). Note that these figures refer only to Mexican migrants. In all occupations they are significantly higher when accounting for Latino migrants from the whole of the region. Significantly also, Latino migrant workers constitute the mainstay of all kinds of domestic service, a sector not included in formal employment statistics.

What must be emphasized, however, is that this profile is not simply the result of the considerable prevalence of unskilled migrants in the overall pattern of migration from Mexico. Rather, compared with the native born population in the US, the occupational profile of Latin American migrants as a whole reveals a concentration in low-skill jobs *regardless of level of educational attainment*, as revealed in successive issues of the US Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey* (also see Canales, 2007). This tendency towards employment of migrants in low-skill service sectors, in a manner not representative of differentials in educational qualification, reflects wider trends among groups of migrant workers worldwide. At the same time, aggregate data for 2006 comparing average weekly earnings of salary and wage workers in the US indicate that foreign born workers earn around 25% less than native born workers (United States Department of Labor, 2007).

Third, as already intimated, the absorption of migrant and other forms of 'flexible', low-cost labor has been associated not only with tertiarization processes in the major 'receiving' countries, but also with their agricultural sectors. It is here that the perhaps most significant irony in the migration development question is visible. The continued protection of the agricultural sectors of the richest economies hampers possibilities for the expansion of trade with developing economies in which agricultural exports remain central to economic profiles, and indeed has contributed to the decimation of rural economies in many parts of the world. These agricultural trade policies have thus acted to increase pressures for internal and international migration. At the same time, the agricultural sector in countries like the US has come to rely integrally on the absorption of low-cost flexible labor, overwhelmingly in the form of migrant workers and frequently on an illegal basis. Reliable figures for this sector are hard to assemble given the high prevalence of illegality, but some 85% of all hired crop farm workers are estimated to be foreign born (roughly one third being US residents and two thirds undocumented workers), and close to 100% of these foreign born workers are Mexican (Commission for Labor Cooperation, 2002; US Department of Labor, 2005). In an already heavily subsidized industry, the systematic use of (illegal) migrant labor contributes further to the maintenance of artificial competitiveness, which feeds back into the circle of constraining the possibilities for competitive trade in agricultural products for the majority of developing economies. In a pithy and popular formulation, the United States has preferred consistently to import tomato pickers rather than tomatoes, and indeed has been much more effective at keeping out tomatoes than keeping out tomato pickers (Martin, 1992: 1005).

Fourth and finally, this surge in demand for low-cost labor is strongly correlated with illegal forms of migration and employment. The exploitative imperatives inherent in global and national processes of capital accumulation are pursued increasingly, and effectively, through the import of undocumented migrant workers, inasmuch as illegal status works ineluctably to suppress and divert demands relating to wages, employment and social rights, and political voice. The growing 'feminization' of migration, relating particularly to the numbers of migrant women in domestic service, is central to this political economy of illegality and exploitation (Anderson, 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002; Parreñas, 2001).

In this context, the particular form of accumulation by dispossession associated with migration processes is enacted through a dual mechanism by which the labor force is disciplined by the increased and sustained favoring of migrant labor. The first part of this mechanism relates to the disciplining of migrant workers themselves. Low- or unskilled migrant labor in countries like the United States is disciplined through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms of dispossession and exploitation, which range from the denial of a wide range of employment, social and legal rights, the inability to achieve representation through unionization, the imposition of profoundly disadvantageous working conditions and wages that rarely exceed minimum wage levels. Illegality, in this sense, is profitable for many employers, and this represents one of the most difficult obstacles to progressive immigration reform. The difficulty is sharpened by the manner in which the overarching principle of moulding immigration policy to the needs of the economy and employers clashes with other principles of governance, particularly those associated with matters of national security.

The favoring of migrant labor is central also in legal employment, in which the same disciplining mechanisms are rooted in immigration and employment law. In the United States, seasonal (H-2A, H-2B and H2-R) work visas – the large majority of which are granted to Mexicans (in 2006, 71.9% (129,766) of the total of 180,503) (United States Department of Homeland Security, 2007a) – are associated with specific jobs, curtailing the ability of migrant workers to change employers and circumventing effective regulation or enforcement. The result is a system which affords enormous control to employers and recruiters over their migrant workers, together with the heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse that such a situation inevitably entails. A longstanding government policy of dealing with immigration solely at the border and leaving to one side enforcement in the workplace has also acted over time to reinforce the control of employers and the disciplining effects of illegality on the workers themselves.

The second part of the dual mechanism relates to the effect of the import of migrant labor in disciplining the *existing* national labor force and maintaining downward pressure on wages and working conditions. Indeed, the notion that the presence of huge numbers of low-skilled, low-wage migrant workers acts to the disadvantage of native born workers of comparable status is one of the most commonly heard complaints among opponents of immigration. It is precisely through the positioning of migrant labor as an economic 'underclass' in advanced capitalist societies that the 'race to the bottom' in forms of employment and production can be perpetuated as the dominant form of capital accumulation, as these processes work to engender a particular type of competition between groups of workers. A debate continues about how best to measure and understand the impact of immigration on wages in particular labor markets, but, in the case of the US, recent research has suggested that the increase in the supply of labor through immigration reduced the annual average earnings of native born men by roughly 4% between 1980 and 2000, and those of native born workers without a high school education by some 7.4%. This pattern also carries strong 'racialized' characteristics: the impact of immigration, through its wage effects, falls disproportionately on native born black and Hispanic workers, given that a much larger share of those groups than white workers are in direct competition with (largely Hispanic) immigrants (Borjas, 2003, 2004).

This, then, is the framework within which we can usefully approach questions of the relationship between migration and development – one which emphasizes the changing transnational division of labor and borrows the vocabulary of 'accumulation by dispossession' in order to illuminate the place of migration within transnationalized and nationalized forms of capitalist accumulation. But it is insufficient simply to assert a structuralist 'logic' of global capitalism as the explanation for why and how migration occurs, in a manner which removes from relevance the forms of agency that are central to the political economy of migration. Rather, there is a huge body of research (notably in the fields of sociology and politics) into how and why people migrate, who migrates, the complex transnational social networks that shape migration patterns and link migrants with their home countries, the obscene 'migration industry' of smuggling and trafficking, and the increasingly consolidated transnational recruiting networks through which employers locate both professional and unskilled migrant labor.[3] At the same time, we need to locate analyses of migration within the political economy of development in the major sending regions – in this case in the Caribbean basin – and explore the implications of the emerging articulation of migration as a national development strategy.

MIGRATION AS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INEQUALITY IN THE AMERICAS

The supply of migrant labor has become in many senses the key contemporary strategy for the 'global positioning' (McMichael, 2000: 150) of economies in the Caribbean basin, and indeed an increasingly important dimension of the strategy in many other parts of Latin America. The emerging articulation of the export of labor as a formal and purposive development strategy by national governments is distinctly novel in the region, although not necessarily in the world. In the contemporary period, government strategies of promoting labor migration have been especially prevalent in Asia. In the Philippines since the 1980s, for example, a range of public policies has been implemented to this end, resting on the principles that emigration should be temporary and legal, and should occur through official channels, with all forms of employment requiring approval by the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration. By channeling emigration through this body, migrants are afforded health and insurance benefits, rights to make representations against their employers, an ATM card for the purposes of sending remittances and other such provisions which seek to make the supply of migrant labor more consistent with national development and social welfare objectives and to tie migrants more closely to their 'homelands' (see, Asis, 2006; Gonzalez, 1998; O'Neill, 2004). How well it has worked is nevertheless questionable, particularly in reducing permanent emigration and illegal movements (Newland, 2007).

Similarly, following the crisis of the late 1990s and primarily with a view to increasing flows of remittances, the Thai government allocated 319 million baht for training up to 30,000 workers to go to work in 22 countries, the emphasis falling strongly on domestic service workers, and put in place policies of 'privatising' recruitment and placement in order to establish domestic labor firmly as a national 'export commodity' (Hewison, 2006: 94).[4] Other similar examples are plentiful, such as the strategy articulated in India around information technology workers and the promotion of 'brain circulation' or 'brain gain' through their emigration and return (Saxenian, 2006), and the strategy pursued by China, from the late 1970s onwards, of promoting substantial investment in the national development project on the part of the 'overseas Chinese' diaspora, largely through the creation of special economic zones.

The visions emerging in the countries of the Caribbean basin are much less developed and cannot, even in Mexico, be characterized as comprehensive or coherent migration policies, much less development strategies. Emerging strategies in the Caribbean basin are clearly incipient, patchy and piecemeal. It is thus important to be clear from the outset precisely what is – and is not – being claimed here about migration as development strategy. It does not refer to a development strategy that rests on the promotion of emigration *per se* – indeed, how to control mass emigration remains an issue of continual concern for national governments. Nor is it intended to indicate purposeful and coherent foreign policies in dealing with governments in the US and other major receiving countries. Indeed, it is notable that still little has been attempted or achieved by governments, even in countries like Mexico, in furthering a serious bilateral political approach to the issues surrounding migration in the region. Equally, the claim is not that we are seeing the emergence of a new kind of development model formulated 'proactively' by national governments.

Rather, what we are seeing in the Caribbean basin, as in the Philippines and other cases, is the moulding of a set of strategies borne not of developmental vision but of necessity – that is, a process of reactive strategizing in order to capitalize on the reality of mass emigration and, crucially, to locate a new 'virtue' in this necessity in the flows of remittances that attend these forms of economic migration. In this sense, there is no change to the underlying development model in the region, based broadly on neoliberal principles. Instead, we are seeing the articulation of migration within, and put to the service of, this regional development model, both as the foundation for the insertion of these economies and societies in the global economy (the supply of labor) and, through the generation of remittances and their supposed impact, as the foundation for domestic accumulation strategies.

Before expanding on these arguments, let us then outline the central elements of these strategies that are emerging in the Caribbean basin. First, emerging policy and institutional innovations have been oriented to reinforcing the ties and the forms of political belonging that migrants have with their home countries, as a means of strengthening the identification of migrant communities as protagonists in national development strategies and putting in place the foundations for other strategies relating to remittances, to which we will come shortly. This is a common element of what Jagdish Bhagwati (2003) has termed the 'diaspora approach' to managing the challenges of emigration. By 2000, legislation had been passed in 10 Latin American countries permitting some form of dual citizenship, while before 1991 such legislation existed only in four. Other countries allow limited and selective duality with specified countries (Jones-Correa, 2001; Renshon, 2001).[5] Some of the legislation (including that of Mexico and the Dominican Republic, for example) also allows political and voting rights to migrant citizens.

These arrangements are accompanied by a prolific web of institutions that both reflect and build 'everyday' forms of transnationalism in migrant communities (both migrants and those who do not move but are integrated into transnational networks). Bodies such as the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, 'Hometown Associations' of many nationalities, government and state departments such as the Ministry of Diasporic Affairs in Haiti or the General Directorate in the Salvadoran Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with expatriates (among legion other examples), institutionalized cooperation between banks and credit agencies to assist migrants, and schemes such as the Mexican *Programa Paisano* represent but a handful of an enormous range of institutional organizations, actors and schemes across the region that respond to and act to construct these forms of transnational identity (Levitt, 2001; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998).

At the same time, the national development strategies of governments across the region have come to incorporate a concern with the circumstances and rights of migrant citizens as part of a broader preoccupation with the developmental context in which migration takes place. A good example is found in the National Development Plan (2007–12) of the Mexican government of Felipe Calderón, in which a series of strategies relating to these objectives are laid out. These include strengthening economic, social and cultural links with the overseas Mexican community, promoting international juridical mechanisms to allow the legal, safe and orderly migration of workers, and advancing a vision of 'co-responsibility' between sending and receiving states in promoting national development opportunities within Mexico (Presidency of Mexico, 2007). These strategies are articulated as part of a wider strategy to build what, in its formal National Development Plan, the Mexican government terms 'a new culture of migration', conceived as a means of harnessing what are supposed to be its 'developmental' benefits.

Second, and centrally, the vision of migration as development strategy rests on the vast flows of remittances to the region – these reached an estimated $62.3 billion in 2006 – and the construction on this basis of so-called 'remittance economies'. The data in Tables 1 and 2 reveal in very stark fashion the basis for this development strategy, particularly when compared in other forms of economic activity and flows of finance. Flows of remittances have also remained on an upward trajectory even with growing economic recession in the US and growing unemployment among the Hispanic population in that country, and indeed have remained stable when other capital flows to the region have featured significant levels of

Table 1 Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001–5 (US$ million, selected countries, descending order based on 2005 figures)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% growth, 2001–5
Mexico	8,895	10,502	13,226	16,613	20,034	125.2
Brazil	2,600	4,600	5,200	5,624	6,411	146.6
Colombia	1,756	2,431	3,067	3,857	4,126	135.0
Guatemala	584	1,690	2,106	2,681	2,993	412.5
El Salvador	1,911	2,206	2,316	2,548	2,830	48.1
Dominican Republic	1,807	2,112	2,217	2,438	2,682	48.4
Peru	930	1,265	1,295	1,360	2,495	168.3
Ecuador	1,430	1,575	1,657	1,740	2,005	40.2
Honduras	460	770	862	1,134	1,763	283.3
Jamaica	968	1,229	1,426	1,497	1,651	70.5
Haiti	810	932	978	1,026	1,077	33.0
Bolivia	103	104	340	422	860	734.9
Nicaragua	660	759	788	810	850	28.8
Argentina	100	184	225	270	780	680.0
Costa Rica	80	135	306	320	362	352.5
Venezuela	136	225	247	259	272	100.0
Uruguay			42	105	110	**161.9
Trinidad & Tobago	41	59	88	93	97	136.6

Source: Data from Inter-American Development Bank <http://www.iadb.org/mif/remittances/>.
**% growth 2003–5.

volatility (Inter-American Dialogue, 2004: 4; Orozco, 2004: 8).[6] It is in this context that increasing attempts have been made to position remittances as a 'bottom-up' form of development financing, ripe for harnessing and co-opting by national states, and that official discourse has sought to celebrate migrants as 'heroes' in Mexico and elsewhere.

The majority of Latin American and Caribbean states maintain a strategy of not imposing taxes on inflows of remittances in order to facilitate and maximize these financial flows. Moreover, it is widely accepted that taxation of remittances would run counter to the strategy of increasing the extent to which remittances flow through and into the formal (rather than informal) economy. This strategy of exempting remittances from taxation is pursued by all Central American states, Mexico, Caribbean countries such as the Dominican Republic and many others in South America. A handful of exceptions remains, and there are sporadic debates, often at local levels, about the possibility of taxing remittances for the general purpose of increasing tax revenues. Such a proposal was made, for example, by the Secretary of the Administration and Congressional Budget Commission of the Mexican state of Veracruz in September 2007. Yet such initiatives have failed to win any significant political foothold and commonly meet with

Table 2 Significance of remittances, 2005

	Volumes of remittances, US$ millions	As % of gross domestic product (GDP)[a]	As % of exports (goods and services)[a]	As % of imports (goods and services)[a]	As % of total net foreign direct investment	As % of aid (net official development assistance or official aid)[b]
Argentina	780	0.4	1.7	2.2	21.8	857.1
Bolivia	860	9.2	25.3	28.1	−307.6*	112.1
Brazil	6,411	0.8	4.8	6.5	51.1	2249.5
Colombia	4,126	3.4	15.5	15.8	71.7	810.6
Costa Rica	362	1.8	3.7	3.4	40.0	2784.6
Dominican Republic	2,682	7.7	27.5	24.4	262.1	3082.8
Ecuador	2,005	5.5	17.8	17.0	121.8	1253.1
El Salvador	2,830	16.7	61.9	37.0	942.7	1341.2
Guatemala	2,993	9.5	60.1	31.3	1438.9	1372.9
Haiti	1,077	25.9	179.9	63.1	11336.8	443.2
Honduras	1,763	21.1	51.5	34.3	648.4	274.6
Jamaica	1,651	16.7	45.7[b]	32.1[b]	283.9	2201.3
Mexico	20,034	2.6	8.7	8.3	160.7	16557.0
Nicaragua	850	17.3	61.9	30.0	352.5	70.0
Peru	2,495	3.1	12.8	16.4	96.7	512.3
Trinidad & Tobago	97	0.6	1.1	1.5	16.2	**−9700.0
Uruguay	110	0.6	2.2	2.4	15.4	500.0
Venezuela	272	0.2	0.5	0.9	19.4	555.1

Source: Own calculations. Primary data on remittances from Inter-American Development Bank <http://www.iadb.org/mif/remittances/>; primary data on GDP, exports, imports, FDI and aid from ECLAC (*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2006) and World Bank (*World Development Indicators 2006*).
[a] At current market prices.
[b] Calculations using 2004 figures.
*Minus percentage arises as the figure for net FDI to Bolivia in 2005 was –279.6 (US$ millions).
**Minus percentage arises as the figure for aid to Trinidad and Tobago in 2004 was – 1 (US$ millions).

immediate official and public resistance, such that the huge bulk of costs associated with remitting money continues to come from commission and fees imposed by banks and other private financial bodies.

In this sense, rather than taking the form of formal taxation, governments' articulation of development strategies around remittances have thus far focused on the transformation of these private flows of money into so-called 'collective remittances', in which public policy can be deployed to divert remittances away from constituting individual, family-based income used primarily for private consumption, towards their identification with collective 'developmental' objectives for communities and the wider national economy. A number of programs have been developed in which national and local governments proportionally supplement collective contributions from migrants to projects involving social and infrastructural development, such as road construction, building projects, water projects and so on. The best example of such a strategy is found in the Mexican '3x1' program, which became '4x1' in October 2005 with the contribution to the existing scheme of $1.25 million by First Data Corporation, which owns Western Union, one of the world's largest money transfer companies. Various equivalent schemes are found elsewhere, such as in El Salvador.

The further dimension of the construction of remittance economies that is worthy of note is the use of present and future flows of remittances by Latin American and Caribbean governments as guarantees for loans from international financial institutions. Such a strategy has been pursued in recent years in, for example, Mexico, El Salvador and Brazil (Ascencio, 2004; Ratha, 2003).

These strategies are clearly partial and inadequate, but are nevertheless indicative of the ways in which migration is being pulled centrally into the articulation of national development strategies. The goal underpinning this shift is not difficult to discern: it is to use migration to contribute 'passively' to the maintenance of macroeconomic and social stability (Delgado-Wise and Guarnizo, 2007) and also to compensate for the deficiencies of public policy and state capacity in a range of areas of social and welfare provision, poverty reduction and infrastructural development. In other words, while the political impetus in the region is to address huge social problems, this is intrinsically a question of facilitating the processes of national and transnational accumulation in which the financing and organizational functions of states are dispersed to a range of other private agents – in the case of remittance economies in the Caribbean basin, to migrant workers and their families. As indicated earlier, it is thus a strategy that needs to be understood as consistent with and coherent within an agenda and form of socio-economic organization associated with distinctively neoliberal understandings of 'development'.

The migration-based development strategy rests also on an attempt to construct around migration the same sorts of backwards and forwards linkages with national economies that are characteristic of strategies in traditional sectors of economic activity. The 'diaspora approach', noted earlier, draws essentially upon an idea of a constructed transnational space in which migrant labor, located physically in other national territories, is somehow organically linked to the 'home' national economy. But the key issue of the intrinsically *nationalized* situation of 'denationalized' workers limits the extent to which an assumption of backwards and forwards linkages to the national economy can form the foundation for a coherent national development strategy. The manner in which immigration is governed in the US, by governments and society, and indeed by transnationalized agents such as banks and firms, constrains significantly the extent to which development can be premised on a notion of shared transnational space or shared 'development', whether this takes a distinctly neoliberal form or otherwise. It is significant also that debates about immigration in the US have never been articulated as requiring attention to issues of development in the region's sending countries, except in a simplistic (and wrong-headed) view that economic 'development' – restructuring – in the sending countries will reduce migration.[7] There has certainly been no movement in the US towards understanding the 'sending' and 'receiving' countries in migration as integrated into a single transnational space that demands novel forms of governance.[8]

It is these twin conditions – the neoliberal foundations of development strategy and the nationalized governance of migration – that shape the emerging political economy of inequality, to which we now turn our attention. The following sections sketch a number of its principal contours, which are identified as relating to the 'nationalized' process of accumulation by dispossession in the United States, the question of remittances and the export of skills and talent.

Immigration and dispossession in the United States

We have already noted that the model of contemporary immigration in the US is one based on securing the supply of workers to feed the addiction to cheap labor and fuel the global competitiveness of the US economy in a new transnational division of labor. The political approach that underpins this model is one which has been described in interesting fashion as a return to the 'Virginia' model of immigration that existed during the colonial period, which treated immigration as a mechanism for covering labor shortages without the extension of citizenship to immigrant workers (Fuchs, 1990; Martin, 2003). This model has long prevailed in the treatment of immigration specifically from Mexico and other parts of the Latin American region, and is one which has found particularly virulent expression in the contemporary politics of immigration. The most recent policy debates on the management of immigration, including the initiatives for a guest worker program put forward during the second administration of George W. Bush but defeated in congressional debates over the course of 2006 and 2007, are based on the same model of using immigration to compensate for labor 'shortages', without extending the benefits of citizenship or basic social or legal rights to the vast majority of migrant workers.[9] It is, in other words, a model of intensified social stratification.

By extension, as already highlighted, it is a model which tailors immigration policy directly to the interests of employers, associated with a longstanding inclination to neglect enforcement in the workplace and with legal structures which consolidate the control of employers over workers. These arrangements reflect the increasing strength of the 'free-market' lobby, which emphasizes the 'right' of employers to locate 'essential workers' but opposes the extension of welfare to these workers and, concomitantly, welfare obligations to their employers (see Martin, 2003; also Tichenor, 2002).[10] The point is that the conception of an 'essential worker' used by this coalition reinforces the association of migrant labor with the low-wage, low-skill sectors of the US economy, and also with labor systems in which employers' costs are driven down by the absence of social and legal obligations to the workforce.

The Virginia model of dispossession also derives political strength in the various subsections of the 'restrictionist' coalition, and centers in this instance largely around state-level lobbying and legislation severely to limit the access of undocumented migrant workers to benefits and services. Since the mid-1990s, federal immigration policy has reflected a significant increase in the number of migrants who are eligible for legal status but at the same time a sharp contraction in the social and legal rights of immigrants who do not enjoy full naturalized status (Martin, 2003: 138). Further curtailments of legal rights were instituted after 11 September 2001 under the Patriot Act. At the state level, legislative debates often yield singularly vindictive and draconian approaches to the treatment of migrant workers, which, with variations, rest on the denial of access to a wide range of social and welfare services (including all retirement, welfare, health or disability benefits, public or assisted housing, post-secondary education, food assistance and unemployment benefit), as well as such provisions as the requirement of proof of eligibility for all non-federally mandated public benefits, the imposition of fines for landlords and businesses for providing accommodation or employment to undocumented migrants, and stipulations that all city documents be written only in English.

Such proposals and legislation were proliferating in cities, counties and states across the US around the mid-2000s, but the generalized hard-line fervor has been significantly 'complicated', and outcomes often tempered, by intense debates about the issues at stake in immigration policy. For instance, a raft of bills was tabled before the Texas legislature in late 2006, piecing together an exceptionally harsh anti-immigrant agenda. Yet the legislature stepped back from this approach in April 2007, as an alliance between legislators and business people crystallized around the recognition that the zeal of the hard-line approach 'threatened to purge Texas of the workers that pluck chickens, build houses, and make some people very rich' (*New York Times*, 2 April 2007) – a revealing formulation of the argument that points clearly to the political economy of accumulation by dispossession and the benefits of migrant labor for the maximization of employers' profits and personal wealth. Purges of illegal immigrant workers in states like Colorado had indeed led to situations in which farmers faced severe shortages of agricultural workers for the planting and harvesting seasons.[11] Similar arguments have led elsewhere to a range of policies designed to be more hospitable to immigrant workers: perhaps most notably, for example, New Haven, CN, became the first city to offer identity cards to illegal immigrants in July 2007.

Through the moulding of immigration policy to the needs of employers in the fastest growing sectors of the economy and the adoption of a model of social and legal exclusion, the social politics of inequality and dispossession in the US are thus entrenched and expanded as the foundation of the US labor market. The resulting form of competition between workers acts both to depress wages and limit unionization. The embedding of migrants in these nationalized politics of immigration, and more broadly in the nationalized structures associated with the shifting transnational division of labor, thus acts under present circumstances to limit the possibilities for social advancement entailed in a notion of 'development'.

The developmental limits of 'remittance economies'

Nationalized modes of governance in the United States impinge with equal force on an assessment of the developmental potential of remittances in the Caribbean basin. As noted earlier, this is an area of huge interest and activity for public policy makers and financial institutions, demonstrated in the ways in which financial and banking sectors have become much more central to immigration policy debates in the US and legislative initiatives at the federal level which seek to allow immigrants to open bank accounts and channel remittances through them. For example, while opposed by the Justice Department and many other organizations and groups, the acceptance of *matrícula*s (Mexican identity cards) for this purpose was supported not only by the State Department but also by the vast majority of banking and industry groups, such organizations as Wells Fargo, Bank of America and Citibank gaining considerable political traction in Congress, various state agencies and large sections of the Republican party.[12] Equally, an array of legislation has been presented which seeks to address some of the key difficulties associated with remitting money, with particular emphasis on the lack of transparency, the lack of requirement that financial institutions disclose the fees and exchange rates with which they operate, and the lack of federal regulation which contributes to huge variation between states. Even so, on the whole US financial institutions are proving resiliently averse to offering products such as deposit accounts, life assurance or mortgages to migrants or their families in other parts of the region, despite the efforts of organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank to bring about such changes in policy and practice.

Moreover, there has emerged a strong political counterpoint to this pressure, manifested in growing state-level initiatives to control illegal immigration through the remittances market. In large part such legislation has focused on the issue of proof of citizenship in order to be able to transfer money through formal channels, which acts inevitably to encourage recourse to remitting through illegal or semi-legal channels to the egregious disadvantage of the person concerned. More worrying still have been widespread proposals to introduce taxation on remittances – that is, to levy taxes on the money sent out of the state (and country) in the form of remittances, even while a worker may already have paid tax on her income. Part of the aforementioned raft of immigration legislation presented in the Texas legislature for the 2007 session, for example, involved proposals to tax money transfers to Mexico, although this was diverted by the subsequent political shifts. If these moves are a sign of things to come, the 'developmental' consequences for migrant individuals and communities within the United States are clearly significant. This is particularly so given that the financial burden of sustaining families through remittances can be extraordinarily heavy for migrants, in some cases of an order which limits their social mobility and their ability to accumulate capital for return or investments in their home countries (Levitt and Sorenson, 2004: 7).

What we see in the US, and elsewhere, is thus a process akin to a 're-nationalization' of economic citizenship in a context of high (and increasing) labor mobility.[13] The link with security concerns is central, particularly in relation to the issue of money laundering by terrorist networks and the tightening of financial regulations in this context. The Patriot Act and other anti-money laundering strategies in fact discourage banks from offering remittance services (Inter-American Dialogue, 2007: 10). The implications connect to the arguments here concerning the nationalized 're-embedding' of migrants, in this instance relating to the denial of access to forms of 'financial citizenship' on which the well-being and security of migrants, and indeed their purposes for migrating, frequently rest.

Turning to the construction of 'remittance economies', there are three issues which should inform our evaluation of the developmental potential of this strategy and temper the excessively excited treatment it often receives. First, there is a wide-ranging debate surrounding the impact of large inflows of remittances (see Brown, 2006; Cohen, 2005; Fajnzylber and López, 2007) and a good deal of caution within this debate concerning their macroeconomic and social effects. In the broadest terms, reservations about the developmental potential of remittances are prompted by the manner in which these flows have thus far remained confined to private consumption. As in the title of one report (Inter-American Dialogue, 2004), remittances remain 'all in the family' and their use is structured around financing existing or new consumption, generally of products with high import content (including food). Emerging patterns in the use of remittance flows thus do not include notable degrees of investment in productive projects or community-based development such as infrastructural works. Research on the Dominican Republic, of broader relevance, has shown that there is as yet no discernible link between remittances and business ownership or levels of entrepreneurship, even while remittances are attracted by the presence of investment opportunities 'back home' (Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo, 2006). Remittances may also be said to represent the potential for sharpening foreign exchange difficulties in the modes of consumption they finance, given their high import content, even while they ease some of the pressures associated with capital constraints in developing countries. Further concerns revolve around emerging evidence that inflows of remittances have tended to reduce labor force participation, and the available evidence concerning the impact of remittances on poverty and inequality is at best mixed (Acosta *et al.*, 2006; Adams and Page, 2005; World Bank, 2005). Moreover, research on all of these issues indicates significant variation across countries and regions. The fact that the jury is still out on these issues has generated a clear change of tone in discussions of the role and potential of remittances, to a much more cautious one, even among some in the World Bank and other institutions.

Second, although it is too early for any systematic data to exist, the evidence suggests increasingly clearly that the ties with 'home' countries that generate remittances on the present scale are characteristic only of first-generation migrants, and become progressively weaker in subsequent generations. As a result, the structuring of national development strategy around remittances can be considered a particularly precarious option, even while, as noted earlier, flows of remittances demonstrate much more robust characteristics than other forms of finance.

Third, the social implications of the positioning of remittances at the center of development strategy point to further dimensions of an emerging political economy of inequality. On the one hand, remittances are envisaged as the return for the export of labor, on the basis that the 'sending' nation can claim to 'own' the labor of their citizenries, in a manner which 'displaces the sale of labour from the labourer to the nation to whom the labourer is presumably indebted' (Hernandez and Coutin, 2006: 189). It is through this 'nationalization' of remittances, widely understood to be private flows of money, that statements such as the following can be made concerning the case of El Salvador: 'Let's remember that the very future of the country, at least in the short term, depends on the expulsion of surplus population and the constant foreign exchange [thereby produced]' (cited in Hernandez and Coutin, 2006: 191). In a similar maneuver, and supported by the deficient accounting techniques that pertain to remittances, remittances are articulated as akin to flows of overseas aid and therefore considered to be a 'cost-free' form of revenue for the national economy (Hernandez and Coutin, 2006). It is noteworthy that this vision of remittances as aid has been prevalent also in the major migrant-receiving countries, with various episodes in the US in which proposals have been made to 'cut off' remittances to particular countries, again as if these flows were 'owned' by the country in which migrant workers reside. Such action was proposed, for instance, in connection with the impending elections of leftist presidents in El Salvador in 2004 and Nicaragua in 2006.

On the other hand, there is an important sense in which the articulation of remittances as a core dimension of national development strategy implies the co-opting of migrants' support for their families and communities – either through individuals' remittances or collective efforts centered in Hometown Associations. Initiatives like the Mexican 4x1 program are oriented in essence to using remittances to subsidize public works and compensate for scarce resources in the national economy, the key point being that this kind of subsidization is being performed predominantly by the poorer (migrant and non-migrant) sectors of society. In this sense, the scarcity of national resources is considered to be mitigated by the 'harnessing' of the resources of poor migrant workers and their families. The development strategy can be understood, in these senses, as one of exploiting an additional opportunity for a form of proxy taxation of the poor and appropriation of migrants' labor, in countries in which formal tax systems remain inadequate, already skewed heavily in favor of business and rich elites, and central to the structures of persistent and massive social inequality.

'Brain drain'

Traditionally, the most commonly noted concern about the developmental consequences of large-scale emigration relates to the export of talent and skills and the loss to national economies of large parts of the educated population. It was noted in the opening paragraphs that one of the most significant obstacles to Latin American and Caribbean development – particularly when compared with Asia – lies in the trenchant deficiencies of education systems. Unhappily, only around a fifth of Latin American and Caribbean people have completed secondary or some form of tertiary education. There is thus considerable concern about the impact of 'brain drain' in this region. However, only 4% of Mexican migrants have tertiary education, and the figures for Central American migrants are 7%, for the Caribbean 12%, for the Andean region 24%, and for South American countries 30% (Fajnzylber and López, 2007: 10). Significantly, Mexican and Central American migrants account for the bulk of migrants from the Latin American and Caribbean region in the United States: 70% of the US population born in Latin America and the Caribbean, as counted in the national census of 2000 (ECLAC, 2006: 18). Similarly, undocumented migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras alone accounted for some 67% of the total estimated unauthorized immigrant population in the United States in 2006, with only Brazil (at 2% of the total) appearing from the rest of the region in the 10 most significant countries of birth relating to this unauthorized population (United States Department of Homeland Security, 2007b). Mexican and Central American migrants consequently dominate the overall education profile of Latin American and Caribbean migrants, in a way which sets it sharply in contrast with the profile migrants from other parts of the world: around 70% of migrants from India, China, the Philippines, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan and Malaysia have tertiary education (Fajnzylber and López, 2007: 10).

From this comparative perspective, the issue of 'brain drain' is palpably less pertinent for countries in the Caribbean basin than it is for countries elsewhere in the world. Yet it becomes much more significant when considered in the context of individual countries. For example, more than 80% of people born in Haiti, Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana who have higher education qualifications live and work overseas (Fajnzylber and López, 2007: 11; Kapur and McHale, 2005: 18–19), primarily in the US and other OECD countries. The figures for other countries in the Caribbean basin are less arresting: the respective figures for Mexico were only around 14%, El Salvador 32% and the Dominican Republic 22% (Kapur and McHale, 2005: 18–19). The problem is thus clearly much more pronounced for small (and often poorest) countries in the Caribbean basin, and the consequences of brain drain concomitantly more devastating.

Yet the absolute numbers of educated emigrants and the high propensity among the most educated in these societies to emigrate are not in themselves automatically indicative of a significant development problem. Rather, it is the almost complete absence of policies in the Caribbean basin designed to counter the impact of these trends, alongside the continuing hostility of the United States to introducing any serious notion of 'circularity' into its immigration and border policies, that give rise to the significantly prejudicial implications of brain drain for national and social development. There is increasing discussion of measures that can be taken to encourage the return of skilled migrants in particular sectors, as in such programs as the Returning Residents Programme in Jamaica and the debate surrounding how to manage the emigration of teachers from the Caribbean countries (Morgan *et al.*, 2005). But there is no clear evidence of the positive socio-economic feedback effects identified in much of the 'revisionist' literature on brain drain, which calls attention to the circular transmission of skills and injections of entrepreneurial dynamism into national economies (of the sort noted in the earlier discussion of the Indian and other Asian cases), as well as the impact of remittances and longer-term investment in the national economy following the return of emigrants to their home country.

Instead, contrary to assertions that emigration benefits the sending countries by compensating for shortages of employment and opportunity, and contrary to the predictions of these 'revisionist' accounts concerned with 'brain gain', the effect of brain drain in this case reinforces the conventional 'territorial' contours of inequality in the region in which economies in the Caribbean basin (and indeed the wider Latin American region) are characterized by low average skill, education and wage levels in comparison with the US and Canada.

CONCLUSIONS

In a context in which available and potential development spaces for the Caribbean basin are being significantly compressed, the increasingly explicit articulation of migration as a national development strategy shows few signs of realizing the developmental potential that could, in principle, stem from greater labor mobility. Certainly it carries very dim prospects as a means of addressing the profound social problems of inequality that continue to characterize the region in a global context in which key economic sectors are increasingly dependent on the creation of an ultra-flexible labor force, primarily through the mechanisms of migration. Rather, the emergent form of migration-led development in the Caribbean basin is based on and driven by the consolidation of transnationalized and nationalized forms of accumulation by dispossession, representative of an entrenched historical process of uneven development, and which arise from, exploit and deepen massive global, regional and national inequalities of wealth and opportunity. At the same time, we see a fundamental clash between the transnationalized nature of contemporary capitalism, which increasingly is sustained by global migration, and the manner in which the world remains organized around highly nationalized forms of governance, centering on ideas of sovereignty and national citizenship, that permit the reinforcement of lines of exclusion based on the citizen/non-citizen distinction. It is this clash which acts profoundly to limit the possibilities for the realization of the developmental potential of migration, both at the aggregate 'macro' level of global development and at the level of the individual migrant. The result, as we have seen, is instead the emergence of a new political economy of inequality, the contours of which are drawn both in transnationalized form and within and between national, territorial units.

Yet the crucial dimensions of contingency and agency that have been emphasized in this paper are central to an understanding of the *politics* of global capital accumulation and the political struggles unleashed by these processes. The core argument concerning the nationalized dimensions of now distinctively transnationalized political economies of accumulation and development reveals the manner in which national states represent sites of intense contestation and struggle, in this case among social groups seeking to control and shape the manner in which migration and immigration are governed both formally and informally. Moreover, alongside these nationalized struggles we have seen the emergence of new, genuinely transnationalizing social movements confronting the issue of immigrants' rights, and particularly the forms of dispossession suffered by non-citizens and those of 'undocumented' status. The mass demonstrations by Latino workers in the US in March 2006 and what was dubbed the 'Great American Boycott' (the day on which Latino immigrants withdrew from work) represented the emergence of a significant, transnationalized movement against the form of accumulation by dispossession that has crystallized around migration in the Americas, and specifically immigration in the US. What these politics indicate forcefully is that the relationship between migration and development, and the developmental potential of labor mobility, are of a fundamentally contingent nature and likely to be shaped by increasingly intense political contestation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For their helpful contributions and reactions to previous drafts of this paper, I am grateful to Steve Jones, Tony Payne, Rorden Wilkinson, Andrew Wyatt, participants in research seminars at the Copenhagen Business School and the Universities of Liverpool, Nottingham and Lancaster, and participants in conferences associated with the Institute for the Study of the Americas (University of London) and the International Studies Association. I also appreciate the valuable comments of three anonymous referees and the helpful input from the editors of *RIPE*.

NOTES

1 Clearly I am privileging here those processes of migration from 'peripheral' to 'core' zones of the global economy. Yet it would not do to forget about the diverse forms of what, inadequately but customarily, is referred to as 'south-south' migration, nor indeed forms of internal migration. What is striking is that similar forms of dispossession operate with respect to the material and social conditions of migrant workers across these arenas of migration, and that, across the world, workers' migrant status is used directly as a means of intensifying national and transnational processes of social stratification.

2 The World Bank study (2005) considered the gains to the citizens of poor countries that would accrue from a relaxation of restrictions on labor mobility to

allow an increase of 3% in the labor forces of the rich countries. The conclusion was that these would be of the order of $300 billion – around four and a half times greater than the gains from foreign aid at existing levels, before one factors in the economic gains to the rich countries themselves.

3 As only indicative examples amidst very sizeable literatures, see, on the 'who, why, how' question, Massey and Aysa (2005); on transnationalism, Glick Schiller *et al*. (1992); Smith and Guarnizo (1998); on human smuggling and trafficking, Anderson (2007); Andreas (2000); Kempadoo (2005); Kyle and Koslowski (2001); on transnational recruiting networks, Peck *et al*. (2005).

4 As Hewison (2006: 94–5) notes, the possibilities for corruption and the defrauding of workers are inevitably rife in this system and have been widely exploited.

5 The 10 are Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. Until 1991, such legislation existed only in Uruguay, Peru, Panama and El Salvador.

6 This situation was apparently changing over the course of 2008 and 2009 as the financial crisis took hold, as the growth of remittances to parts of Latin America began to slow and, later, volumes of remittances flowing to the region began to decline. The emergence of these trends adds weight to arguments concerning the precarious nature of a development strategy based heavily on remittances.

7 For a good discussion of this line of argument, see de Haas (2007).

8 This is less the case in the European context, where moves have been made to conceptualize the relationship between national spaces in this transnationalized manner. The phrase that has entered into use in this regard is 'co-development', probably first coined in 1997 by a French scholar, Sami Naïr, during his time as director of the Interministerial Mission on Migration/Co-development. 'Co-development' is conceived in his definition as 'a proposal for integrating immigration and development in a way that migration fluxes will benefit both the country of origin and the country of destiny. This is a consensual relationship between two countries that will allow migration to the country of destiny not to imply an equivalent loss in the country of origin'. See relevant documents from the Council of Europe at <http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/migration/Activities/Migration_and_co-development_en.asp>, and the 'Co-development Newsletter' produced by the French government at <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/codevelopment_newsletter_no1-2.pdf>.

9 It should be noted, of course, that the notion of 'shortage' does not refer to demographic profile or insufficient numbers of American workers, but rather to the shortage of American workers prepared to accept the wages and conditions associated with most of the positions available.

10 Perhaps the most potent political force is the Essential Workers' Immigration Coalition (EWIC) which comprises some 50 of the most powerful employers' associations.

11 The disturbing solution proposed was to deploy prisoners in state jails as the new agricultural workers (*Los Angeles Times*, 1 March 2007; *Washington Post*, 10 March 2007). Prisoners would earn the state's standard prison pay of 60 cents a day. The contract would be between the state and farmers, the latter paying the costs of transportation and guards.

12 Author's interviews, Washington, DC, September–October 2004.

13 I am indebted to Ben Rosamond for suggesting this formulation of the argument to me.

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