

Amenity Migration in Rural Latin America

Migración por amenidades en la ruralidad de América Latina

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ABSTRACT

Amenity migration evidences a conscious desire to migrate to rural areas, in most cases influenced by the attraction of natural or cultural comforts. The objective of this article is to examine research trends on amenity migration in rural areas, metropolitan rural areas, and intermediate cities in Latin America. The method consisted of a qualitative design framed within a state-of-the-art review. In the results, the different conceptual terms used to describe this phenomenon are detailed, the Latin American countries where these migratory flows occur are georeferenced, and the theoretical and methodological approaches of the studies are also expanded upon. The discussion highlights the gaps in current research and the challenges for studying these new human mobilities.

Keywords: 1. amenity migration, 2. nature, 3. migration flows, 4. rural space, 5. Latin America.

RESUMEN

La migración por amenidades evidencia un deseo consciente de emigrar a la ruralidad por influencia, en la mayoría de los casos, de la atracción de comodidades naturales o culturales. El objetivo de este artículo es examinar las tendencias de investigación sobre la migración por amenidades en zonas rurales, zonas rurales metropolitanas y ciudades intermedias en América Latina. El método consistió en un diseño cualitativo enmarcado en un estado del arte. En los resultados se detallan los diferentes términos conceptuales para nombrar este fenómeno, se georreferencian los países de América Latina donde se presentan estos flujos migratorios, y se amplían también los abordajes teórico y metodológico de los estudios. En la discusión se detallan los vacíos en las investigaciones actuales y los retos para el estudio de estas nuevas movilidades humanas.

Palabras clave: 1. migración por amenidades, 2. naturaleza, 3. flujos migratorios, 4. espacio rural, 5. América Latina.

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INTRODUCTION³

Constant human movement has led to the emergence of a new mobilities paradigm in the social sciences, involving contributions from anthropology, cultural studies, geography, science and technology studies, tourism and transportation studies, as well as sociology (Sheller & Urry, 2006). This paradigm implies a broad theoretical project aimed at going beyond images of spaces as static and fixed geographical containers where social processes take place. It calls into question scalar logics, such as the usefulness of the local-global binomial for the description of regional extensions, and attempts to account for those concomitant patterns of concentration that create zones of connectivity, centrality, and even empowerment in some cases, and of disconnection and exclusion in others (Graham & Marvin, 2001). Although a distinction is often made between spaces and those who inhabit them, the new mobility paradigm opposes this separation, rather positing the reality of a complex relationship of places and people connected through mutually influencing actions (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

Migration can occur individually or collectively, voluntarily or forcibly. Forced migration is one of the most studied types in recent decades,⁴ and involves a set of legal and/or political categories, such as refuge, asylum, forced internal displacement, development displacement, environmental and disaster displacement, human trafficking and smuggling (Castles, 2003).

In contrast to the above, other types such as amenity migration, which allows individuals to make choices about their lives, evidence a conscious desire to migrate to other locations to pursue personal objectives and aspirations, unrelated to economic needs or forced reasons (for example, due to human conflicts or natural disasters). This type of migration is motivated by the desire and ability to seek specific living conditions found, in this case, in rural areas of large, mid-size, or metropolitan area cities (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2015; Ruiz-Ballesteros & Cáceres-Feria, 2016).

Amenity migration (Moss, 2006) is the movement of people to areas, especially rural areas, with a notable natural environmental and landscape presence, chosen as permanent residential settlements due being deemed ideal places to live in. The movement of people to the countryside takes place under different signs: migration for services, second homes, or migration for amenities. Despite the different terms, the concept includes access to or ownership of a second home by people whose primary residence is outside the site of interest, that is, people are not actually tourists. Although tourism is considered to play a causal role in amenity migration, some studies suggest that amenity migration may occur quite independently of tourism (Chipeniuk, 2004).

Given the above, the categories of migration and tourism are interrelated and overlapping. Tourists, motivated by the consumption of services, local products, landscapes, and experiences,

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⁴ The trends in studies on forced migration is beyond the scope of this research.

arrive and reside in the territory for a limited time. However, the psychological and emotional attraction of rural amenities may contribute to the tourist's aspiration for seasonal or permanent residence in such space (Rode, 2008).

Amenity migration is a phenomenon associated with the movement of upper-middle-income populations to rural or peri-urban areas. These areas offer goods and services such as electricity, aqueducts and sewage systems, road and telecommunications infrastructure, proximity to businesses, but also provide access to areas with natural resources such as water springs, natural environment, forests, pleasant climate, etc. The decision to move is not made from need, but rather seeking access to areas where health and education services are satisfactorily covered, where there are paved roads, and where there is access to recreation and leisure. The amenity migrant, unlike the tourist, does not seek exclusively the consumption of the rural landscape, but rather to settle and fulfill a life project in this new space (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; McCarthy, 2008).

The main motivations for amenity migration pertain people's desire to live away from large urban centers and in close proximity to natural beauty, diverse rural life and ecosystems; migrants leave the hustle and bustle of the city in search for the *simple life* and culture found in rural locations (Beyers & Nelson, 2000; McGranahan, 1999; Shumway & Otterstrom, 2001). At once, migrants raise the demand for cultural and artistic, and in some cases, employment options.

The profile of the migrant can be national or international; it also varies in terms of the length of their stay. Some migrants move to these areas on a temporary basis, while others migrate permanently. Temporary migrants have been the subject of considerable research, as they are considered a middle ground between those who visit rural areas (tourists) and those who stay (former urbanites or retirees) (Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013).

Available literature on the topic is predominantly produced in North America and the United Kingdom (Abrams et al., 2012; Bertuglia et al., 2013; Moss, 2006), and focuses on migrants moving from cities to rural areas, primarily seeking natural amenities. The American West is perhaps the most cited example of a region experiencing high rates of population growth related to amenity migration (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011).

In recent years, several academics have begun to notice the rapid growth of a mobility pattern of affluent migrants from the United States and Canada to South America, not only to rural areas but also to Latin American cities. In these latitudes the boundaries between tourism and amenity migration are becoming increasingly blurred as, through different rental or ownership options, real estate investment has become the main economic driver. Since migrants from the United States and Canada are in a better financial situation than the host society, many Latin American countries not only welcome these migrants, but have also developed strategies to attract them in order to take advantage of their potential and foster local and regional economic growth (Rainer, 2019).

The migrant shifts residence seeking a lifestyle with access to amenities at a lower cost, such as beaches, large properties, domestic services, and slower paced life in countries such as Argentina (Morales Gaitán & Rainer, 2013; González, 2011; Medina, 2017; Rainer & Malizia,

2015; Sánchez & González, 2011; Trivi, 2018; Merlos & Otero, 2013), Mexico (Lorenzen, 2021; Sunil et al., 2007), Costa Rica (Emard & Nelson, 2020; Janoschka, 2009; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017; Van Noorloos & Steel, 2016; Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020), Ecuador (Gascón, 2016; Hayes, 2015a, 2015b; Van Noorloos & Steel, 2016), Panama (McWatters, 2008; Spalding, 2015, 2017), and Chile (Hidalgo & Zunino, 2011, 2012; Marchant Santiago & Rojas, 2015; Marchant Santiago & Aros Navarro, 2018; Marchant Santiago, 2017; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2017; Otero et al., 2017; Sánchez & González, 2011; Vergara et al., 2019).

The aim of this article is analyzing the research produced on rural amenity migration in Latin America between 2011 and 2021 in order to clearly identify the countries, the characteristics of these migrants, and the trends in these studies. For this case, the rural areas are understood from the theoretical re-elaborations of new rurality addressing the postulates of classical theory, where rural space is not exclusively agricultural or extractivist (Baigorri, 2007; Kayser, 1996; Lefebvre, 1971), but also includes a series of land uses such as residential, industrial, recreational, and ecological. The inclusion of uses other than agricultural ones and the increase in amenities has led many authors to rework an analysis focused on economic, cultural, and technological flows found in these places (Agudelo Patiño, 2012; Arango-Escobar, 2008; Ávila Sánchez, 2015; Baigorri, 2007; Barros, 2006; Bonilla Rodríguez, 2008; Cadavid Arboleda, 2009; Entrena Durán, 1998, 2012; Llambí Insua & Pérez Correa, 2007; Pérez Correa, 2004; Pérez Correa et al., 2008; Perrier-Cornet, 2002; Pradilla, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The guiding question for the literature review we conducted was: What are the trends in research on amenity migration in rural Latin America? A qualitative documentary review was conducted to analyze the evidence and answer this question in a structured, explicit, and orderly manner, without statistical analysis (Montero & León, 2007).

The search, selection, and review of the original articles was carried out in six databases—Scopus, Science Direct, Web of Science, Redalyc, Scielo, and Dialnet—, which were favored due to them grouping a greater number of studies related to the social sciences at the international level and in the Spanish speaking Americas. The search terms and Boolean operators⁵ were in Spanish and English, so as to include articles from different academic contexts and cultures: amenity migration and rural, lifestyle migration and rural, *migración por amenidades* and rural, *migración por estilo de vida* and rural.

⁵ It is an IT term that refers to a piece of data with only two answers: true or false. It is used in document review exercises to search databases structured and designed from algorithm programming. In computer science, keywords are also used in quotation marks so that algorithms can distinguish and select references with a higher level of precision. Both the use of Booleans and the use of quotation marks in the keywords in Spanish or English are strategies so that the search in databases can be more selective and, therefore, the researcher can focus on the main analytical work.

Our search was limited to studies carried out in the last ten years. The inclusion criteria were:

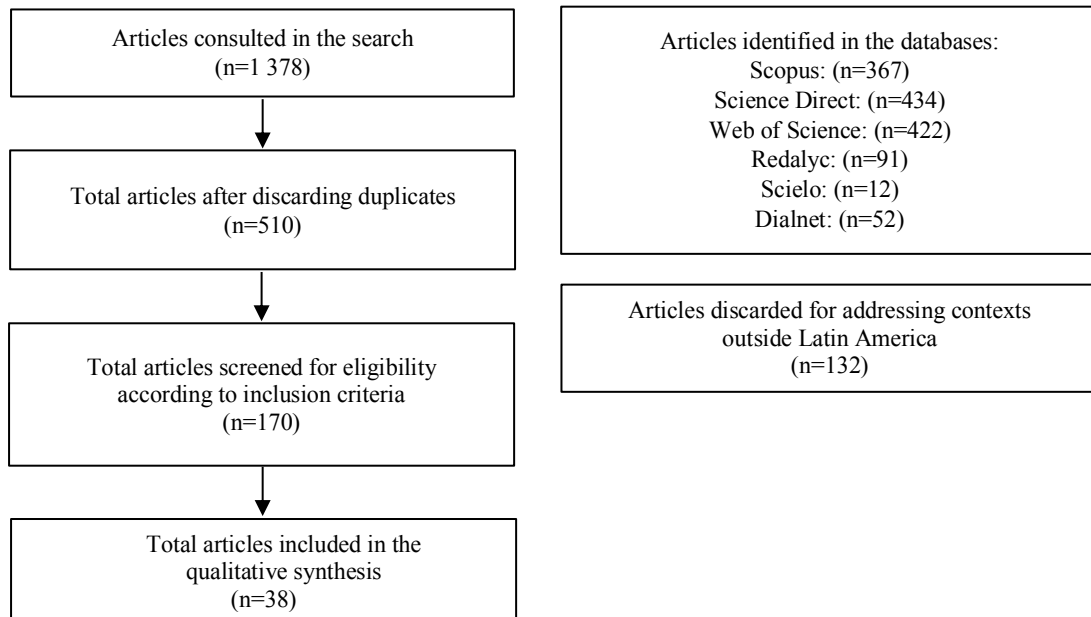
- a) *Type of study*: primary research and literature review that included the categories amenity migration and rurality, whose field collection had been carried out in Latin American countries.
- b) *Publications*: only articles from specialized journals were included. Grey literature, doctoral theses, books, and book chapters were discarded.
- c) *Year of publication*: only studies published from January 2011 to October 2021 were included. Research addressing amenity migration in contexts outside Latin America was discarded.

Procedure

The metadata was downloaded in Mendeley, and from there was reviewed for compliance with the evaluation criteria, first from the title and abstract, then based on the full text, identifying and eliminating duplicates. The research selection was limited to that related to the social sciences (Figure 1).

The following analytical categories emerged from the textual analysis: the conceptual terminology of amenity migration, the location of the studies, the migrant profile, and the theoretical and methodological approach of the studies. These categories were analyzed and detailed using ATLAS.ti software, 8.0 version.

Figure 1. Review Flowchart



Source: Own elaboration.

The boxes in Figure 1 represent each of the stages of the bibliographic search. The first shows that 1378 articles were found (by means of keywords and the Boolean *and*), of which 868 were discarded for being duplicates. We proceeded to read the titles, keywords, and abstracts, leaving us with 170 articles, of which 132 were discarded because they were outside the geographical area prioritized in our review, namely Latin America. According to this methodology, the process went from the general to the particular, finding a universe of 1 378 articles. Thanks to the use of programmatic language, it was possible to select 38 articles specialized in the topic of amenity migration through the use of keywords in quotation marks to adapt the bibliographic review to this language.

RESULTS

Conceptual Terminology of Amenity Migration

Amenity migration has been studied under an array of terms that demarcate the different forms amenity migration takes (Hayes, 2015b). The studies reviewed highlight the use of terms such as *amenity migration*, *lifestyle migration*, *economic migration*, and *neo-rurality*. Although the concepts may vary, in most studies they are used indiscriminately as synonyms.

Amenity Migration

The concept of amenity migration refers to a migratory phenomenon in metropolitan areas, small and mid-sized cities, and rural areas near or surrounding these, especially in mountain areas or localities with a strong tourist attraction that allows for recreational activities (Trivi, 2018). This mobility process generally begins with a first visit to the place, probably as a tourist; then, it moves on to the acquisition of real estate and/or the construction of a second residence there; and ends with a residential change attracted by the natural quality of the environment and the tranquility that the place can provide (Medina, 2017; Sánchez, 2019).

A differential element that is key in the concept of amenity migration is that individuals are attracted to natural spaces; in this sense, the driving force behind changing residences is the search for experiences involving amenities-comforts such as mountains, volcanoes, or lakes, often present in rural areas (Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013).

Despite the significant links between tourism and amenity migration, a fundamental difference between the economic, political, and cultural impact of short-term tourists and that of migrants is that migrants may own property, work locally, and directly influence local politics and decisions, aspects that are beyond the reach of tourists (Emard & Nelson, 2020).

Although much of the available literature usually associates amenity migration with rurality, it was found that some authors do not distinguish between the place of residence, whether rural (Marchant Santiago & Rojas, 2015; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2015, 2017; Matarrita-Cascante & Sues, 2020; Rainer, 2019; Sánchez, 2019), or urban (González, 2011; Otero et al., 2017).

Lifestyle Migration

The term lifestyle migration refers to the phenomenon whereby relatively privileged or high-income migrants move in search of a more fulfilling life. These migrants seek to escape the burdens of their previous lifestyle, often associated with living in urban areas of more developed nations under conditions of high stress, high cost of living, and a fast pace of life. Many of them settle in less developed countries, and seek rural communities because of their proximity to nature, the experiences associated to such locations (outdoor recreation, leisure), perceived lower health risks, slower pace of life compared to their places of origin, and lower costs of living (Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020).

Lifestyle migration as a term emerged in sociology and focuses on movements to rural locations (Rainer & Malizia, 2015). According to Benson and O'Reilly (2009), in these instances the decision to migrate is based on the belief that there is a more fulfilling way of life available to them elsewhere. These migrants tend to be very affluent people who for various reasons move temporarily or permanently to environments that offer them a better quality of life, better climate, or the possibility of living closer to nature.

Lifestyle migration broadly describes the relocation of people from developed countries seeking a better way of life. In this case, migration is generally not based on economic necessity, such as the search for employment or even better paying jobs, nor is it forced migration, such as that resulting from civil unrest or natural disasters (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017).

The concepts of both amenity and lifestyle migration highlight, first, the link between city and rurality, and then the perception of quality of life in both places. Such concepts are used interchangeably in most studies that address cultural factors or imaginaries (Emard & Nelson, 2020; Kordel & Pohle, 2018; Sánchez & González, 2011; Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020).

Economic Migration

Services migration has also been named as counter urbanization, retirement migration, leisure migration, seasonal migration, and lifestyle migration (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). There are different approaches to the definition of services migration. Janoschka (2009) defines it as a type of mobility that lies on a conceptual continuum between migration and tourism; it is intimately related to the search for better economic and social opportunities, better health systems, as well as leisure, and quality of life.

Among our findings, studies on transnational services migration predominate over research on national services (services migration of residents within the same country) (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2015). Transnational research has shed light on a variety of negative impacts on host communities. These include substantial landscape modifications, residential segregation, displacement of local populations, symbolic appropriation, conflicts between foreigners and locals, increased land prices and cost of living, and increased burdens on public services (Hayes, 2015b).

Neo-Rurality

The concept of neo-rurality is derived from anthropology, and emphasizes the progressive displacement of urban middle classes to rural areas. The focus of study, unlike that of previous concepts, is national and not transnational migration (Quirós, 2019).

Contrary to the economic services migrant, the motivation in this case is not the search for financial opportunities, but the search for a better quality of life, more peaceful, and in harmony with nature. Another differential factor from amenities or lifestyle migration, is that here the individual is not high-income or wealthy, but rather may be of average income.

LOCATION OF THE STUDIES

Our findings show that in recent years Latin America has seen an increase in migrant flows from the United States and Canada. Although available data does not suffice to specify the changing volume or geographic configuration of migrants, there has been a growth of retirees abroad that provides some indication of the increase in lifestyle-motivated movements (Emard & Nelson, 2020).

On the other hand, the rise of destination and project-specific marketing is global in both outline and scope, attracting national and international migrants who search and compare the best relocation options. In a short time, these publications have created an advertising platform that has become a driver of lifestyle migration, and has channeled movements to certain destinations that are heavily promoted in Latin America (Rainer, 2019).

In the last three decades, Latin American rural spaces have been the scene of profound changes due to the effects of globalization; new forms of transit and exchange of goods, people and ideas have impacted the dynamics and socioeconomic processes of these spaces (Rosas-Baños, 2013). A first manifestation of these transformations are the intense modifications of traditional rural economies, which have aimed at de-agrarization, and have evolved towards other productive activities (Camarero & Oliva 2016: 100). According to Berdegué et al.(2000: 2), in the early 1980s, non-agricultural rural income was 25% to 30% of total rural income, while in the second half of the 1990s this figure rose past 40% (Marchant Santiago & Aros Navarro, 2018, p. 10).

In the studies reviewed, transnational migrations that involve displacements from large cities to less dense localities in search of better professional and family opportunities, prevail to a greater extent (Otero et al., 2017). At the time of writing this the countries with a greater trend in amenity migration are Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Panama (Table 1).

Table 1. Amenity Migration Studies in Latin America

Country	Allure, landscape, ecosystem	Location	Studies
Argentina	Mountains	San Carlos de Bariloche; Caviahue, province of Neuquén; Tafi del Valle, Norpatagonia, Villa la Angostura-Patagonia; Valle del Conlara, province of San Luis; Valles Calchaquíes	Morales Gaitán y Rainer, 2013; González, 2011; Merlos & Otero, 2013; Rainer & Malizia, 2015; Sánchez & González, 2011; Trivi, 2018.
Chile	Mountains	Malalcahuello, valleys of Elqui, and Limarí, Pucón, Andean Araucanía, and Patagonia	MacAduo Espinoza et al., 2019; González, 2011; Marchant Santiago, 2017; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2017; Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020; Otero et al., 2017; Sánchez, 2019; Vergara et al., 2019.
Costa Rica	Coast	Talamanca, Nuevo Arena, Bahía Ballena, province of Guanacaste, and Nuevo Arenal	Matarrita-Cascante, 2017; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2015; Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013; Van Noorloos & Steel, 2016; Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020.
Ecuador	Highlands, valley	Cuenca, Vilcabamba, and Cotacachi	Gascón, 2016; Hayes, 2015a, 2015b; Kordel & Pohle, 2018; Van Noorloos & Steel, 2016.
Mexico	Mountains, mid-size cities	Jiutepec, Yautepec, and Tlayacapan, Mazatlán	Lizarraga et al., 2015; Lorenzen, 2021.
Panama	Coast	Boca del Toro	Benson, 2013; Spalding, 2015, 2017.

Source: Own elaboration.

Argentina

During the 1990s population growth in Chile and Argentina was concentrated in those areas with the greatest tourism potential. Migration was not only driven by employment motivations, but partially also by amenity or lifestyle migration (Zunino et al., 2012).

Argentinian mountains are an important destination for migrants (Merlos & Otero, 2013; Morales Gaitán & Rainer, 2013; Sánchez & González, 2011; Trivi, 2018). An example of this is San Carlos de Bariloche, an attractive point associated with the natural landscape, which has motivated migration to this country (Otero et al., 2017). For its part, the natural characteristics of Tafi del Valle have generated a boom in both tourism and migration, especially amenity; this migratory process has been described as the process of globalization of rural space (Morales Gaitán & Rainer, 2013).

Chile

In the case of Chile, “the increase in amenity migration in the last two decades can be understood as a logical continuation of its development, and as a new dimension of social segregation” (Hidalgo et al., 2009, p. 94). The fact that people from higher socioeconomic strata acquire considerable extensions of land outside the urban circle has been explained as a new form of macro-segregation (Hidalgo et al., 2009).

The sparsely populated borderlands in Chile shifted from an economy based on extractive industries to one based on services, oriented toward migrants and tourists seeking recreation and closeness to nature in Patagonia (Blair et al., 2019). Similar to the trend in Argentina, mountain locations are the main focus of these displacements. Among the most alluring destinations due to their climate, landscape, services, and natural and cultural possibilities are the Malalcahuello areas, the Elquí and Limarí valleys, the Andean Araucanía, and Patagonia.

Both Hidalgo and Zunino (2011) and Otero et al. (2017) analyzed the case of the commune of Pucón in Chile, and conceptualized the notion of existential amenity migrants to refer to people who are attracted to activities such as reiki, yoga, or light therapies. In this case, these “unconventional factors” motivate migration “to satisfy personal fulfillment”, and are “linked to religious activities” such as Zen Buddhism, or “to mystical-spiritual movements of various origins, or to the realization of eco-centric ideals” (Hidalgo & Zunino, 2011, p. 321).

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is internationally known for its commitment to environmental protection and climate change mitigation. In recent decades, the reduction of natural resource exploitation in Costa Rica has been an important attraction for international migrants (Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020).

The main destination in Costa Rica is the coast. Matarrita-Cascante (2017) analyzed elements little explored in other studies, such as interactions between migrants and the local population. He also examined how residents feel about having moved, the roles of migrants in the local economy, and community development efforts. In contrast, Van Noorloos and Steel (2016) note that lifestyle migration in a region like Guanacaste introduces new privileged populations, and thus inevitably creates social inequalities that become clear. This is particularly visible in the prevalence of communities or groups that are closed off from each other.

Ecuador

Research shows that the migration flow to Ecuador is mostly services migration. Migrants tend to arrive in mid-size or small cities, such as Cuenca or Vilcamba. Hayes (2015b) draws attention to the economic motivations of U.S. migrants in Ecuador; the main narrative is to arrive in cities with a low cost of living to perform home office jobs.

Similarly, the research also addresses “social relations of domination and subordination at the receiving location, where historical inequalities are reproduced. The analysis focuses on the social

relations of land ownership” (Hayes, 2015b, p. 81). The case of Cantón de Cotacachi—a city in northern Ecuador—became a major destination for tourists and gentrifiers, including retirees from Canada and the United States seeking permanent or seasonal residence in a place with scenic natural landscapes, pleasant climate, and comparatively low living costs. This accelerated the construction of small rural hotels and gentrified housing on former farmland, which in turn led to a significant increase in the price of farmland that prevented many farmers from buying or renting the land.

In general, lifestyle migrants positively evaluate their immigration to rural Ecuador and perceive their presence as a valuable contribution to development in terms of better income opportunities for the local population (Kordel & Pohle, 2018).

Mexico

Lorenzen (2021) studied the effects of gentrification in Mexico. He stressed that gentrified housing construction primarily affects agricultural land by commercially displacing farmers, who rent the plots where they work to migrants and may be directly and immediately displaced when their leases are not renewed—usually when the land is sold for construction—. This displacement may be more gradual and indirect when rent increases force them to start looking for land elsewhere.

In the city of Mazatlán, Lizarraga et al., (2015) analyzed lifestyle migration in Mexico. Their results show that there is a greater economic asymmetry between U.S. citizens and the majority of people in the receiving community. In this case, economic reasons may be more important as a pull factor than other elements, such as climate or tourism infrastructure.

Panama

Transnational lifestyle migration is a constant in this country. There is a continuous flow of relatively affluent people migrating from developed countries, attracted by the warm climate and low costs, seeking after a perceived higher quality of life. Foreign residents are attracted to Bocas del Toro for its natural beauty and the globally produced ideal of tropical island living. Now, Spalding (2015, 2017) highlights tensions revolving around respect for land and resources, often exacerbated by differences in perceptions of ownership among culturally and socially diverse groups, as well as a lack of institutional capacity to enforce existing regulations, and a development narrative that supports the hegemony of neoliberal private property.

Migrant Profile

In research on amenity migration, there is usually an underreporting of migrant figures; as such, there is little clarity about motivations for migrating (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). In these studies, the profile of the transnational migrant from Canada, the United States, and Europe is more clearly exposed in most cases (Emard & Nelson, 2020; Hayes, 2015a), than that of national migrants. For Rainer (2019), what sets migrants moving from north to south apart from those moving in the opposite direction is their privilege. Those who migrate south improve their living conditions as

there they find lower living costs, more financially accessible health care systems, and can cross borders with few restrictions.

Overall, migrants represent a similar demographic group: they are often white baby boomer retirees, well-educated and wealthy (Janoschka, 2009). Although this profile constitutes a significant part of the research and is the focus of much of the literature on privileged migrant categories, new profiles are being studied, such as that of professional and commercial migrants, travelers and backpackers, as well as that of younger migrants—in their 20s and 30s—who move to reside in small or mid-size cities, or to surrounding rural areas, to live there for periods of months or years, or who may intend to stay for the rest of their lives. Younger migrants or long-stay tourists often engage in small business activities, related to arts and crafts, agriculture, or health (Hayes, 2015b).

Conversely, other migrants move to amenity-rich rural communities to perform remote employment using technology, establish businesses, or seek work in the community (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017).

MacAdoo Espinoza et al. (2019) to two types of lifestyle migrants: the dominant and the reflexive. While the dominant ones are more interested in personal goals at the expense of nature, the reflexive ones are more sensitive to the cultural and environmental reality of host communities. Dominant migrants appreciate the sociocultural and physical landscape transformations fostered by their presence, while reflexive ones are more integrated into pre-existing social networks.

EFFECTS OF AMENITY MIGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Both socially and economically, the impacts of amenity migration are diverse. Our findings show more negative than positive aspects to it.

The benefits of services or lifestyle migration in Latin American destinations are very unevenly distributed among different social groups. While large landowners, along with national and international real estate developers, investors, and migrants are active agents and reap benefits, in many destinations the local population increasingly struggles with rapidly rising land and living costs. In this sense, migration builds on historically inherited unequal socio-spatial structures and at the same time deepens them (Rainer, 2019).

The social inequalities at the base of amenity migration engender multiple repercussions. For example, the transition in labor trends has displaced extraction—or agriculture—focused jobs with service-oriented ones. Other effects include: increases in taxes, and in property and living costs; increased demand for infrastructure, commercial activities, and public services; emerging gentrification; changes in levels of social capital, land ownership, and land use conversion; increased levels of pollution and environmental degradation; displacement of local populations; considerable landscape modifications; and residential segregation (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2015; Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013).

Yet another recurrent repercussion of amenity migration revealed by studies is rural gentrification, which is linked to patterns of counter-urbanization, a phenomenon driven by increasing residential mobility due to the rural lifestyle preferences of highly educated, qualified, and wealthy migrants. Thus, counter-urbanization—as a type of services migration with global connotations—widely spreads through coastal and mountainous areas, and essentially any idyllic landscape (Rainer, 2019; Vergara et al., 2019; Yuan et al., 2021).

In contrast to previous findings, for Lorenzen (2021) direct residential displacement is not one of the main impacts of rural gentrification. First, migration in rural settings is often the result of broader rural restructuring that precedes gentrification and is driven by a change in the profiles of previous residents. Nascent economic and employment opportunities linked to gentrification can help to slow rural migration, and long-time residents may benefit if they sell part of their property.

Socio-spatial segregation constitutes another negative effect of migration to Latin American destinations. Most global lifestyle migrants choose to live in gated communities or in homes surrounded by high fences that spatially separate them from other community residents. Spatial segregation is compounded by differences in language, socialization habits, and the hyper-mobility of lifestyle migrants who travel frequently to and from their country of origin. Thus, social segregation by these types of migrants and other residents often results in unequal participation in community decision-making processes (Emard & Nelson, 2020).

The demand for low-skilled labor, socio-economic and socio-ecological inequalities can be counted among the impacts of amenity migration, both at the national and international level. The intensification of amenity migration and its collateral effects (a boom increase in land prices), as well as the lack of urban growth planning, benefit a few actors while at the same time increases the privatization of resources and socio-territorial fragmentation. In this context of inequalities, the struggles of social movements and indigenous communities for access to land and water gain strength (Marchant Santiago & Aros Navarro, 2018; Rainer & Malizia, 2015; Spalding, 2017).

Emotional solidarity has been counted by Matarrita-Cascante and Sues (2020) as one positive impact on lifestyle migration. This notion describes the perception of a sense of cohesion and integration that develops between social groups as a result of shared actions, common beliefs, and interaction. Similarly, migrants can make an important economic, social, and cultural contribution to their new communities in the form of knowledge, environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviors, participation, innovation, and entrepreneurship, all of which can stimulate community improvements (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). For his part, Sánchez (2019) rescues that the local community shows, in general, a positive attitude towards recreational tourism and amenity migration, but also recognizes that these processes can promote socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and social impacts that may lead people to question their matter-of-fact benefits.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE STUDIES

There is a number of different theoretical approaches to amenity migration so far. One of these is that of otherness as a framework for analyzing migration, understood as an encounter of locals and migrants who interpret the context, the other, and themselves. This theory made it possible to analyze how locals and migrants develop processes of interaction and social cohesion, defining both the other and themselves. How the search for recognition reveals power struggles is underlined by their interactions, valuations, and knowledge about the other and themselves in a shared context (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017).

Another theoretical position relates to an anti-colonial approach to amenity migration research. This approach critically addresses current studies by making important contributions toward the recognition of race, inequality, and power relations in lifestyle destination sites, yet still not fully identifies the impacts of migration, and its racial, colonial, and neocolonial histories and implications (Benson, 2013; Emard & Nelson, 2020; MacAdoo Espinoza et al., 2019).

It is also important to highlight some themes similar or related to amenity migration studies, such as political ecology (Rainer, 2016), pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017), community field perspective (Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013), motivations for change of residence (Kordel & Pohle, 2018; Marchant Santiago & Aros Navarro, 2018; Rainer & Malizia, 2015; Sánchez & González, 2011; Winkler & Matarrita-Cascante, 2020).

When it comes to methodology, qualitative studies predominate in the research mentioned above, particularly developed from the ethnographic method. As a strategy, literature review, documentary analysis, and in-depth interviews with key informants have been conducted, with participant observation and focus groups. Although uncommon, some studies consulted censuses of localities as methodological strategies to analyze migration flows.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to analyze the research produced on rural amenity migration in Latin America between the years 2011 and 2021. Until recently, relatively little attention had been paid to lifestyle and amenity migration within the Americas, a flow that moves primarily north to south. However, as suggested by recent studies, migration of people from Canada and the United States to destinations in Latin America will increase considerably in the coming years (Hayes, 2015a; Rojas et al., 2014).

For McCarthy (2008), some elements that have contributed to amenity migration are the mobility of elites, the rapid growth in the relative and absolute incomes of certain classes of urban professionals, the easing of restrictions on foreign ownership in many countries, the shortening of distance thanks to the evolution of transportation and communications technologies, and the increase in publicity for the sale of real estate in rural environments. All of these factors have served the reshaping of an increasingly globalized marketplace. The change in the anthropogenic landscape is one of the effects of the expansion of prominent settlements on the periphery of

metropolitan areas and in rural regions with recreational and aesthetic attractions (Hammer et al., 2004).

In some studies, the concepts of amenity migration, lifestyle migration, and economic migration are often used as synonyms. All three concepts have in common the change of residence, particularly to small cities, mid-size cities, or rural areas surrounding them, by migrants attracted by nature, by a better quality of life, or by economic interests (Emard & Nelson, 2020).

The studies on this subject are mostly conducted in Latin America, specifically in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Panama. The main pulling factors in these areas in terms of landscapes are the Andes mountains, and in Central America, in the case of Panama, and Costa Rica, the coastal areas.

Studies on amenity migration initially focused on understanding its causes, finding that changing social conditions facilitate the movement of people to these communities. On the side of *demand*, changes in the conditions and value of the labor force, improvements in communication and transportation, and the adoption of ways of living related to leisure, tourism and quality of life, have influenced the lifestyles of people who choose to break away from *traditional* patterns of urban dwelling (Beyers & Nelson, 2000; Krannich & Petrzalka, 2004).

One of the gaps in the research reviewed is that few studies address how migrants and local rural residents influence each other. How social relationships develop between new residents and local inhabitants is still not known (Matarrita-Cascante, 2017; Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013; Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020). Studies focusing on rural residents are also scarce (Vergara et al., 2019). There are knowledge gaps regarding the profiles and motivations of national migrants who decide to opt for a second residence motivated by rurality.

The world events surrounding the emergence of COVID-19 impacted the social dynamics of both cities and the countryside. Confinement, fear of contagion, and repercussions on health status contributed to increased mobility from large metropolises to less populated or rural sectors, as stated by Jiménez Avilés (2020). Although the results do not allow us to visualize migration flows resulting from the effects of disasters or epidemics, particularly COVID-19 is an issue to be addressed in the near future, whose impact on the territories will become evident in the short and mid-term.

A major challenge in researching this migration flow is the lack of data sufficient to accurately assess its changing volume or geographic configuration. In some countries there are often no instruments that identify the income, ownership, or registration of incoming people; hence it is difficult to assess what percentage move primarily for leisure rather than labor reasons, or how many are naturalized citizens or migrants not motivated by a recreational lifestyle. However, there are several indications, both quantitative and qualitative, that point to its growing importance, hence the challenge for researchers to delve deeper into this topic.

CLOSING REMARKS

Amenity migration is likely to continue to increase due to the retirement of the baby boomer generation, as well as to the cultural and technological changes brought about by globalization (Hayes, 2015a), and to the effects of the pandemic. Therefore, amenity studies are timely and important in understanding contemporary geographic mobility patterns and can provide a theoretically inclusive understanding of both migrants and community members at the destinations.

Translation: Fernando Llanas.

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