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### **Diasporic Migrations: A Comparative Analysis of Guatemalans in Costa Rica, Belize, Mexico, and the United States**

Studies of migration streams have typically focused on those between labor exporting countries in the Third World and the receiving societies in developed countries. Recently, social scientists have paid more attention to those migration streams between developing countries. Nonetheless, the majority of studies still concentrate on one particular, established stream between two nations. Some countries show evidence of diasporic migration, where citizens have established flows to two or more receiving countries. One such example is the case of Guatemalan immigrants.

When presented with a diasporic migration, several research questions arise:

1. Which countries do the immigrants move to, and why?
2. What are the characteristics of these immigrants in the different receiving societies?
3. How are opportunities for these immigrants structured in each host society?

Using data from the 2000 Censuses of Costa Rica, Mexico, Belize, and the United States, we will address these questions and create a comparative framework from which further research can be conducted. For Costa Rica and Belize, the complete Census is available through the Central American Population Centre ([www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr](http://www.ccp.ucr.ac.cr)). For Mexico and the United States we will use the 1% sample available through IPUMS ([www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)).

We will obtain information on general demographic variables (age, sex, marital status), socioeconomic indicators (educational level, employment), and community variables (place of residence, internal mobility, presence of critical mass).

Preliminary data on the number of Guatemalan immigrants in each of the four host countries of interest show radical differences in both the net number of immigrants present, and the percentage of the total immigrant population that they represent (see table 1). In Belize they represent 42.83% of the total immigrant stock, which is not surprising given the geographical proximity and cultural continuity across the border. In the other three countries they represent a much smaller percentage of the total immigrant stock.

**Table 1: Number of Guatemalan Immigrants by Country of Residence**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Guatemalans</b>	<b>Percentage of immigrant population</b>
Costa Rica	1,996	0.67%
Belize	14,693	42.86%
Mexico	2,537	2.6%
United States	4,462	1.4%

Further analysis will reveal residential proximity among the immigrants, as well as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Migration data is more limited and consists of information on place of residence 5 years before, revealing either the newest immigrants or recent internal migration. The relationship between these variables will

allow us to create a comparative framework of the Guatemalan diaspora in the four countries, which will further our comprehension of how migration flows are shaped, and the factors conditioning the opportunities available to members of a diaspora in different host countries.