

## Call for papers

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Dossier

# African and Afro-descendant migrations in our America: transits, routes and destinations

Thematic Editor

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## Presentation

In the field of social sciences, studies have been pointing out to the growing concern of national states about the control of migration flows in Latin America, both at times of border crossing as well as during transit routes and settlement at destination. In this context, the experiences of migration, exodus and displacement from Mexico and Central America that seek to get to the United States have been, addressed from the heterogeneity of its actors: indigenous peoples, women, young people, urban and rural workers as well as the collective agencies that organize migration flows: migrant caravans where those who go, build collective mobility and protection strategies. These groups are joined by caravans of Central American mothers who are searching for their missing migrant sons and daughters throughout their long journey through Mexican territory.

To contextualize the geographies of migration movements that underscore not only the diversity of actors and strategies for circulation and mobility, but also drive focused discussions on border control and governance regimes, and subjectivities that make visible and challenge such regimes, involves opening the reflection to the migratory experiences and transnational connections of the African and Afro-descendant population in Latin America. Despite the few official statistics of Latin American governments on the migration movements of Africans and Afro-descendants, they have gradually gained significance on political agendas, both because of their effects on public opinion related to manifestations of racist and xenophobic discourse against them, as for their public safety, and humanitarian drama in transit and destination countries. This last strand includes political constraints to regulate the

transit and permanence of these populations, which results in greater reliance on transnational human trafficking networks, many of them linked to organized crime.

For several generations, academics focused on the connections built by the forced migration of Africans in times of transatlantic trade of people enslaved to America, and the debate focused on the processes of adaptability and cultural change of these populations in the new places to which they were taken.

More attention has recently been paid to the multidimensional flows and impacts of African migration driven by new processes of neo-colonization, civil wars and climate change in their places of origin. Contemporary migration flows from sub-Saharan Africa through border corridors in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Panama to reach the United States are highlighted. These transit routes are influenced by situations of violence, hate speech, racist practices and human insecurity. Crossing borders on buses, extensive walks through the jungles of the Amazon or the Darien and travelling across the Atlantic is a field of multiple conflicts and tensions, between African migrant subjectivities, legibility and illegibility of migratory practices at the borders they are trying to cross.

On one hand, the connection and geographies of migration flows of the descendants of the African Diaspora in Latin American countries, with their regional particularities, have been linked to issues related to inequalities and exclusions within national states and in the last decade to territorial conflicts related to the stripping of land and territories as a result of the implementation of extractive economic policies capable of transforming natural environments into dead lands and dead waters; in addition, there are also conflicts related to the dispute between criminal groups over the control of strategic territories for drug trafficking and illegal economies. This situation has generated massive waves of forced internal displacements of Afro-descendant populations, which in the case of Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico have had a transnational scope.

The various processes and conditions that drive African and Afro-descendant migration movements coexist in a context of sharpening a global dispossession capitalism that promotes the extraction of natural resources and industrial crops towards low-cost areas and weak regulations; hence, the natural resources of much of Africa and Latin America are more important than the people who live in these lands, motivating forced migration, refugee and asylum camps, places of precarious work, or urban settlements in places of extreme poverty. It is important to highlight a common element in the African and Afro-descendant migration experience in the region: the intersectionality on "race" and migration in the configuration of "racialized geographies" as places of oppression and violence against these populations which are elements that force us to review how this process is taking place in the region.

In this way, the Dossier: "African and Afro-descendant Migrations in Latin America: Transits, Routes and Destinations" incites reflexion on the long-distance panorama of migration and displacement flows of African and Afro-descendant populations in Latin America. It will be important to empirically determine the connection of historical and contemporary contexts of migrations, spatial contours, transit and destination routes, and the reconstruction of connections that cross political-territory divisions, whether these are national borders or internal demarcations. At the same time, this is an invitation to investigate our chances of drawing up connections regarding the continuity of the forced migration of Africans and Afro-

descendant people ranging from plantation colonies past to a present of refugee camps and expulsions from the political and economic systems at a global scale.

## Descriptors

1. African and Afro-descendant migrations, displacements and diasporas
2. Multidisciplinary and comparative studies of African and Afro-descendant migrations
3. Migrant caravans, new territorialities and geographies of migration
4. Frontiers, refuge and asylum camps
5. Deterritorialization, reterritorialization and resistance
6. Migration, exile, exoduses and shelters
7. Race, racism and xenophobia
8. Remains, coloniality and capital
9. Deportation, detention and outlawing regimes for migrants.
10. Racial violence, humanitarian crisis and security of migration
11. Rights, activisms and migrant organizations

## Questions

1. Which are the particularities of migration movements coming from Africa, in transit or destination in Latin America?
2. Is it possible to establish a historical continuity between the forced migration of Africans in the colonial past and the contemporary migration flows?
3. Is there a connection between the political-economic systems in which the migration movements of Africans and Afro-descendants take place?
4. How to understand the new forms of African and Afro-descendant mobility and how to understand the control mechanisms to stop them?
5. What political and racial power configurations do African and Afro-descendant migrants face on their journey routes?
6. How to analyze the relationship between African and Afro-descendant migration patterns and the dominant ways in which the global economy is expressed?
7. How do racist and xenophobic practices against the migrant populations of African and Afro-descendant origin manifest?
8. What are the identity strategies created by African and Afro-descendant migrants in the vindication of their blackness and demand in guaranteeing political and economic rights?

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At the time of submission, select the section: **Dossier; Dossiê** and add the comment to the editor:  
**Dossier: African and Afro-descendant migrations...**

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### Comentarios para el editor/a

Introduzca texto  
(opcional)

Dossier: African and Afro-descendant migrations...



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**Deadline:** May 15, 2020