Making Sense of a Minor Migrant Stream

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The relatively few Norwegians who migrated to Latin America between 1820 and 1940 represented a miniscule share of the transatlantic migration system. More than fifty million Europeans crossed the Atlantic between 1815 and 1939.¹ Nearly one million of these were Norwegians. But only about ten thousand of them were Norwegians who went to one or more Latin American countries.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss possible similarities and differences between the small stream of Norwegians to Latin America and the other streams of the mass transatlantic movement. In order to do that, I will first present a general model of migration processes developed by Thomas Faist, which will in turn allow us to examine why Norwegian migration to Latin America between 1820 and 1940 never reached a substantial level. Using the best available statistics, the second part of the chapter discusses how this migration fits into Faist's model. The last section describes the three main phases of the Norwegian migration stream to Latin America during the same period, and introduces some of the more specific questions that will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters.

The transatlantic migration was in itself just a small part of a major migratory trend which affected all of Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Internal migration, from rural to urban areas and from older settled rural areas to new frontiers, was the general tendency involving millions of persons who sought at first land and then increasingly salaried jobs in the main manufacturing centers of Europe and the Americas. Within both continents, new centers and new peripheries emerged. "New" industrial cities such as Berlin, Bremen, Bilbao, and Buenos Aires, which were connected to the ever-expanding modern transportation networks of railways and steam ships, replaced the "old" administrative and agricultural centers such as Madrid, and Mexico City.

Migrants responded to the economic and political shifts in various and complex ways. They moved within countries (from rural areas to cities), across borders, and across the sea. The goal of many was not to become modern or live in a city, but to acquire land and set up a farm. For most migrants, this was

¹ Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millenium*, Comparative and International Working-Class History (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 332.

just a dream. The stereotypical nineteenth-century European rural families – those who left their home community and settled in the first place where they could get land cheaply in the Americas – were never actually the norm. Already by the 1840s, more than 60 percent of the immigrants to the United States went into wage labor.² Cheap land was usually only available where the soil was poor and infrastructure weak or inexistent.

Norwegians who migrated to Latin America were simultaneously typical and atypical. They shared with other migrants the decision to cross borders and oceans to try their luck elsewhere. Like other migrants, they came from all classes of society, although the laboring classes dominated numerically. Like their fellow migrants from other parts of Europe, they left largely for economic reasons, in search of better conditions for work or farming. The Norwegians who went to Latin America were also typically young, and they had relatives or more distant acquaintances forming networks of information in their new home countries. In other words, although the Norwegian stream of migrants to Latin America was small, it did form part of the great transatlantic migratory wave.

Still, the wave was composed of larger and smaller streams, and each of them had their own idiosyncrasies. One of our principal questions concerns how to explain that such a limited number of Norwegians ended up in Latin America between 1820 and 1940, when the general Norwegian rate of emigration was so high and when Latin America received so many millions of immigrants. This may seem at first sight to be a counterfactual question of the type that is highly problematical for historians to tackle. Explaining why something did not occur is even more difficult than explaining why something did occur, and the possible causes for something not happening may in principle be endless. On the other hand, the question is not *that* far-fetched – after all, there was a sizeable emigration from Norway in general, so why not to Latin America in particular? Moreover, there were Norwegians in Latin America from early on who stayed in touch with family and friends in Norway. Land and jobs were available in many areas of Latin America, and migrants from other countries in Europe and elsewhere did in fact enter on a massive scale.

At a more general level, certain questions relating to minor migrant streams are important to raise. The tendency in migration studies has been to focus on the largest groups that gave rise to the large migration waves, and to understand the mechanisms of their growth and decline. But we often forget that minor streams were more numerous and in many instances counted for more migrants in sum than the major waves. And – perhaps even more importantly

² Ibid., 336.

– if we are to understand why some streams evolve into large waves while others fizzle out or abruptly end, we cannot limit our studies to the largest migrant groups.

Faist's Model

The approach chosen here focuses on the phases or stages in migration processes as theorized by Thomas Faist.³ A migration process is seen as the cumulative movement of migrants from one country to another, often spanning several generations. Typically, the migration process includes three main phases: (1) start and acceleration, (2) climax, and (3) deceleration. This process takes on a life of its own in Faist's presentation. Although exogenous factors such as unemployment rates and relative wage differentials have some influence on the migration process, especially in the first phase, Faist holds that the endogenous dynamics of the migration process predominates once a critical threshold of migrant numbers is reached. This is because the social ties between migrants structure the flow to such an extent that the migration process unfolds in part independent of macro factors, such as demographic pressures, wage differentials, unemployment rates, and state regulations.

However, in the first phase, before migrant networks have been formed, the exogenous factors are important. The first migrants are frequently depicted as adventurers and pioneers both by themselves and by migration scholars. In part there is always some random, almost accidental, migration of a few individuals from country A to country B. But when demographic and economic factors favor migration from one country to another, the number of such migrants will increase, albeit only very gradually in the beginning.⁴ This coincides with Massey's influential and often cited distinction between explanations of why migration starts and why migration continues.⁵ In order for migration processes to really start, according to both Faist and Massey, there has to be some economic factors (typically cheaper land or better salaries in the host countries) or demographic causes (population growth in the home countries, and need for labor in the destinations).

3 Thomas Faist, *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 145ff.

4 Ibid., 143–52.

5 D.S. Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration – a Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 3 (1993).

In Faist's model, the critical threshold for the second phase occurs when information about migration possibilities has reached a sufficient number of potential migrants *outside* the immediate social circles of the pioneer migrants. Following Granovetter, Faist maintains that the weak ties in social relations are more important in explaining the diffusion of information.⁶ Migrants in the second phase typically receive information from accidental acquaintances, distant relatives, and friends of friends rather than from their immediate kin. Through so-called brokers or gatekeepers they are connected to the now rapidly expanding migrant networks that provide new migrants with information about housing, job opportunities, travel, and paper work, thus lowering the transaction costs of international migration. Reciprocity and solidarity between migrants and other types of economic and human capital are mobilized through social and symbolic ties. The second phase is not only characterized by an accelerating increase in the number of migrants, it also typically involves a considerable widening of the social base of migrants. While the pioneer migrants are relatively resourceful and recruited from the upper tiers of the working classes or middle sectors of society, the lowered transaction costs during the second phase, provided by the established migrant networks, help recruit migrants with less economic and human capital as well. The first critical threshold in the migration process thus marks a sort of take-off. After take-off, migration is self-sustained, and it becomes almost an automatic dynamic that feeds on itself.

Another major critical threshold heralds the third phase. In this phase, the number of new migrants decreases because nearly all the potential migrants have been informed about the migration possibility. Even though the exogenous factors favorable to migration may objectively be stronger, the migration process has reached a climax and cannot continue to accelerate, because potential migrants have already migrated or reached a final decision to stay.

Faist's model may be visualized in two different ways. If we focus on the number of migrants who move from one place to another within shorter intervals than the whole period of the migration process, for instance the number of migrants per year or per decade, it will take the shape of what Faist calls an inverse U-curve, or what we may perhaps more precisely call a Bell curve (see figure 2.1). During the first phase, the curve increases very gradually, until the first turning point is reached; in the second stage, the number of migrants increases exponentially and the slope is steep; finally, at the second turning point, the number of migrants decreases and the curve falls.

6 Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973).

FIGURE 2.1 *Faist's model: number of migrants in each phase*

SOURCE: THOMAS FAIST, *THE VOLUME AND DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACES* (OXFORD: CLARENDON, 2000), 145FF

FIGURE 2.2 *Faist's model: cumulative number of migrants resident in host country by phase*

SOURCE: THOMAS FAIST, *THE VOLUME AND DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACES* (OXFORD: CLARENDON, 2000), 145FF

The other way of graphically representing the migration process is based on the cumulative number of migrants in the host countries. In our case this would be the number of Norwegians resident in Latin America at any given point in time. In Faist's model, the cumulative curve will have an S-shape (see figure 2.2). The migration process or wave tends to follow an S-shaped curve with a slow and gradual increase of migrants during the first phase and a significantly higher increase in the number of migrants during the second phase, before the number remains constant and eventually levels out during the third phase.

Now, does the case of Norwegian migration to Latin America fit Faist's model? Given the relatively low number of Norwegians migrating to Latin

America throughout the period of the transatlantic mass migration, there are at least three different ways of answering that question: either that the Norwegian case followed the general dynamics of the model even though the numbers are small; or it followed Faist's curve to a certain point, but was aborted or interrupted; or it did not follow the typical migration curve at all. Once we have reached a conclusion on this question, we may proceed with the more detailed issues regarding possible peculiarities of the Norwegian migration stream to Latin America.

Statistics on Norwegians in Latin America before 1940

The best available statistics on Norwegians in Latin America prior to 1940 are based on the HULA database, which has been compiled from more than forty lists containing the names of Norwegian citizens or persons born in Norway who were registered as being present in at least one Latin American country at least once between 1820 and 1940. These lists have been collected from archives and libraries in Norway and Latin America. HULA now contains nearly nine thousand biographical events concerning Norwegians in Latin America. Each HULA event is either a movement between two places, of which at least one occurs in Latin America, or a registration of a Norwegian person in one specific place in Latin America, such as marriage involving at least one Norwegian spouse in Latin America or the death of a Norwegian in Latin America. Every event concerns an individual identified by name and is defined by a date and at least one Latin American place.⁷ Despite its many shortcomings, some of which will be exposed shortly, HULA is more comprehensive than any other single set of available statistics on Norwegians in Latin America. It includes the names of many more Norwegians than those registered as emigrants in Norway or as immigrants in Latin American countries. And it has a wider periodical scope than national statistics on migration.

Prior to the development of HULA, the number of Norwegian migrants in Latin America was thought to be very small, almost non-existent. According to the 1921 official treatise on emigration produced by the Ministry of Social Issues, "the emigration to Central and South America (especially Argentina) never reached a major level," a claim corroborated by a table where the percentage of Norwegian emigrants who sought American destinations outside

7 The HULA (*Historisk register over utvandrede nordmenn i Latin-Amerika*) database can be accessed at <https://app.uio.no/hf/ilos/hula/Hula.php>.

the United States and Canada oscillated between 0.03 and 0.11 percent in the period between 1886 and 1915, in other words just a negligible stream.⁸ The 1921 treatise was based on the emigration protocols, an instrument instated by a 1869 law on emigration that required all agents, captains, and shipowners to register contracts with migrants and have the contracts authorized by the police prior to departure from Norway. Thousands of Norwegian emigrants were registered each year in these protocols, and they have served as the most important source for research on emigration from Norway. However, as noted in the introduction of the 1921 treatise, the 1869 law exempted captains who carried twenty emigrants or fewer from the requirement, and the protocols furthermore only recorded migrants with overseas destinations. By 1915, the last year covered by the 1921 treatise, only 348 Norwegian migrants with Latin American destinations had been registered in the protocols, indeed a negligible number. Migration scholars were aware of some of the limitations and distortions in this material. In the 1950s Ingrid Semmingsen estimated roughly that approximately two thousand Norwegians had migrated to Central and South America, without providing any sources or methods for how she had reached this number.⁹ Twenty years later, Gudmund Stang stated that Semmingsen's number obviously was too low, and estimated the number to be between three thousand and five thousand, again without indicating how he had reached that number.¹⁰

More recent attempts arrive at estimates between five thousand and ten thousand.¹¹ These higher estimates are due to the incorporation of census data and immigration numbers from the most important Latin American destinations and the inclusion of estimates on the number of runaway sailors. Still, also these estimates are very uncertain, in part because it is impossible in most cases to know whether Latin American and Norwegians sources are complementary or overlapping. The only way around this methodological problem is to work with sources where migrants are identified by name.

This is the principal idea behind the construction of the HULA database. With identifiable migrants, it is feasible to follow individual migrants and to

8 Sosialdepartementet Norge, "Utvandringsstatistikk: Statistique de l'émigration," vol. 25, *Statistique de l'émigration* (Kristiania, 1921). 73.

9 Ingrid Semmingsen, "Veien mot vest : [2] : Utvandringen fra Norge 1865–1915," (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1950). 292.

10 Gudmund Stang, "La emigración escandinava a la América latina, 1800–1940," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 13 (1976): 297 (footnote).

11 Steinar A. Sæther and Nils Olav Østrem, "Norwegian emigration to Latin America: numbers, questions and methods," in *Nordic Migration: Research Status, Perspectives and Challenges* ed. Nils Olav Østrem and Christina Folke Ax (Stamsund: Orkana, 2011).

know whether the same migrants are covered in different sources. Although HULA enables better statistics than the official ones, it also has some important shortcomings and weaknesses that need to be addressed before discussing the numbers.¹² One of its main weaknesses for statistical purposes is that it is neither complete nor random. The lists of Norwegians included in the database are the ones that have been the most readily accessible, either because they are already available online, because they have been digitized, or because we have had the luck of finding them in the archives where we have worked. Unfortunately, none of the relevant Latin American censuses have been digitized, with the exception of the 1895 Argentina census. Most of the Latin American sources included in HULA are lists of passengers, immigrants, and foreigners of different sorts. We have not yet collected lists of Norwegian migrants and residents from all Latin American countries. On the other hand, we have many sources from the countries that attracted many Norwegian immigrants, such as Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico (as we know from previous studies). This means that some destination countries probably are over-represented in HULA, such as Chile and Mexico, while others – primarily Uruguay and Cuba – are underrepresented.

In terms of periods, we have many records from the 1920s, but almost none from before 1850. Although this probably reflects a real tendency in the migration pattern of Norwegians in Latin America, it certainly also reflects tighter control of migration in both Norway and many Latin American countries after World War I. It is probable that we cover a higher percentage of actual migrants after 1920 than before.

When constructing the database, we have confronted the thorny issue of how to define migrants. We have opted for an inclusive definition, and all individuals identified in the underlying sources either as born in Norway or as Norwegian citizens have been included in HULA irrespective of how long they stayed in Latin America and irrespective their intentions, as this type of information is usually not included in the underlying sources. In most cases, this makes sense from a migration studies perspective. The vast majority of Norwegians who were registered in Latin America before 1940 traveled by ship and had to stay for at least a few months, even if they had no intentions of becoming permanent residents. In order to study the real patterns of migration, it has been important for us to include as many as possible, also those who regularly fall outside the bureaucratic categories of emigrants and immigrants. In general, this has been a sound decision as it has generated information about thousands of Norwegian migrants in Latin America who for different

12 For previous attempt to tackle some of the same issues, see *ibid.*

reasons were not registered as migrants by the Norwegian or Latin American authorities. However, this broad inclusion creates a problem with the numerous Norwegian sailors present in Latin American ports. As will be explained below, Norwegian ships with largely Norwegian crews sailed between all the major Latin American ports, and between these and ports in the United States, Canada, Europe, and South Africa from the 1840s and onward. Even in the period of sail, most of the sailors only stayed for short periods of time in each port. But the sheer number of Norwegians sailors in Latin American waters meant that even if just a very small percentage of them jumped ship in Latin American ports, it would have a dramatic impact on the number of Norwegian residents in Latin America. Since such escapes were illegal by Norwegian law – and in some instances Latin American as well – neither the sending nor the receiving countries registered runaway sailors as migrants. Our problem is that it is misleading both to include them and to exclude them from the database without further information about their individual lives, information that we usually do not have.

With these caveats and shortcomings in mind, let us turn to the possible interpretations of the statistics based on the HULA database. Recall that the objective is to gauge whether Norwegian migration to Latin America corresponds to Faist's curves on migrants per year and cumulative numbers of migrants.

Of the nearly nine thousand events currently in HULA, 4,896 concern the arrival of Norwegians in a specific Latin American destination. The number of arrivals by decade is very low until the 1880s, then it increases quite rapidly from the 1890s, before virtually exploding in the 1920s and then dropping to less than half the former levels in 1930s. Although there are certain caveats, such as the serious distortions in the geographic distribution, the tighter migration control after World War I, and the overall incompleteness of the figures, the best statistics available suggest that there indeed was a take-off in the Norwegian emigration to Latin America in the 1920s, but that it ended quite abruptly in 1930. Comparing the curves in figure 2.3 below with Faist's typical model for migration numbers in figure 2.1, it seems that there is a close enough fit that it makes sense to pursue his explanations further.

In order to identify the possible timing of the two turning points in the emigration process, we need to look at individual years. The yearly records of Norwegian arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA) and the annual statistics on Norwegian emigration to Latin American destinations (EMIPRO) do not converge entirely (figure 2.4). CEMLA has a single peak year in 1920, and then a marked and continual increase from 1922 through 1926, before it reaches new peaks in 1928, 1929, and again in 1930, which actually is the single year with

TABLE 2.1 *Norwegian arrivals in Latin America in HULA by decade and country of arrival, 1850–1940*

	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	n.s.d	Totals
Argentina				66	113	276	485	1,635	631	17	3223
Brazil	62	7			11	29	68	411	405	13	1006
Chile					1	93	67	108	29	18	316
Mexico			7	27	4	33	19	35	19	9	153
Cuba				1	1	29	12	24		3	70
Uruguay				1	1	3		10	3	7	25
Peru						4		13	1	4	22
Venezuela							1	16	2	1	20
Bolivia						2	3	2		6	13
Guatemala							1	11			12
Colombia							2	4	2	2	10
Ecuador							1	6		2	9
Panama						1	2	3			6
Paraguay						2		1		1	4
Dom. Republic								3			3
Costa Rica								2			2
Nicaragua									1		1
Honduras									1		1
Total	62	7	7	95	131	472	661	2284	1094	83	4896

BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

most Norwegian arrivals between 1882 and 1940. EMIPRO shows a marked increase starting in 1919 through 1921, and then the number stabilizes at a slightly lower level, before it rises again between 1925 and 1930 with 1926 as the peak year. If we may indeed speak of a turning point toward an exponential growth in the number of Norwegian migrants to Latin America, it has to be sometime between 1919 and 1925, and the following growth is indeed short-lived, lasting only four or five years.

Unfortunately, with the existing data in HULA it makes less sense to construct a graph to be compared to Faist's second, S-shaped curve on the cumulative number of migrants present in the destination (see figure 2.2). Our underlying sources do not easily lend themselves to this type of enquiry,

FIGURE 2.3 *Number of Norwegian arrivals in Latin America (HULA), Norwegian arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA) and departures for Latin American destinations (EMIPRO) by decade*
BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

FIGURE 2.4 *Yearly arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA), 1910–1940 and yearly departures from Norway to Latin America (EMIPRO)*
BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

FIGURE 2.5 *Yearly registered presence of Norwegians in Latin America by HULA, 1848–1940*
 BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

because the majority of our sources in HULA concern movement. If we include all movements, the resulting graph will probably look like the one depicted in figure 2.1 and actually reflect arrivals instead of residence. If we exclude the movements, we are left with 1,397 events of the type registration, observation, or residence in Latin America, which is a type of event where a Norwegian is listed in the sources as being present at one particular place at one particular date (or year) in Latin America. From these 1,397 events we need to subtract the 435 Norwegians listed in the 1895 Argentina census because it is the only census in HULA, and because it is a *de facto* census where the vast majority of Norwegians are actually sailors on board Norwegian vessels in Argentinean ports at the date of the census; the inclusion of this census would therefore distort the overall statistics. If we furthermore exclude the erroneous and incomplete events, we are left with only 918 registrations of residence. The annual graph is seen in figure 2.5, by decade in figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 does not bear much resemblance to Faist's S-shaped curve in figure 2.2. Part of the explanation for this is no doubt the deficient nature of the statistics themselves as mentioned above. But there may also be another explanation rooted in the actual emigration process. If most Norwegians stayed in Latin America for shorter periods and did not take up permanent residence in Latin America, or if the rate of return migration and remigration to areas outside Latin America was large, we will not get the accumulation of migrants that Faist's S-curve illustrates.

To construct a curve on the cumulated number of Norwegians in Latin America, the best statistics we could use are probably series of censuses where

FIGURE 2.6 *Registered presence of Norwegians in HULA by decade*BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php) FIGURE 2.7 *Norwegians in Chilean censuses, 1854–1940*

SOURCE: SÆTHER AND ØSTREM, "NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA", 125

the numbers of Norwegians are given for a longer period of time and according to fairly constant criteria. Unfortunately, such censuses are not available for the countries with most Norwegians, such as Argentina and Brazil, but we do have them for Chile and Mexico (figures 2.7 and 2.8).

FIGURE 2.8 *Norwegians in Mexican censuses, 1910–1930*

SOURCE: SÆTHER AND ØSTREM, "NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA", 130–131

Both these series suggest that the number of resident Norwegians were actually lower in the 1930s than in preceding decades. Taken together, the series suggest that despite a marked increase in the number of Norwegian migrants who arrived in Latin America during the 1920s, the number of resident Norwegians did not increase correspondingly. This may be interpreted as a consequence of very high rates of return migration and remigration. On the other hand, the censuses should be treated with care, since they generally are *de facto* censuses that include for instance sailors on foreign ships in the ports, and some of the censuses may therefore give a somewhat distorted and exaggerated impression of Norwegian presence for certain years.

In any case, the first set of figures on the number of Norwegian migrants per year and decade arriving in Latin America suggest that the Norwegian emigration process may at least provisionally be divided into three phases on the basis of Faist's schema. There is a very long pioneer phase that lasts for nearly one hundred years from the 1820s until roughly 1920. Then there is a very brief second phase during the 1920s when the number of Norwegian migrants increases rapidly, and, finally, a third decelerating phase from around 1930 when the number of migrants drops to a level slightly above the pre-1920 levels.

Returning to our initial question with three alternative answers, it is consistent with our approach to rule out alternative three, which stated that the Norwegian migration to Latin American did not follow Faist's model at all. Alternatives one and two remain, and the question of which one of these is most consistent with our empirical data cannot be adequately resolved with a

simple glance at statistics. To repeat, alternative one implies that the Norwegian migration stream generally followed Faist's model throughout the period, while alternative two suggests an abrupt end to the migration stream. In other words, it is clear that Norwegian migration to Latin America leveled around 1930, but we need to study closer the available data in order to evaluate whether this was caused by the migration wave reaching a mature phase, as Faist's model would predict (because the possibility of migrating to country A was so well-known that most potential migrants had already migrated), or whether there were other factors that caused the deceleration and eventual decrease of the curve. With this question in mind, we will now explore the three phases of the Norwegian migration cycle with a more detailed view in order to better understand the possible explanations for the ebb and flow of the migration cycle.

The Long Pioneer Phase, 1820–1920

One of the distinctive features of Norwegian migration to Latin America between 1820 and 1920 is the almost constant presence of Norwegian sailors in Latin American waters and ports. The presence of Norwegian sailors and vessels structured the migration in important ways. Sailors were not only potential migrants themselves, they also provided information about possible destinations to family, friends, and acquaintances back home. And the many small Norwegian cargo vessels that frequented Latin American harbors provided an important alternative means of transportation for those Norwegians who wanted to “try their luck” overseas.

Before the 1830s and 1840s, most Norwegian sailors in Latin America were employed on foreign ships. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the characteristic Norwegian merchant fleet, with its cheap, small sailing vessels, minimal crew, low salaries, and family ownership, made its way to Latin American ports. Regular sailors unfortunately left few textual traces, and it is nearly impossible at this stage to estimate the number of Norwegian sailors in Latin America before 1850 and, perhaps more importantly, to get glimpses of the stories they told about Latin America.

One striking exception is the story of Nicolai Olaus Lossius, a sailor who in 1806 left his native northwestern town of Molde at the age of sixteen on one of the many Norwegian schooners headed for Barcelona with dried cod (*bacalao*). This was the start of an eventful and dramatic life at sea that brought him first to Ireland on a Scottish ship and then to Liverpool, from where he sailed to Brazil. After returning to Britain he sailed on the Mediterranean, where he was captured by Moroccan privateers in 1809 and taken hostage. After being

released he made his way to Philadelphia from where he sailed to China, and in 1812 he became a US citizen and captain of an armed corvette. He was again taken captive in 1813, this time by the British outside Gibraltar, and he was brought to Newcastle, where he escaped. He then made his way to New Brunswick in Canada and established himself as a merchant, specializing in naval construction and the fish and timber trade. However, he soon lost his rapidly amassed fortune in 1816, and for reasons not entirely clear he ended up in the newly established Chilean navy under the command of the Scottish-born general Thomas Cochrane. He was decorated with a silver medal for his services under the battle of Valdivia in 1820, was given the rank of captain in the navy, and married the young daughter of a prominent local family in Valdivia. Between 1820 and his death in 1851, Lossius (who had now changed his name to Nicholas Oliver Lawson) lived intermittently in Valdivia, Valparaíso, and the Galápagos Islands, where he actually met Charles Darwin in 1835 and according to Darwin himself played a crucial role in the development of the theory on natural selection and evolution by providing information about species variation of tortoises on the different islands there.¹³

From a migration perspective, the most interesting part of Lossius's story is the content and effects of the letters he wrote to his family in Molde. Eleven of his letters from Chile have survived, most of them only as translated printed versions thanks to the efforts his niece, the genealogist Wilhelmine Brandt, who in 1863 published a genealogy of the families Lossius and Brandt and who presumably had received the original letters from her relatives in Molde.¹⁴ It is important to remember that his family background from prominent families on the west coast explains to a large extent why precisely *his* letters are still accessible – archives are by no means class-blind. Lossius wrote the letters in English and claimed he had forgotten how to write in Norwegian. In his letters he complains about the mail service, expects most of his letters home to have been lost on the way, and is frustrated by the lack of replies from his parents, and when he finally does hear from them, he is relieved that they still remember him. He explains furthermore that he is doing quite well in Valparaíso, and he asks them to intercede on his behalf before the court in Stockholm so that he can be named the Swedish-Norwegian consul of Valparaíso, mentioning in passing that there actually are a number of Norwegian ships calling at Valparaíso every year. Though his quest to become consul was not successful,

13 Anders Kvernberg, "Mannen som visste så mye om skilpadder at han endret verdenshistorien," *Romsdals sogelag årsskrift 2013* 77 (2013).

14 Wilhelmine Brandt, *Stamtavle over familjerne Lossius og Brandt med flere i samme indgiftede slægter* (Bergen: Geelmuyden, 1863).

his letters have another effect, one that was not intended by Lossius. Peter Andreas Brandt, Lossius's brother-in-law, was a painter and editor based in Christiania (modern-day Oslo) who went bankrupt in the early 1830s and got the idea of fleeing to South America, presumably in search for his wealthy relative in Chile. However, Brandt was unable to continue farther than Brazil, and ended up living in Santo Lagoa, where he worked as an illustrator for the Danish paleontologist and archaeologist Peter Wilhelm Lund.¹⁵ Curiously, Kristoffer Brandt, Peter Andreas Brandt's son and Lossius's nephew, also eventually migrated to Latin America, more specifically Mexico, after having corresponded with Lossius from Germany where he was working.

Lossius's correspondence, then, illustrates several key aspects of the Norwegian presence in Latin America in the early nineteenth century. First of all, Norwegian sailors were present in Latin American waters and ports from early on. Although they may not have consciously promoted migration, the effects of positive letters speaking well of the republics could trigger migration. And this migration was not necessarily directed toward the actual place where the original migrant lived. Furthermore, Norwegian migrants being few in numbers did not necessarily aim for the recreation of transplanted local communities. Lossius himself stopped using the Norwegian language, he was regularly identified as *norteamericano* or *inglés*, and he moved in international social circles. His naval career in Chile and Ecuador was itself part of the British engagement in the Spanish American wars of independence. His story underscores the need to look at migration in a global perspective, as it is not always or primarily a case of migrants moving only from one country to another.

We should not, however, exaggerate the migratory effects automatically generated by positive and optimistic texts on Latin America. About the same time as Lossius's correspondence, two other texts were published in part to encourage Norwegian emigration to Brazil. The first was the short, sober, and slightly enigmatic travel account of a round-trip voyage between Lübeck and Rio de Janeiro written by a certain W. Quellmann and published in Christiania in 1846 after the author's five-year stay in Brazil.¹⁶ The more openly propagandistic account by the priest Jonas W. Crøger, published ten years later after a similar five-year spell in Brazil, was apparently no more successful in attracting Norwegian immigrants to Brazil.¹⁷ But Crøger's text is interesting in part also

15 B. Holten, M. Sterll, and J. Fjeldså, *Den forsvundne maler: P.W. Lund og P.A. Brandt i Brasilien* (København: Museum Tusculanums forlag, 2004).

16 W. Quellmann, *Min Reise fra Lübeck til Rio di Janeiro i Aaret 1840, og mit femaarige Ophold i denne Stad* (Christiania 1848).

17 J.W. Crøger, *En Reise til Brasilien og Uruguay, Ophold i disse Lande og en Beskrivelse over dem* (Christiania 1856).

because he describes his encounter with some of the remaining migrants from the *Sophie* expedition who ended up in Joinville and who are treated in more detail in Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann's chapter of this book.

Sailors

Although the presence of Norwegians in Latin America by 1850 was still somewhat accidental, erratic, and numerically limited, several different factors worked together to increase its presence. One was the San Francisco gold rush, the intended destination for the Joinville settlers, and which was also remarked upon by Lossius in his last letters home. As European vessels heading for California had to go through the Strait of Magellan they thus called at Brazilian, Argentinean, and Chilean ports, and Lossius mentions the names of several Norwegian captains he met in Valparaíso in 1849 on their way to San Francisco, presumably sailing with migrants.¹⁸

In the 1840s and 1850s there are several more sporadic pieces of evidence of an increased presence of Norwegian vessels in Latin American and Caribbean waters. Norwegian captains used Charlotte Amalie, the principal port of the Danish West Indies, as a base for cargo shipping to the United States and the ports of the former Spanish colonies in the Circum-Caribbean. This trade had its heyday between 1839 and the 1870s, when the Royal Mail Steam Packet and subsequently Hamburger-Amerikanische Paketfahrt Aktiengesellschaft (HAPAG) used Charlotte Amalie as an entrepôt for their Caribbean trade, and there were regular routes between Southampton and Hamburg to the Danish colonies. The cargo was usually transferred to smaller sailing vessels in St. Thomas, from where they sailed to nearby Cuba, Mexico, and the principal South American ports.¹⁹ One of them may have been Norwegian-born merchant Juan Möller, who appears sporadically in sources from Tampico in Mexico in the 1840s, but we know almost nothing more about him except that he was born around 1812.²⁰

Another important trend in this period was the renewed interest for Norwegian *bacalao* in Latin American markets. Until the 1820s Spain and partly Portugal had been the most important markets for the salted cod of the

18 Kvernberg, "Mannen som visste så mye om skilpadder at han endret verdenshistorien."

19 Erik Gøbel, "Shipping through the Port of St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, 1816–1917," *International Journal of Maritime History* 6, no. 2 (1994).

20 Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico), Movimiento marítimo, Pasaportes y cartas de seguridad, vol. 23, expediente 45, hoja 12 and vol. 38, expediente 133, hojas 114–118.

northwestern Norwegian coast. And *bacalao* along with timber was Norway's most important export article throughout the nineteenth century. When Spain introduced new taxes on salted fish carried on foreign vessels, the Norwegians could no longer compete with the Canadians on the Iberian market or with the Spanish merchants who increasingly came to Norway to buy their *bacalao*. In the 1830s and 1840s, the larger trading companies based in the northwestern towns of Christianssund, Molde, Ålesund, and Trondhjem sought alternative markets especially in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and Havana, although direct trade in *bacalao* between Norway and Latin American ports was not entirely new. The first ship to be entered in the list of the Swedish-Norwegian consulate after its establishment in Rio in 1815 was the *Hinna* from Christianssund. And in 1830 the Rio consul remarks in his annual report that trade in *bacalao* is a "well-established business."²¹ But in the years between 1849 and 1855, several trading houses in Christianssund, Ålesund, and Bergen attempted to send their *bacalao* directly to Latin American ports. New methods of packaging introduced in the 1850s to preserve the fish from the hot and humid climate, combined with the successful import of coffee from Brazil and sugar from Cuba, implied that there came to exist a quite regular service between several Norwegian ports and the Atlantic ports of Latin America even though this trade was perceived to be especially risky.

In 1873 the Norwegian (and Swedish) consul in Rio de Janeiro remarked that "because of the comfort and consistence of the steam route from Hamburg, it appears that the direct trade between Norway and Brazil in beer, fish, and coffee on sailing vessels is decreasing."²² Although he was right in pointing out that Norwegian exporters of *bacalao* increasingly preferred shipment on German steam routes, the actual number of small Norwegian sailing vessels increased dramatically in the ensuing years, as seen from table 2.2 and figure 2.9.

Especially during the fifteen years between 1880 and 1895, several hundred small sailing vessels called at the major Latin American ports every year. Most of these did not go between Norway and Latin America but carried cargo between ports in the Americas. This implies that there were far more Norwegians in Latin American territories than the migration statistics reveal. Of course, most of these sailors spent little time on land, and most of them had no intention of settling in Latin America. But if even a small percentage of

21 Odd Volla, *Den norske klippfiskhandels historie* (Førde: Øens Forlag, 1956), 169.

22 Departementet for det Indre, "Uddrag af Consulatberetninger vedkommende Norges Handel og Skibsfart i Aaret 1873," Norges officielle Statistik (Christiania: Departementet for det Indre), 95.

TABLE 2.2 *Number of Norwegian ships arrived at selected Latin American ports according to consular reports, 1865–1903^a*

Year	Havana and other Cuban ports	Rio de Janeiro (incl. Santos and Porto Alegre)	Buenos Aires (incl. Rosario)	Valparaíso (including Iquique and Antofagasta)
1865	43	69	10	1
1871		107	46	
1872		160	154	8
1873	n/a	57 ^b	64	4
1874	45	61	60	1
1875	75 ^c	124	77	15
1876	93	110	46	15
1877	59	62	57	5
1878	72	125	78	7
1879	88	97	44	2
1880	53	113	28	3
1881	48	127	34	4
1882	110	165	38	23
1883	70	172	28	14
1884	52	232	125	11
1885	45	337	237	n/a ^d
1886	48	421	308	n/a
1887	21	455	472	n/a
1888	212	456	510	8
1889	151 ^e	544	593	3 ^f
1890	263 ^g	580	482	11
1891	170	721	312	15
1892	227	504	241	n/a
1893	237	558	249	10 ^h
1894	171	495	331	5
1895	123	637	354	11
1896	30 ⁱ	543	245	8
1897	91	388	124	5
1898	144	307	139	14
1899	319	228	160	14
1900	313	149	133	30
1901	482	148	91	n/a
1902	283	131	79	22 ^j
1903	274	128	121 ^k	n/a

- a The sources for these numbers are consular reports by Swedish-Norwegian consuls in Latin American ports and published usually every year by the Bureau of Statistics. These have been digitized and are available on the following web pages. Numbers after semicolons refer to pages of the original documents from each year. http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3_1865.pdf; 122–25, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1871.pdf; n/a, 60, 62, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1872.pdf; n/a, 67, 65, 70, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1873.pdf; n/a, 94, 95, 98, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1874.pdf; 100, 93, 97, 101, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1875.pdf; 101, 102, 104, 107, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1876.pdf; 122, 124, 127, 130, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_115.pdf; 272, 179, 275, 274, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_116.pdf; 381, 314 (and 358, 289, 390), http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_117.pdf; 162, 265, 199, 147, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1880.pdf; 366, 314, 249, 302, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1881.pdf; 383, 245, 359, 316, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1882.pdf; 326, 332, 337, 343, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1883.pdf; 239, 428, 409, 434, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_001.pdf; 233, 302, 305, 315, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_017.pdf; 144, 326, 186, 390, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_041.pdf; 208, 424, 442, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_060.pdf; 59, 555, 576, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_096.pdf; 112 and 548, 419, 305, 547, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_124.pdf; 495, 540, 373 and 609, 506, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_118.pdf; 359 and 615, 550, 1 and 491, 604, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_119.pdf; 9–407, 18–613, 23–759; 14–509; 9–375; 23–763, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_120.pdf; 8–222; 19–659; 15–542 and 25–842; n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_121.pdf; 266, 694 and 938, 845, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_122.pdf; 9–489, 16–757 and 18–793, 11–539, 18–796, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_123.pdf; 7–239 and 22–911; 3–46, 12–540, 12–559 and 23–923; 11–483 and 20–844; 23–930, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_124.pdf; 2–48; 1,11,10,461,16–709,710,19 and 765; 13–567, 16–719 and 16–720; 821, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_125.pdf; 9–274; 1–6,14–489 and 18–768; 14–525; 852, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_126.pdf; 4–154; 10–433; 8–324 and 18–890; 18–871, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_128.pdf; 609; 2–78 and 10–520; 12–565; 18–894, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_129.pdf; 7–343; 2–58,8–360 and 19–891; 15–673; 10–478, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_130.pdf; 9–459; 1–34, 8–370, 15–689, 15–700 and 16–796; 17–801; n/a, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_131.pdf; 16–787; 7–289; 14–655; 16–797, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_132.pdf; 17–788; 7–289, 9–429; 14–625, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1871.pdf; n/a, 60, 62, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1872.pdf; n/a, 67, 65, 70, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1873.pdf; n/a, 94, 95, 98, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1874.pdf; 100, 93, 97, 101, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1875.pdf; 101, 102, 104, 107, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1876.pdf; 122, 124, 127, 130, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_115.pdf; 272, 179, 275, 274, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_116.pdf; 381, 314 (and 358, 289, 390), http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_117.pdf; 162, 265, 199, 147, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1880.pdf; 366, 314, 249, 302, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1881.pdf; 383, 245, 359, 316, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1882.pdf; 326, 332, 337, 343, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1883.pdf; 239, 428, 409, 434, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_001.pdf; 233, 302, 305, 315, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_017.pdf; 144, 326, 186, 390, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_041.pdf; 208, 424, 442, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_060.pdf; 59, 555, 576, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_096.pdf; 112 and 548, 419, 305, 547, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_124.pdf; 495, 540, 373 and 609, 506, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_118.pdf; 359 and 615, 550, 1 and 491, 604, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_119.pdf; 9–407, 18–613, 23–759; 14–509; 9–375; 23–763, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_120.pdf; 8–222; 19–659; 15–542 and 25–842; n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_121.pdf; 266, 694 and 938, 845, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_122.pdf; 9–489, 16–757 and 18–793, 11–539, 18–796, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_123.pdf; 7–239 and 22–911; 3–46, 12–540, 12–559 and 23–923; 11–483 and 20–844; 23–930, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_124.pdf; 2–48; 1,11,10,461,16–709,710,19 and 765; 13–567,16–719 and 16–720; 821, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_125.pdf; 9–274;

TABLE 2.2 *Number of Norwegian ships arrived at selected Latin American (cont.)*

- 1–6, 14–489 and 18–768; 14–525; 852, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_126.pdf; 4–154; 10–433; 8–324 and 18–890; 18–871, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_128.pdf; 609; 2–78 and 10–520; 12–565; 18–894, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_129.pdf; 7–343; 2–58, 8–360 and 19–891; 15–673; 10–478, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_130.pdf; 9–459; 1–34, 8–370, 15–689, 15–700 and 16–796; 17–801; n/a, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_131.pdf; 16–787; 7–289; 14–655; 16–797, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_132.pdf; 17–788; 7–289, 9–429; 14–625.
- b Only Rio de Janeiro.
- c Nineteen came directly from Norway with *bacalao*.
- d Digitized version does not include page 390.
- e Consul notes that most freights is sugar to the United States, but that there is an increase in fruit cargo especially from Baracoa.
- f Includes lengthy narrative on Chilean history, economy, and politics and information about migration to Chile.
- g Of these, 202 arrived in Baracoa.
- h Reported in 1894.
- i The consul notes problems with fruit trade to the United States because of the insurrection on the island.
- j Consul Bruno Mohr notes six Norwegian sailors escaped from Norwegian vessels in Chile in 1902.
- k The consul notes that thirty-nine of these were Norwegian sailing vessels, thirty-eight of which went with timber from US ports, p. 626.

FIGURE 2.9 *Number of Norwegian vessels arrived in selected Latin American ports annually, 1865–1903*

THE SOURCES FOR EACH YEAR ARE THE SAME AS LISTED IN TABLE 2.2

them did, this would have had a marked effect on the number of Norwegians living in Latin America. Some of the lists in HULA confirm that some Norwegian sailors did in fact stay in Latin America on a more permanent basis. In Argentina, the authorities required all adult males without property to keep a *papeleta de conchabo* documenting their association to an employer. Without it, workers in Argentina could be charged with vagrancy and sentenced to military service or forced public labor. Foreign workers obtained the document from their consular representative. The consul for Norway and Sweden kept a list of papeletas issued to Norwegians and Swedes between 1848 and 1887. The list includes 193 Norwegians, of whom 102 were sailors, captains and stevedores, thirty-three were simply listed as workers, twenty were artisans of different kinds (carpenters being dominant), eleven were merchants, shopkeepers or tradesmen, nine were specifically listed as agricultural workers, and five were engineers or machine operators, while in nine cases no occupation was registered.²³ In Chile, lists of captains in the national merchant marine tell a similar story.²⁴ Thirty Norwegians were named captains in the Chilean merchant fleet between 1873 and 1911. These may have represented only the tip of the iceberg. Presumably, many more Norwegian sailors worked on Chilean ships without ever reaching the rank of captain.

The legal and economic conditions of Norwegian sailors during the age of sail made it particularly attractive to jump ship in foreign ports and seek employment either on land or on foreign ships. Desertion from the Norwegian merchant marine was quite common during the age of sail, particularly among the ordinary and able-bodied seamen who were in fact exempted from military service but who in turn had to sign two-year contracts. Since salaries on Norwegian ships were, at least until the 1890s, considerably lower than

23 Riksarkivet (Oslo) S-2981/E/Ee/Loo26/0001: "Register of ver uti Buenos Ayres Bossatte Svenskar & Nordmän."

24 "Lista oficial de capitanes de la Marina Mercante chilena, inscritos en la Gobernación marítima de Valparaíso, a virtud de lo dispuesto en el decreto supremo No. 263 de 25 de septiembre de 1872 i que pueden mandar nave con bandera nacional, según datos obtenidos particularmente," in Archivo Historico Nacional de Chile, Ministerio de Marina, vol. 633 (1893); "Lista oficial de capitanes de la Marina Mercante Chilena inscritos en el Registro respectivo en virtud de los dispuesto en decreto supremo de 25 de septiembre de 1872 i que pueden mandar naves nacionales" i *Memoria del ministerio de Marina presentada al Congreso Nacional en 1901* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1901); "Nomina de los diferentes clases de capitanes de la Marina Mercante Nacional, hábiles para mandar naves, de conformidad con el reglamento de 7 de setiembre de 1906" in *Memoria del Ministerio de Marina* (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1911), pp. 362-70.

salaries on British, Canadian, and US ships, there was a considerable temptation to desert in ports where there was a market for their skills.²⁵ Other scholars have noted how at least some of the deserted sailors were in fact hidden migrants, especially in New York but also in Australia.²⁶ Potentially, deserted sailors made up a much larger share of Norwegian migrants in Argentina than in the United States or in Australia, given the limited legal migration there and the surprisingly high numbers of deserted sailors, especially in the 1870s and 1880s.

The annual reports where Swedish-Norwegian consuls provided information about trade and shipping also included the numbers of sailors who had deserted from Norwegian ships. Though the reported numbers may well be lower than the actual number of deserted sailors, they at least provide us both with a general tendency over time (the ebb and flow of deserters), and they can be used to compare different ports with each other. Among the Latin American ports, Buenos Aires stands out. And it is from 1885 until roughly 1900 that the numbers of deserted Norwegian sailors in Buenos Aires is remarkable, both in relation to the number of legal immigrants and compared to the number of deserted sailors in other ports (see table 2.3)

During the eleven years between 1885 and 1895, a total of 595 Norwegian sailors deserted from Norwegian vessels in the port of Buenos Aires, according to the consul. In the same years, only sixty-two Norwegians immigrants were registered by the port authorities in Buenos Aires. Clearly, then, if desertion from the merchant marine was a type of hidden migration, its numerical importance at least in those years could be great. Most of our sources indicate that the majority of deserted sailors did not stay permanently in Buenos Aires or Argentina, but sought employment on other ships, preferably British,

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- 25 Catharina B. Dyvik, "Hiding Migrants – A study of seamen deserting from Norwegian merchant vessels between 1860 and 1914" (London School of Economics, 2011); Johan Nicolay Tønnesen, "Rømning 1850–1914 fra norske skip i fremmede havner," in *Den norske sjøfarts historie fra de eldste tider til vore dage*, ed. Alexander Bugge and et al (Oslo: J.W. Cappelens forlag, 1951); Steffen Sætereie, "Sjømenn på rømmen: En studie av norske sjøfolk som forlot sine skip 1862–1913." (University of Oslo, 2014).
- 26 Lewis R. Fischer, "The Sea as Highway: Maritime Service as a Means of International Migration, 1863–1913," in *Maritime aspects of migration*, ed. Klaus Friedland, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte. Neue Folge (Köln: Böhlau, 1989); Fredrik Larsen Lund, "A Norwegian Waltz: Norwegian Immigration and Settlelement in Queensland 1870–1914" (University of Oslo, 2012); David Mauk, *The colony that rose from the sea : Norwegian maritime migration and community in Brooklyn, 1850–1910* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association : Distributed by The University of Illinois Press, 1997); Dyvik, "Hiding Migrants – A study of seamen deserting from Norwegian merchant vessels between 1860 and 1914."

TABLE 2.3 *Runaway sailors in the port of Buenos Aires according to consular reports, 1871–98*

Year	Deserters from Norwegian vessels				Norwegian vessels	Deserters pr vessel
	Norw.	Swedes	Others	Sum		
1871					46	
1872					99	
1873					64	
1874			8		60	0.13
1875			2		77	0.03
1876			0		46	0.00
1877			0		57	0.00
1878			8		78	0.10
1879					44	
1880			5		28	0.18
1881			11		34	0.32
1882			12		38	0.32
1883			21		28	0.75
1884			36		125	0.29
1885	52		62	114	237	0.48
1886	60	31	38	129	308	0.42
1887	85	23	47	155	472	0.33
1888	98	19	54	171	510	0.34
1889	51	29	43	123	593	0.21
1890	22	16	23	61	482	0.13
1891	4		12	16	312	0.05
1892	28	10	21	59	241	0.24
1893	41	23	30	94	249	0.38
1894	52	24	54	130	331	0.39
1895	82	27	49	158	354	0.45
1896	54	18	25	97	245	0.40

THE SOURCES FOR EACH YEAR ARE THE SAME AS LISTED IN TABLE 2.2.

Canadian, or US.²⁷ Following the paths of individual sailors, even when we have their full names and approximate year of birth, is a very time-consuming

27 Steinar A. Sæther, "Fordrukne ofre, rasjonelle nyttemaksimerere eller skjulte migranter: rømte sjømenn fra Stavanger i Buenos Aires 1888," in *Sjøfolks liv og arbeid* (Bergen maritime museum: unpublished, 2013).

and often frustrating endeavor. Yet in order to obtain a firmer grasp on the destinies of deserted sailors in Latin American ports, more in-depth studies are needed. Buenos Aires is a key port if we rely on the consular reports on desertion, and the years between 1880 and 1913 stand out as particularly important. From the beginning of the twentieth century, even the Norwegian shipowners turned to steam and steel, thus improving conditions on board, while the port authorities in Buenos Aires curbed the influence of crimps and runners. There may have been other factors at play, too, but in any case the numbers of desertions fell steadily thereafter.

Engineers

In addition to the sailors and the shipping industry, other work opportunities for Norwegians also opened in Latin America during the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the HULA database, more than one thousand events concern Norwegian engineers in Latin America. The engineers are a well-documented group, unlike the sailors, and most engineers are listed with more than one event in HULA. It is nevertheless clear that the engineers represented a substantial group among Norwegian emigrants to Latin America, by far outweighing their proportion of the Norwegian population at the time. The basic reason for this particular migration is quite straightforward: long into the twentieth century, Norway educated far more engineers than what the domestic economy needed – indeed, the emigration rate among newly graduated engineers was generally very high from all Scandinavian countries.²⁸

In HULA, the distribution of Norwegian engineers by country in Latin America where their life events have been recorded is as follows: Argentina (484), Chile (254), Brazil (68), Mexico (60), Bolivia (41), Uruguay (23), Cuba (17), and Colombia (12). Of the sixty-nine Norwegians registered in the Mexican register of foreign residents in the 1930s, eight were engineers.²⁹ Of the 2,523 entries of Norwegians in Buenos Aires between 1884 and 1940, 339 were listed with engineer as occupation.³⁰ And even more remarkably, of the 205 Norwegians registered in the list of foreigners by the police in the port of

²⁸ Forthcoming study by Per-Olof Grönberg.

²⁹ Archivo General de la Nación (México), Galería 5, Departamento de Migraciones, Varias nacionalidades, caja 7.

³⁰ “Listado de pasajeros e inmigrantes noruegos llegados al puerto de Buenos Aires entre 1882 y 1950,” Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos (CEMLA).

Antofagasta between 1903 and 1942, sixty were engineers.³¹ Taken at face value, sources such as these suggest that somewhere between one in every four to eight Norwegian migrants were engineers. But we need to take into account that some of them exaggerated their titles abroad and that these particular migrants tended to move often and also traveled in ways that made their movements more susceptible to be registered by the authorities. A more conservative estimate is that they represented between 5 and 10 percent of the Norwegian migrant population in Latin America.

Interestingly, the engineers tended to form clusters around certain geographic locations, and some of these locations seem to have been among the favored destinations for Norwegian migrants (not only engineers) for decades or even generations. Indeed, the first Norwegian engineers behaved very much like the migrant pioneers theorized by Faist. One example is Lars (or Lorenzo) Sundt, who already in 1870 was invited by a Danish vice-consul in Chile to be the administrator of a copper mine that the latter owned in Chañaral in the Atacama Desert. Sundt was a graduate in mining from the Royal Frederick University in Christiania (today's University of Oslo) and worked for some years in the silver mines of Kongsberg in Eastern Norway. Lars/Lorenzo Sundt served in Chañaral for three years, and then worked in other silver and copper mines in Chile before he was hired in 1878 as *subgerente* of the Corocoro mine in Bolivia, which was owned by a Chilean company.³² When the War of the Pacific broke out in 1879, in part sparked by precisely the newfound ores in the Atacama, Sundt moved back to Chile where he administered nitrate mines near Iquique before he was commissioned by the Chilean government to conduct a geological survey of the Atacama Desert, obviously with an intent to discover new and exploitable mineral deposits. He later returned to Corocoro, before moving back to Santiago, where he settled in 1896 and lived until the 1930s. For our purposes, the most interesting aspect of Sundt's activities concerns his role as a migration pioneer. Not only did he bring along a mine worker from Kongsberg and the latter's family when he moved to Chile in 1879, he also recruited Norwegian engineers to the mines he administered in Chile and

31 Archivos históricos de la Universidad Católica del Norte (Antofagasta, Chile), Prontuarios de extranjeros de la oficina de identificación de la policía de Antofagasta, carpeta "Noruega."

32 S.H. Finne-Grønn, *Den vestlandske slegt Sundt: genealogisk-personalhistoriske meddelelser* (Christiania: Mallings, 1916), 140–42; Gudmund Stang, "Compañía Corocoro de Bolivia, 1873–1923: a Chilean copper-mining venture in Bolivia seen in the context of the contemporary development of the industry," *Iberoamericana: Nordic Journal of Latin American Studies/Revista Nórdica de Estudios Latinoamericanos* 23, no. 12 (1993).

Bolivia. Among those he recruited first were Ole Sandstad, who replaced him as an administrator of the Corocoro mine in 1892, and Axel Thorgersen.³³ Both Thorgersen and Sandstad were killed in 1898 during the Bolivian civil war.³⁴

Despite this tragedy, many more Norwegian engineers continued to seek work in northern Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. Among them were four recent mineralogical graduates from the Royal Frederick University: Arne Utne, Hans Nikolai Ellefsen, Kristian Lerche Bøckmann, and Leonhard Holmboe. Initially, from 1912, they all had contracts with the Braden Copper Company, which owned the El Teniente mine in northern Chile. But dissatisfied with the treatment and conditions, they all preferred working for Chilean-owned mining companies in Peru and Bolivia and later sought to locate new deposits with own licenses that could in turn be sold to the multinational companies.³⁵ From then on there was a constant stream of newly graduated engineers from Norwegian technical schools who were recruited to mines in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru (see table 2.4). Most seem to have been recruited in Norway or the United States, and they behaved more like present-day expats than permanent residents of their Latin American host countries, in how they lived, what they ate, and the length of their stays.³⁶ Still, some – like Utne, Ellefsen, Holmboe, Bøckmann, Sundt, and Sandal – seem to have preferred working for Latin American companies or governments if they got the opportunity. This was also the case for the engineers whom the skiers discussed in Alvstad's chapter met in Argentina and Chile in the 1890s.

Table 2.4 illustrates the clustering of Norwegian engineers around specific companies in Chile and Bolivia. Exactly how recent graduates were recruited is not clear from the sources consulted. But it seems obvious that there were networks that involved people in charge of hiring engineers in the larger companies, such as Braden, Guggenheim, the Chile Exploration Company, and the Anglo-Chilean Nitrate Company, and that these networks had contacts at

33 *Studenterne fra 1883: biografiske meddelelser samlede i anledning af deres 25-aars student-erjubilaum*, (Kristiania: Det Mallingske bogtrykkeri, 1908). “Compañía Corocoro de Bolivia, 1873–1923: a Chilean copper-mining venture in Bolivia seen in the context of the contemporary development of the industry.”

34 See letter from Sverre Næsgaard to Martha Bromander, Nov. 15, 1946, kindly lent to the author by Lars Aasness.

35 Kristian Lerche Bøckmann, “In memoriam,” *Bergmanns-jul* (1958); “Jul i Andesfjellene,” *Bergmanns-jul* (1955). See also the collection of photographs with descriptions by Hans Nikolai Ellefsen, kindly lent to the author by Berit Wangenstein Haugen.

36 For a particularly detailed and vivid illustration, see the memoirs and photo album of Asbjørn Danielsen, who worked for Guggenheim at the María Elena mine from 1926 to 1931. The memoirs and album were kindly lent to the author by Jon Asbjørn Danielsen.

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Sundt, Lars	KFU	mining	1867	In Chile from 1870 (see main text)
Wiel Krefting, Truls	KFU	mining	1879	Peru 1880s
Sandstad, Ole	KFU	mining	1887	Corocoro mines in Bolivia from 1889 to 1898
Cappelen Smith, Elias Anton	TTL	chemistry	1892	Consultant for Guggenheim, Chile Exploration Co., and Braden from 1912. From 1925, manager and partner for Guggenheim Brothers in Chile.
Gude, Ove	BTS	machine	1894	Co-owner of Minas de Carbon Rio Verde, Magallanes, Chile
Christian Lange, Ulrik Fr. Nath.	TTL	construction	1894	In Chile from 1906
Schach, Nikolai Petter	TTL	engineering	1898	Railway construction in Chile and Peru 1907–10. Argentina thereafter.
Sohlberg, Christian	OTS	construction	1899	Chile after 1904
Melvær, Thormod	TTL	chemistry	1900	Chile Exploration Co. from 1915
Vodahl, Andreas	TTL	engineering	1902	Chile Exploration Co. before 1916
Lossius Jørgensen, Erling	TTL /BF	chemistry/ mining	1905	Chile Exploration Co. after 1906
Koch, Otto	TTL	chemistry	1906	Chile Exploration Co.
Larsen, Alf				In Chile from 1907, claims to be engineer in 1940
Rønning, Peder Ansgar	TTL	machine	1906	Braden Copper Co. from 1909
Salvesen, Jens Irgens	OTS	construction	1906	Bolivia and Chile after 1906
Arnet, Fr. W.	KTS	chemistry	1908	Chemist at nitrate fields in Chile, 1908–17
Dahll, Chr. Budde	TTL	chemistry	1908	Braden 1909–12, Cía La Reina (Bol.) 1912–13, Cía Min. Gatico 1914, Braden 1915–32

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940a (cont.)*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Krog, Karl Martin	TTL	chemistry	1909	Chile Exploration Co. after 1915
Balle Røyem, Claus Fredrik	TTL		1910	1910–12: Griffiters & Co.; from 1912 in Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata
Hofseth, Bjarne	CSM, UK	mining	1910	Northern Chile, 1923–26
Næser Sontum, Fredrik	BTS		1910	Braden Copper Co. 1915–47
Røyem, Claus Fredrik	OTS	construction	1910	Chile 1910–14 and 1919–50
Schønning, Eirik Nergaard, Gunnar	OTS	construction	1910	Chile 1910–13 Arrived in Argentina in 1910, worked in Chuquicamata in 1920 and 1924
Ellefsen, Hans Nikolai	KFU	mining	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1912, from 1915 in Bolivia
Jørgensen, Jørgen	TTL	chemistry	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1912
Lerche Bøckman, Kristian	KFU	mining	1911	Chile, Peru and Bolivia 1912–15, Chile 1919–20, Bolivia 1925–28
Newton Kirsebom, Gustav	KFU	mining	1911	Contract with Cappelen Smith in Chile 1913–16
Ringstad, Bjarne	KFU	mining	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1913
Ervik Holmboe, Leonard	KFU	mining	1912	Braden Copper Co. from 1912, from 1915 in Bolivia
Melvær, Jonas	BTS	chemistry	1912	Chuquicamata, Chile from 1915
Utne, Arne	KFU	mining	1912	Chile, Bolivia 1912–50
Andresen, Arnold	THK	chemistry	1913?	Petroleum chemistry in Magallanes, Chile
Rogde, Sigurd	BTS	construction	1914	Anglo Chilean Nitrate Corp. after 1917

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Magisås, Hans				In Chile from 1918, worked as engineer at Chuquicamata in 1926
Duborgh, Peter	THK	electro-technical	1915	Standard Oil, Argentina and Bolivia 1922–27
Urheim, Thorvald	BTS	electro-technical	1916	Braden Copper Co., 1924–27
Harje Freuchen, Thord	BTS	electro-technical	1917	Guggenheim Copper
Horneman, Jacob H.	KFU	mining	1918	Venezuela and Colombia, in Chile from 1930 at María Elena
Thomassen, Sverre Johan	BTS	electro-technical	1918	Braden Copper Co., 1932–37
Aasheim, Hans	NTH	chemistry	1919	From 1930 at Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp.
Grahl-Nielsen, Frithjof	KFU	mining	1919	Chuiquicamata, Chile 1920–22
Hanger, Anders	KFU	mining	1919	Braden Copper Co. 1920–21, Cevio de Pasco, Peru 1921–23
Hirth, Anders	NTH	electro-technical	1919	Braden Copper Co. after 1931
Ingier Vold, Ole	KFU	chemistry	1919	Chile Exploration Co. 1922–29
Lowzow, Odd	TTL	machine	1919	Guggenheim Copper
Wee, Sverre	KFU	mining	1919	Guggenheim, Andagoya Copper in Bolivia, Peru, and Chile from 1919 to the 1940s
Bratt, Per	THDa	chemistry	1920	Assistant chief chemist Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp 1926–28.
Danielsen, Asbjørn	NTH	construction	1920	Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp 1926–32
Lundh, Fridthjof C. Gordon	NTH	electro-technical	1920	Chile Exploration Co., 1923–24
Stuenes, Kaare	KFU	mining	1920	Braden Copper Co., 1922–24
Børresen, Rolf Torgny	NTH	machine	1921	Braden Copper Co., Rancagua 1929–1932

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940a (cont.)*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Korstvedt, Ole Carsten	NTH	electro-technical	1921	Braden Copper Co., Chile from 1923
Swensson, Carl Petter	NTH	construction	1921	Fountain Co and Braden Copper Co., 1929–33
Wefring, Peter Meyer	NTH	construction	1921	Guggenheim Nitrates from 1926, later Comp. Maestranzas and Galvan in Viña del Mar
Dalen, Olav	NTH	mining	1923	Cerro de Pasco Copper, Peru 1927–29
Darre-Jenssen, Lauritz	NTH	construction	1923	Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp
Steffensen, Bjarne	OTS	chemistry	1923	Chile Exploration Co., 1927–32
Thunæs, Arvid	NTH	mining	1923	Osoyo gold mines, Bolivia 1938–39
Heiberg Greve, William	NTH	construction	1924	Chile Exploration Co., 1925–27, Patiño Mines Bolivia 1927–31, Pedro de Valdivia Nitrate Mines 1931
Kleppe, Reidar	NTH	construction	1924	Chuquicamata, 1924
Sæther, Hans Birger				Standard Oil, Argentina and Bolivia from 1925
Brygfjeld, Ragnar	NTH	electro-technical	1925	Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata 1927–28
Bassoe, Ivar	OTS	construction	1925	Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata after 1925
Rustan, Arvid Konrad				Chile Exploration Co. 1926–32
Hoff, Edward				Mechanical engineer in Chuquicamata from 1926
Andrew				Chuquicamata 1926
Holmsen, Sverre				

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Bachke, Anton Sophus	NTH	construction	1927	Braden Copper Co., Rancagua 1931–32
Petersen, Harald Ludvig	NTH	construction	1928	Cons. Nitrate in Chile from 1931
Fladby, Jens	NTH	chemistry	1929	Nitrate mining, Chile before 1935
Kloed Petersen, Hans Thomas	NTH	electro-technical	1929	Braden Copper Co. from 1931, Cerro de Pasco (Peru) from 1932
Ranum, Harald	NTH	electro-technical	1929	Cerro de Pasco Copper, Peru 1934–37
Ansgaard Moebius, Johan	NTH	construction	1930	From 1930 at Comp. Salitrera Anglo-Chilena
Grove, Ivar	NTH	construction	1930	Comp. Salitrera Anglo- Chilena 1931–32, Texas Oil in Argentina 1935–36
Garson, Henrik	HTS/ CTS		1912/1914	Braden Copper Co. after 1914
Holmboe, Fredrik B.	KTS	construction		Chuquicamata 1917
Aalborg Haugen, Erling	THD		1921	Nitrate mining, Chile before 1938

SOURCE: HULA ([HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/))

- a Abbreviations: Bergen Tekniske Skole (BTS), Kristiania/Oslo Tekniske Skole (OTS), Trondhjem Tekniske Lærestalt (TTL), Norges Tekniske Høgskole (NTH), Kongelige Fredriks Universitet/Royal Frederick University renamed University of Oslo in 1939 (KFU), Technische Hochschule Dresden (THD), Technische Hochschule Karlsruhe (THK), Technische Hochschule Darmstadt (THDA), Camborne School of Mines (CSM), Bergakademia Freiberg (BF), and Chicago Technical School (CTS). More information about every individual in the table in HULA (<https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/>). I am particularly grateful to Kristin Ranestad and Per-Olof Grönberg for information about Norwegian engineers in Latin America, and the lists they prepared for inclusion in HULA.

Norwegian technical schools. It is also probable that once Norwegian engineers such as Cappelen Smith held higher positions within these companies, more Norwegian engineers were recruited. Mining engineering in the southern Andes developed into a specific migrant niche for Norwegian engineers between 1890 and 1930, although very little Norwegian capital was involved, and although most engineers only worked in South America before returning home or being employed elsewhere.

The engineering niche also attracted other Norwegian migrants. Not only did some of the engineers bring along wives and fiancées and other family members, they also served as magnets for other Norwegian males seeking work, as evidenced by the chapters of Cecilia Alvstad and María Bjerg in this book. Norwegians looking for work were guided in the direction of companies where compatriots held influential positions.

A list similar to table 2.4 for Argentina would be too long to include here. In Argentina, Norwegian engineers were employed in railway and port construction, in the building of dams, in hydrological surveys, and in the petroleum industry, both off-shore in Comodoro Rivadavia and in the inland exploration and production in the northern provinces. Many of the first group of Norwegian engineers in Argentina were initially hired by the geographer Francisco Pascacio Moreno, founder of the Natural History Museum of La Plata, explorer of Patagonia, and, most importantly for our purposes, head of the Argentinean Border Commission in the 1890s, a commission that was tasked with exploring Patagonia and the southernmost part of the cordillera in order to establish the exact border between Argentina and Chile. For these explorations several Norwegian engineers were hired, first and foremost the military captain Gunnar/ Gunardo Lange. Lange had previously emigrated to the United States, before following his brother to Honduras and then migrating onward to Argentina in 1886.³⁷ Moreno and Lange recruited a small army of Norwegian engineers to defend Argentinean interests in the border conflict with Chile, including Eilert Sundt (a cousin of Lars/Lorenzo Sundt), Henrik Wolff, Theodor Arneberg, Einar Soot, Alf Schjørbeck, Karl/Carlos Zwilmeyer, Hans Peter Waag, Ulrik Greiner, Olaf Jansen, N.J. Hammer, and the same Olaf Erichsen who after having worked for Moreno became the manager of El Mate, the estancia where the workers treated in María Bjerg's chapter initially worked.³⁸

37 Kjartan Fløgstad, *Eld og vatn* (Oslo: Universitetsforl., 1999), 162–67; Joar Hoel Larsen, “Gunnar Lange,” in *Norsk biografisk leksikon* (2009).

38 Hans Sundt, *Innen alt går i glemmeboken: erindringer og selvopplevelser fra Argentina, Chile og Uruguay* (Tønsberg: Tønsbergs Aktietrykkeri, 1968), 40–45.

This group of engineers formed the nucleus of what was to become a substantial Norwegian community in Buenos Aires. They are also a group that is relatively easy to trace, in part because many of them wrote about their experiences in the form of scientific monographs, travelogues, or more fictionalized accounts.³⁹ Several were also central actors in forming and maintaining institutions such as the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Scandinavian Rowing Club (Club de Remeros Escandinavos), and the Norwegian *La Plata Samfund* along with Norwegian shipping agents, shipowners, and trading agents based in Buenos Aires. The Norwegian communities in Buenos Aires were by far the largest one in numerical terms in Latin America, and the niches they covered were more diverse than in other part of the region, and especially during the 1920s there was a considerable increase in the number of Norwegians who sought work in and around Buenos Aires, as illustrated by the EMIPRO and CEMLA numbers reviewed at the beginning of this chapter.

The Norwegian circles in Buenos Aires included some wealthy and politically influential members. Of them, the most influential by far in both Argentina and Norway was Peter Christophersen (Don Pedro). After having worked as a shipping agent in Cadiz, Spain, he moved with his brothers to Buenos Aires in the 1870s and quickly ascended socially and economically. He married first one granddaughter of a former Argentinean president, then another, which gave him access to rich agricultural land in Mendoza. He financed the Norwegian Lutheran Church (whose architect was Alexander/Alejandro Christophersen, Pedro's brother, later to become professor of architecture at the University of Buenos Aires); financed Roald Amundsen's Antarctic expedition, as well as the grandiose reception for Amundsen's men in Buenos Aires after the completion of the expedition; founded the whaling station Grytviken at South Georgia along with Captain C.A. Larsen; and co-founded the Norwegian South America Line, a line of steam vessels that served the route between various Norwegian ports, Santos, and Buenos Aires from

39 Eilert Sundt, *Pampas og cordilleras: erindringer fra grænse-expeditionerne i Patagonia* (Christiania: Cammermeyer Boghandel, 1906); *Patagonia på kryss og tvers* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1942); *Patagonia på kryss og tvers* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1942); Pedro Rubio, *Et år i urskogen* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1935); *Et år på hesteryggen: en nordmanns eventyr i Patagonia* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1934); *Et år på pampaen* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1936); Guillermo Hoxmark, *La evolución de la meteorología*, vol. 13 (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y casa editora "Coni," 1925); Olaf J. Storm, *El río Pilcomayo y el Chaco Boreal: viajes y exploraciones* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1892); Nils Johan Schjander, *En reise til Patagonia* (Oslo: Forlaget Press, 2000); Eilert Sundt, *Amasonfloden: fra kildene til havet : med beretninger om flodens opdagelse og gjenopdagelse 1539–1541–1639* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1941).

1913 until the 1930s. Although he came from a modest background, around the turn of the century he wielded influence through his brothers in the diplomatic and political circles that paved the way for the break-up of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905. His brother Søren Christophersen served as consul in Montevideo, and another brother, Wilhelm Christopher Christophersen, was consul in Buenos Aires, Mexico, and Antwerp before being appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1908. Don Pedro himself was honorary consul for both Russia and Denmark in Buenos Aires.⁴⁰

Don Pedro's particularly successful career nevertheless illustrates the economic and political interests of the Norwegian elites around 1905. The conflict with Sweden was to a large extent motivated by diverging interests in the consular and diplomatic services, which the Norwegian shipping community sought to control to protect their interests worldwide, and less concerned with diplomatic niceties and protocol. Like Mieke Neyens shows in another chapter of this book, the newly independent nation encouraged the establishment of Norwegian lines and supported the shipping interests, particularly in the Americas. In the first governments after 1905, shipowners and shipping agents were particularly dominant. However, Christophersen and fellow business representatives had little economic incentive to encourage Norwegians to emigrate to Latin America. The enterprises they were involved in simply did not need massive Norwegian labor in Latin American territories, with the obvious exception of Norwegian vessels and in part also the more limited recruitment of engineers. This is very similar to the attitude adopted by the Norwegian landowners in Guatemala discussed in Synnøve Ones Rosales's chapter. Why encourage Norwegians to settle in Guatemala, or in other parts of Latin America for that matter, when more qualified and cheaper workers could be found locally?

Colonization Attempts

Nevertheless, there were at least a handful of attempts to establish Norwegian colonies in Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were generally short-lived and unsuccessful by most criteria, including the number of Norwegian migrants they actually attracted. Still, they are interesting from a migration studies perspective, in part because they highlight the specific character of Norwegian migration to and within Latin America. One of the first attempts, except for the rather accidental one in Dona Francisca,

40 Joar Hoel Larsen, *Don Pedro: Norges mest vellykkede emigrant* (Oslo: Kagge, 2001).

Brazil, discussed by Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann in the next chapter, was Arent Mathias Arentsen's proposal for the establishment of the colony Normannia near Punta Arenas in southern Chile. Arentsen was a bankrupted shipowner from Tvedestrand in Southern Norway who emigrated to Argentina in 1889 with one of his sons, found his way to Punta Arenas, and from there via the Chilean ambassador in Buenos Aires proposed the formal establishment of the colony. He promised to initially recruit no less than one hundred Norwegian families, on the condition that the colonists would govern themselves according to Norwegian laws and customs, have the right to establish their own school and church, and administer their own alcohol regulations. The Chilean authorities, probably quite wisely, never responded to this request, and the colony did not materialize.⁴¹ However, several Norwegian families, mostly from Tvedestrand, followed in Arentsen's footsteps and established themselves as sailors, whalers, shipping agents, tradesmen, and artisans in Punta Arenas in the 1890s. The Norwegian community there did not reach the size imagined by Arentsen in 1889, and after the Panama Canal opened in 1914, the number of Norwegians slowly decreased. There was also an attempt to establish a Norwegian colony some years later further north in Chile on the island of Chiloé, and some families did in fact go there between 1899 and 1901, but they were frustrated by unfulfilled promises, and they all left within a short period of time.⁴²

Slightly more successful, at least in the beginning, was the Norwegian colony established near Baracoa on the eastern end of Cuba in 1907.⁴³ This colony actually lasted until 1919, was led by arctic explorer Otto Sverdrup, and included several Norwegian families who bought land near Baracoa just before the outbreak

41 The manuscript "La familia Arentsen de Noruega 1783–1983" by Arnt Pettersen Arentsen was kindly passed on to the author by former Chilean ambassador in Norway, Juan Anibal Barria; Mateo Martinic, "El proyecto de colonia noruega 'Normannia' en Magellanes", *Apartado de Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia* (2000); Paula Contreras Puebla, *De polo a polo: La historia de la primera inmigración noruega a Chile* (Santiago: Real Embajada de Noruega en Chile/ Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2004). Archivo General del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Fondo histórico, vol. 142 A, contains some material about Arentsen's proposal, including a map delineating the territory of the proposed colony.

42 There are some sporadic traces of this project in some sources including documents in the Archivo General del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Fondo Histórico, vol 289 B, concerning warnings issued in Norwegian newspapers against the Chiloé project. See for instance *Aftenposten*, April 1, 1902.

43 There is a very good and detailed presentation of this colony based almost exclusively on Norwegian sources in Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret: koloniserings-ideen som spilte fallitt* (Brandbu 1999).

of World War I. The idea was to produce fruits for export, mainly to the United States, and there were also hopes that Baracoa in time would become an important shipping entrepôt in the Caribbean. The project was extensively propagated in Norwegian newspapers, but always with the condition that this was a colonization scheme best suited for men with capital to invest. There were several reasons why it eventually failed, including the obvious lack of expertise in tropical agriculture among the colonists and the impossible competition that the fruit producers and transporters experienced vis-à-vis the United Fruit Company.

An even more fanciful colonization project took shape in 1923 when August F. Christensen, a whaling veteran from Antarctica, Chile, and Peru, formed the company La Colonia de Floreana for the colonization of the Galápagos Islands, west of Ecuador. Christensen was by then a rather successful shipowner based in Oslo, and he was the honorary consul of Ecuador in Norway. He secured an agreement with Ecuadorean authorities that gave any settler the right to two hundred acres of land, license to fish and hunt, tax exemption for ten years, and also the right to remain Norwegian citizen. Spurred on by very optimistic views on the possibilities of whaling, agriculture, and – of course – international shipping based on the Galápagos Islands, several expeditions sailed from Norway to Galápagos with immigrants, in total probably around two hundred over the next ten years. Most of them returned to Norway or settled elsewhere when conditions did not meet expectations. But several families remained, a factory of canned seafood was built (although it burned in 1938), and there were descendants of Norwegians living on the islands until very recently.⁴⁴

The Climax of the 1920s

Part of the reason why the Galápagos project attracted a relatively high number of migrants had to do with timing. Precisely in the 1920s, the interest for Latin American destinations were higher than ever, despite the cautious and even negative attitude of the Norwegian government and the most influential and wealthy shipping magnates. After 1921, unemployment levels reached new heights in Norway and stricter US immigrant quotas made it more difficult for Norwegian migrants to reach their favored destination. At the same time, at least some Norwegians in Latin America prospered. And by the 1920s there

44 Stein Hoff, *Drømmen om Galapagos: en ukjent norsk utvandrerhistorie* (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1985).

existed networks of Norwegians in many parts of Latin America, enabling information about work and other opportunities to be dispersed more effectively and thereby lowering the transaction costs of migration, as Faist's model predicts.

The story of Ole Viborg Høiby and Ottar Enger, as discussed by María Bjerg in this volume, is more typical of the hundreds of Norwegians who crossed the South Atlantic in the 1920s and 1930s than the members of the various Galápagos expeditions. Although the information they had about Latin American societies and working opportunities was limited and distorted, they at least had names of relatives or acquaintances they could contact in Latin America. They may have been adventurous, but first and foremost they sought salaried jobs wherever they could be found. In the diaries, letters, and travelogues many of them wrote, they often attempted to represent themselves as pioneering, adventurous spirits who sought exotic experiences, but when read with care, their experiences were not that different from most migrants: they went primarily for economic motives, did their best to capitalize on education and skills, and sought support from fellow Norwegians wherever they could be found.⁴⁵

Despite the marked increase in the 1920s, the stream of Norwegian migrants to Latin America was interrupted after 1930. Contrary to what Faist's model predicts, then, the established networks themselves were not sufficient to uphold a continued incremental rise of Norwegians to Latin America. The explanation for this, I think, lies in precisely in what kind of stories the migrants told to potential migrants at home. And these stories actually reflected perceived realities. In most cases, and at least in economic terms, the crossing was worth neither the trouble nor the risks involved. When Latin American economies also went into recession after 1929, the opportunities for migrants became even more limited than before.

It is impossible in one chapter to comprehensively cover all the different strands of the Norwegian migration experience in Latin America between 1820 and 1940, even if this migratory stream was more limited than most. There are many issues that need to be researched more thoroughly, and some of them

45 Some of the most telling published travelogues from this period include Per Rostad, *Den lange veien* (Solør: Solørforl., 1994); Oddmund Ljone, *Grønt lys for eventyret* (Bergen: Eide, 1954); Kaare Gulbrandsen, *Gull og grønne skoger* (Bergen: Eide, 1956); Liv Olsson, *Piken fra Argentinas pampas: en fortelling fra virkeligheten* (Oslo: Salvata, 1948); Erling Næss, *Glade argentinadager* (Bergen: Beyer, 1943). In addition there are numerous copies of private letters, diaries, and memoirs that have been kindly offered to the author by descendants and relatives of Norwegian migrants in Latin America.

are covered in the subsequent chapters of this book. Here, certain regions and themes have been given priority to the detriment of others. More research is needed, particularly on countries such as Uruguay and Cuba, where there were many Norwegians, and the stories of women, missionaries, and whalers are also obvious lacunae. There should also be the possibility of doing better quantitative work on return migration, using HULA and the Norwegian digitized censuses. And there is obviously a lot of unexplored material both in Latin American and Norwegian archives that may throw additional light on the topic. Hopefully, future students and scholars will be able to complement and criticize the present attempt.