

**MIGRATION
ACROSS FRONTIERS:
MEXICO AND
THE UNITED STATES**

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INTERNAL MIGRATION TO MEXICO CITY AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE CITY'S LABOR MARKET

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INTRODUCTION

Mexico City is one of the fastest-growing large cities of the world, and a large part of this growth has been the result of internal migration. Knowledge of the causes of this process and the analysis of internal migration in regard to urban population growth and to changes of the urban occupational structure are basic for understanding some of the crucial aspects of development in Mexico.

The research we have conducted for several years was oriented at gaining a better understanding of the process of internal migration and the impact it had on the capital's population and labor force in the context of economic and demographic concentration in the country. The research project² has been based primarily on various surveys carried out at the beginning of the 1970's. Since the surveys included "life-histories" we could use cohort analysis (in addition to secondary sources of various kinds) to reconstruct historically the migration process for the period 1930-1970, during which economic development gained speed and became institutionalized.

The objective of this paper is to present some of the main results and conclusions derived from our previous analyses of internal migration and labor force in Mexico City.³

In the first part of the paper we shall place migration to Mexico City in the context of population redistribution trends in Mexico during the twentieth century and, more concretely, in the context of other important internal migration currents of the last decades. Next, we shall evaluate the relative importance of migration in the growth of the capital city since 1930. A summary analysis will then be made of the changing regional differentials in the volume of migrants during recent years.

Secondly, the paper will focus on how the process of economic development has affected the sectoral transformation of the labor force in Mexico City. This analysis provides the context for understanding labor force allocation over time and the impact that internal migration has had on the forging of industrial workers and on the tertiarization process.

Finally, the social mobility of migrants and natives will be compared, their occupational and income inequalities will be discussed, and their educational characteristics will be examined. In each case, the comparisons will emphasize the context of labor market segmentation and the growth of the tertiary sector.

IMPORTANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION TO MEXICO CITY

Progressive concentration of population in the Metropolitan region

Analysis of the regional distribution of the Mexican population during the first seventy years of the twentieth century shows that it has increasingly concentrated in the small Metropolitan region dominated by Mexico City (see Figures 1 and 2).

This region almost doubled its share (from 12 to 23.4 per cent) of the population in the 1900-1970 period. In the same period, only two other regions showed significant but much smaller increases in their share of population: the Northwest, which increased its share from 5.3 to 8 per cent; and the Northeast, which increased its share from 4 to 6.5 per cent (see Table 1). This increasing concentration of the population in the Metropolitan region runs parallel to important losses in the population shares of the surrounding regions (West, Center, South). Both trends gained speed after the 1930's, when the great surge towards industrialization started to take place.

Most of these changes in the distribution of the Mexican population have been the result of internal migrations, which have become increasingly directed into the Metropolitan Region.⁴ Life-time migration data show that by 1950 the States comprising the Metropolitan Region had a net positive migration balance more than four times greater than that of those States comprising the Northeast, which was second in importance as an attraction region at that time. During the 1950-1960 decade the Metropolitan Region maintained its preeminence in terms of net immigration, and it greatly increased this importance during the 1960-1970 decade, when its net balance was almost eight times greater than that of the Northeast, still the second region in order of importance in the attraction of migrants.⁵

These trends become even clearer when recent migration currents are analyzed (see Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4). By comparing the most important interregional migration currents⁶ in two periods — 1955-1959 and 1959-1970 — we see that all important migration currents directed into the Metropolitan Region have increased, while many of those directed into other regions have diminished. Thus, the relative attraction exerted by the Metropolitan Region has been increasing due both to a growing tendency for it to receive greater proportions of migrants from most outmigration regions and to a diminishing capacity of other growth poles to attract migrants.

Importance of migration in the population growth of Mexico City

The population growth of Mexico City⁷ in the last decades has been impressive (see Table 3 and Figure 5). From a population of less than half a million during the first decades of this century, it grew to around one million in 1930, close to three million in 1950, eight and-a-half million in 1970, and more than thirteen million presently.⁸

This population growth has been the result of three processes: a) the reproduction of its own inhabitants (births minus deaths or "natural" growth); b) positive migratory balances (immigration minus outmigration or "social" growth); and c) the absorption of other localities due to the physical expansion of the city ("physical" growth or growth by "incorporation").

Measurement of the exact weight of these three components on the population growth of Mexico City for the first four decades of the century is not available. However, we have computed the relative weight of each of them for the last three decades⁹ (see Table 3). As can be observed, the migration component was the

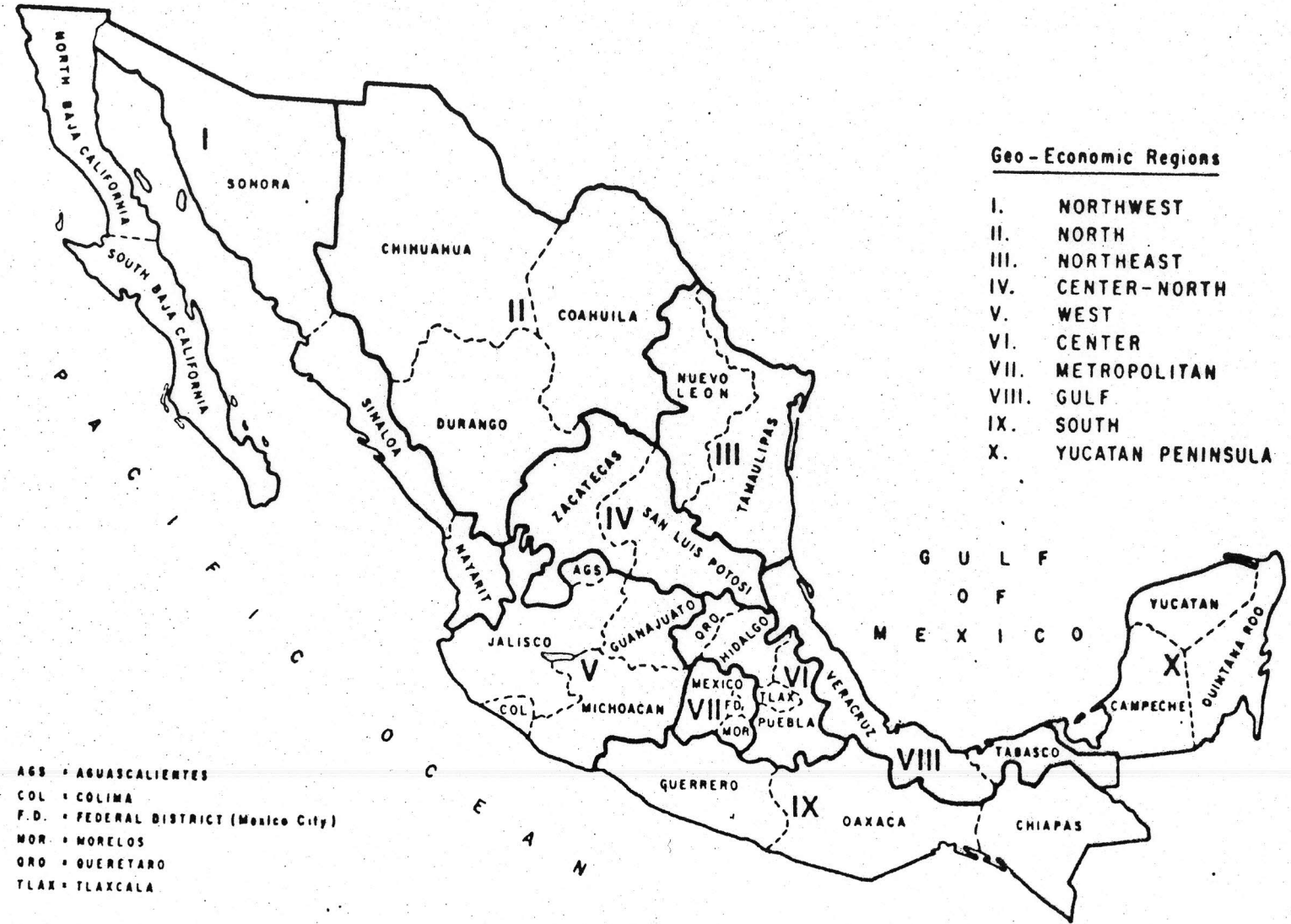


Figure 1
Mexico: Division by Political Entities and main Geo-Economic Regions

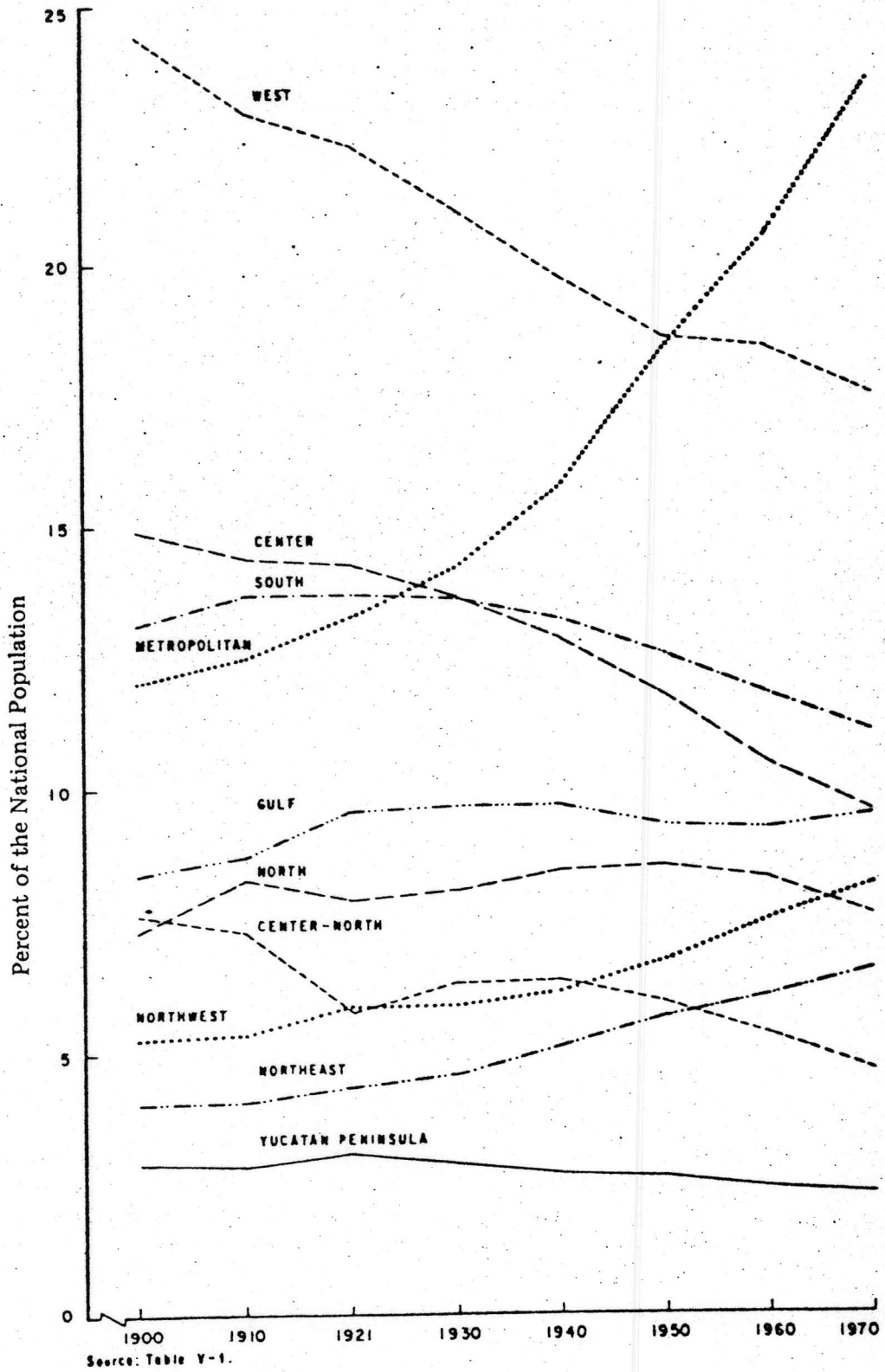


Figure 2
Regional Re-distribution of the Mexican Population, 1900-1970

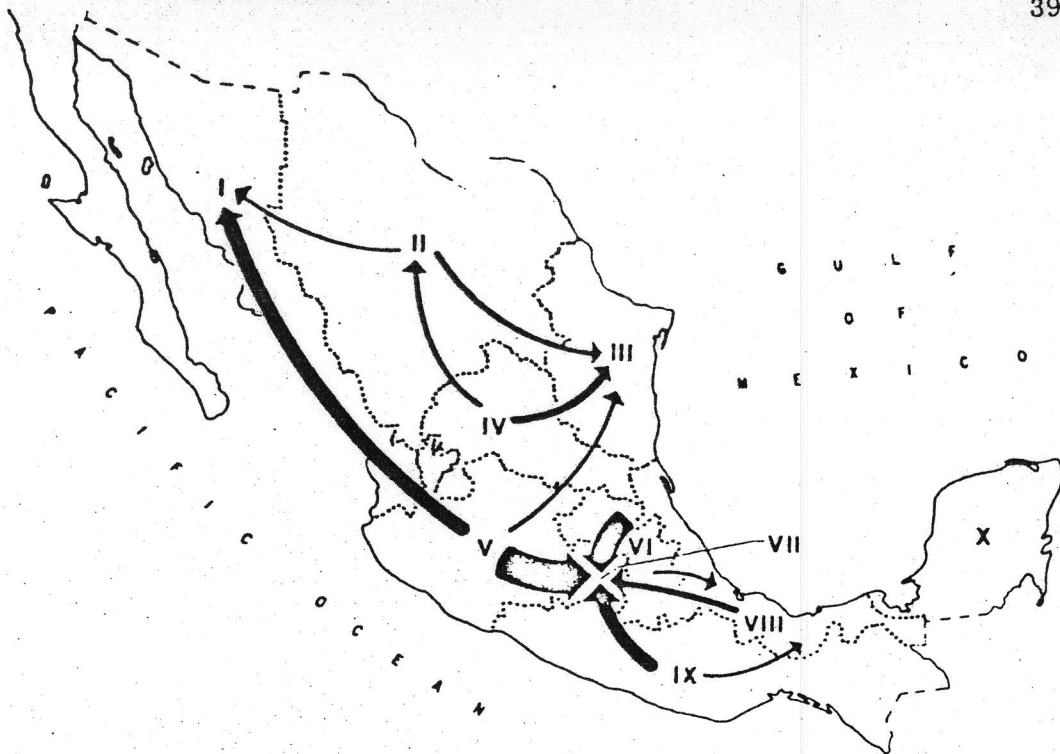


Figure 3
Mexico: Main Inter-regional Migration Currents, 1955-1959

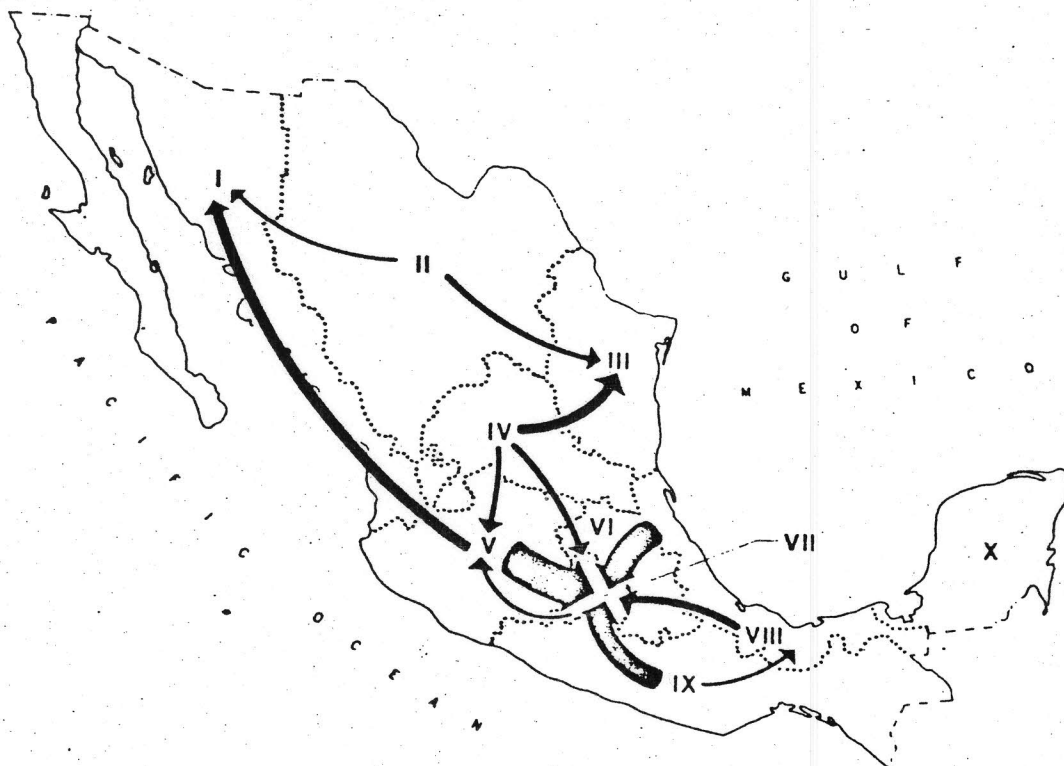
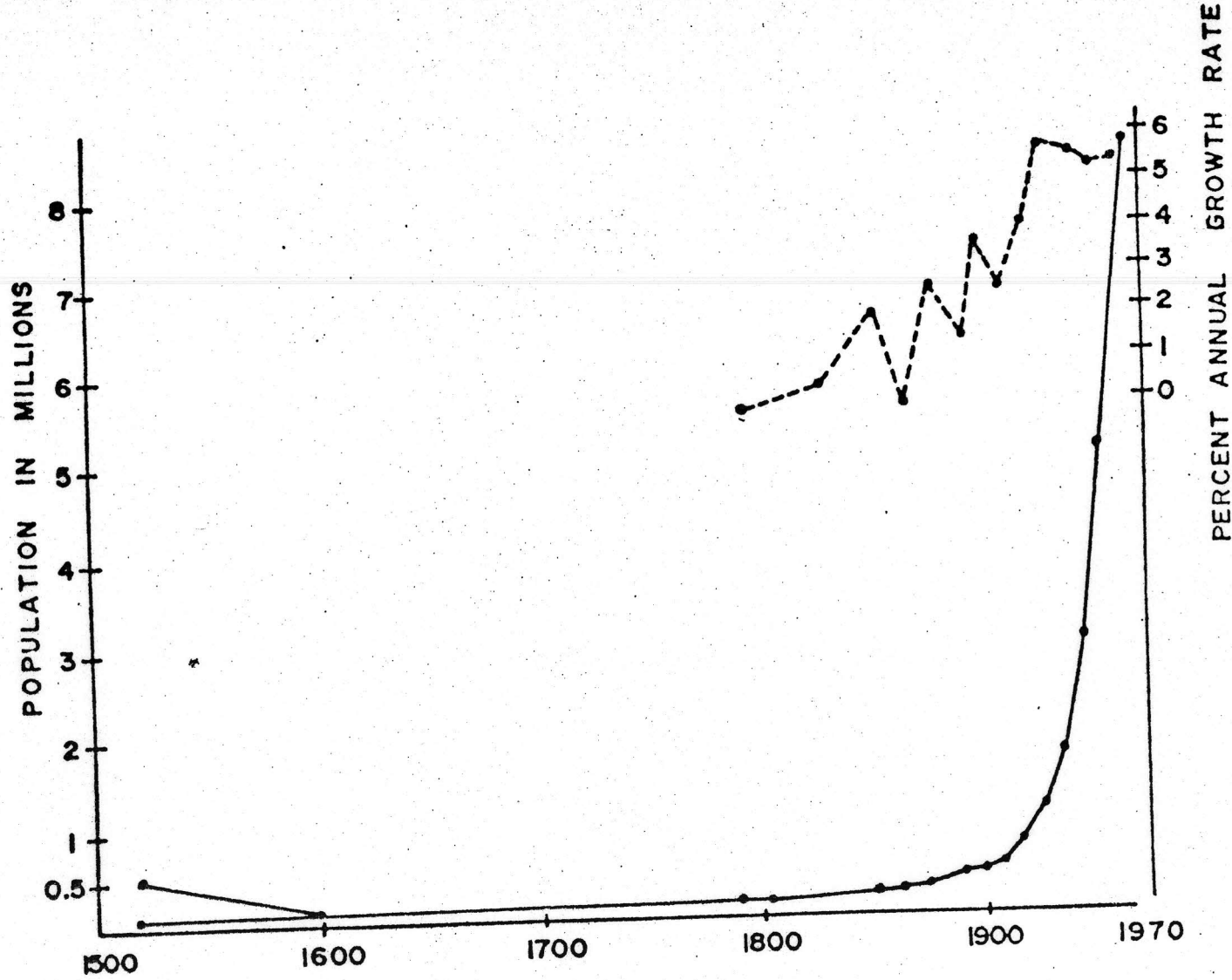


Figure 4
Mexico: Main Inter-regional Migration Currents, 1959-1970



SOURCE : BATAILLON AND RIVIERE D'ARC, 1973 : 15

Figure 5
Mexico City's Population Growth, 1500-1970

Table 1
Distribution of the Mexican Population by
Geo-Economic Regions 1900-1970
(In Percentages)

Regions	1900	1910	1921	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
I. Northwest	5.25	5.35	5.86	5.88	6.12	6.70	7.48	8.07
II. North	7.31	8.26	7.90	8.05	8.43	8.52	8.29	7.57
III. Northeast	4.02	4.06	4.35	4.60	5.09	5.66	6.02	6.51
IV. Center-North	7.63	7.29	5.76	6.27	6.33	5.90	5.34	4.62
Subtotal: northern	24.21	24.96	23.87	24.80	25.97	26.78	27.13	26.77
V. West	24.39	22.93	22.28	21.06	19.79	18.62	18.44	17.51
VI. Center	14.93	14.39	14.27	13.70	12.91	11.82	10.51	8.52
VII. Metropolitan	12.03	12.46	13.21	14.22	15.70	18.28	20.49	23.41
VIII. Gulf	8.38	8.71	9.56	9.68	9.69	9.32	9.23	9.48
Subtotal: central	59.73	58.49	59.32	58.66	58.09	58.04	58.67	59.92
IX. South	13.14	13.68	13.70	13.64	13.26	12.60	11.82	11.04
X. Yucatán penins.	2.92	2.87	3.11	2.90	2.68	2.58	2.38	2.27
Subtotal: southern	16.06	16.55	16.81	16.54	15.94	15.18	14.20	13.31
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Computed from Unikel, 1976: tables II-A1, II-A2, II-A3, II-A4.

Table 2
Main Inter-regional Migration Currents,
1955-1959 and 1959-1970.

Regions of origin and of destination				Percent of total migrants:	
				1955-1959	1959-1970
II	to	I	2.08	2.32	
V	to	I	6.20	5.00	
IV	to	II	2.45	*	
II	to	III	3.29	2.81	
IV	to	III	4.09	4.32	
V	to	III	1.97 ^a	*	
IV	to	V	*	2.62	
VII	to	V	*	2.36	
IV	to	VII	*	2.93	
V	to	VII	15.18	16.05	
VI	to	VII	10.99	12.31	
VIII	to	VII	3.56	3.99	
IX	to	VII	6.17	9.59	
VI	to	VIII	2.26	*	
IX	to	VIII	2.32	2.12	
Total			60.56	66.42	

Source: C. Stern, 1977: 109.

a We have rounded up this figure to two per cent.

* Less than two per cent of the total number of migrants.

Table 3
Relative Weight of the Natural, Social and Physical Components
in the Population Growth of the Mexico City Metropolitan Area,
1940-1970
(In thousands of inhabitants and percentages)

Components of growth	1940-1950		1950-1960		1960-1970	
	Absolute	Percentage	Absolute	Percentage	Absolute	Percentage
"Natural"	301.8	23.1	1,015.5	46.7	1,762.5	47.8
"Social"	959.8	73.3	957.5	44.1	1,793.1	46.1
"Physical"	47.3	3.6	199.0	9.2	224.4	6.1

Source: Computed from data presented by Unikel, 1971.

most important factor during the 1940-1950 decade, while natural population growth assumed the first place in the following two decades. In spite of the great size the capital city had acquired by 1960 (close to five million inhabitants), the migration component still accounted for almost 50 per cent of its growth in population during the following decade.

Furthermore, these estimates reflect only the direct contribution of immigrants to the overall population growth of Mexico City, although immigrants also contribute indirectly to this growth through their offspring. For the 1960-1970 period it was estimated (Goldani, 1977) that 52 per cent of the natural growth of the Mexico City Metropolitan Area was due to the offspring of previous immigrants, and that the combined direct and indirect contribution of immigrants to population growth during the decade had been 69.4 per cent.

There is no doubt, then, of the great impact that immigration has had on the population growth of the nation's capital, not only in the past (as thought by many), but even in our own days. The net result of this continuing process is that around 35 per cent of its 1970 population, and more than 50 per cent of its adult (20 plus years old) population, were not born in the city (Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern, 1971).

The changing communal and regional origins of migrants

A diachronic analysis of the migrants living in Mexico City in 1970 shows that there have been important temporal changes in the origins of migrants by size of community of birth and by level of development of the region of birth.¹⁰

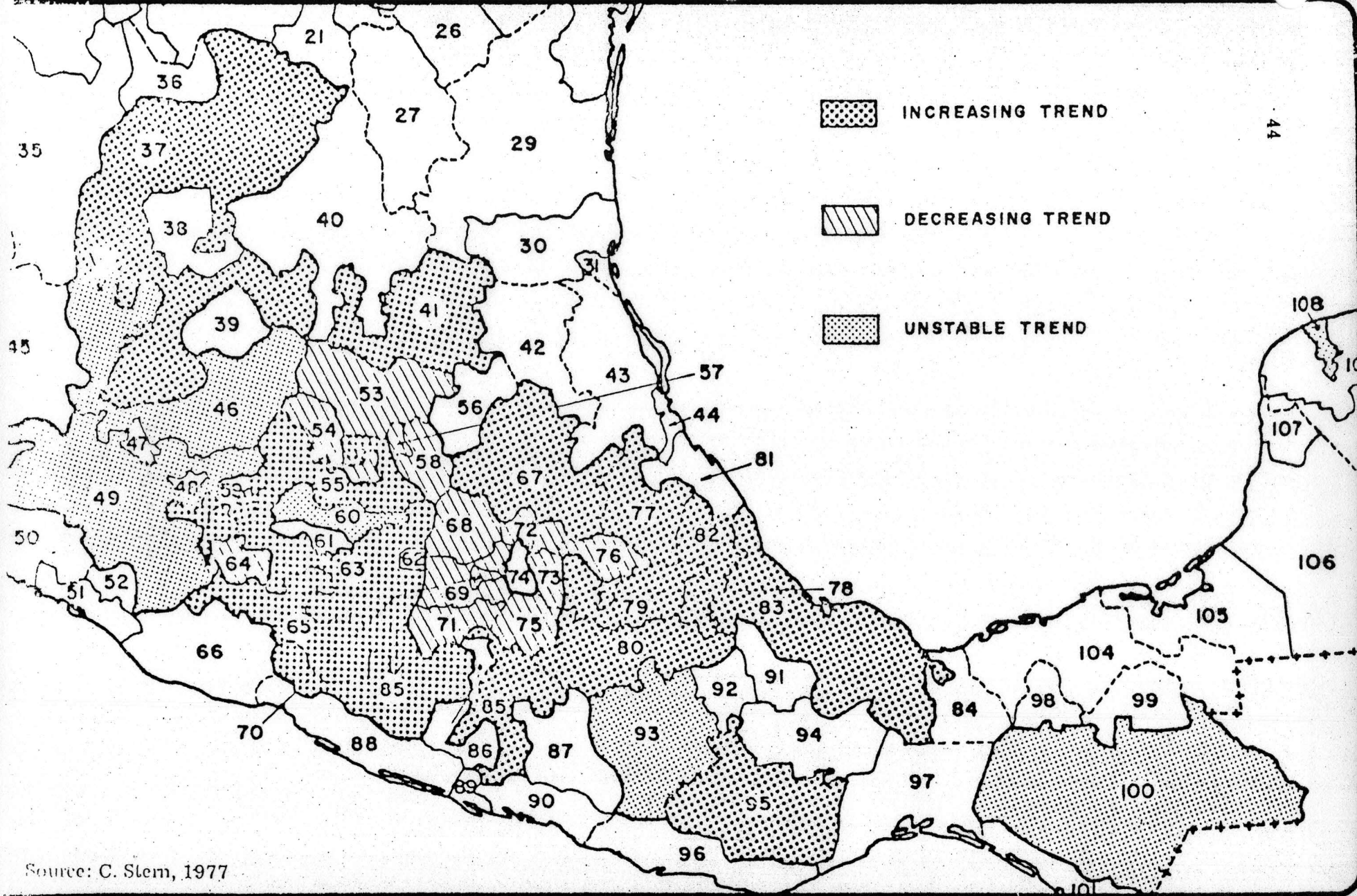
If migrants are divided by their period of arrival to Mexico City, we see that they tend to come increasingly from rural communities and from deprived regions (see Tables 8-4 and 8-5 in Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern, 1977:106-107). Since size of community of birth and level of development of the region of birth are related to educational levels (see Stern, 1974b), these trends have important consequences in terms of the capacity of migrants to compete for jobs and to rise in the social ladder once in the city.

From another point of view, though most migrants were born in regions located at relatively short distances from Mexico City, and though the absolute importance of short-distance migration to the Capital has not diminished significantly over the last decades, the relative importance of regions located at intermediate distances as sources of migrants to the Capital is increasing rapidly, as can be seen in Figure 6 (in which Mexico City corresponds to region No. 74).

Most of the regions showing increasing trends as sources of migrants to the Capital are predominantly agricultural (both subsistence and commercial), while most of those showing decreasing trends are either formed by cities or have an important urban structure and diversified economic activities (see Stern, 1975).

In interpretative terms, from these trends one can derive a set of preliminary hypotheses about the process of migration to Mexico City:

The demand for labor generated by national industrial development in recent decades, and concentrated in Mexico City, has generated "massive" migratory processes in which one can distinguish at least two phases according to their regional effects. In a *first phase*, the required labor force is recruited largely from two sources: 1) cities relatively close to and well connected with the capital (Toluca, Querétaro, Puebla, Guadalajara), in which the process of industrialization was not initiated simultaneously with that of the capital; and 2) zones of subsistence agriculture located near the capital and which, simultaneously with its urban-industrial development, suffer effects of decapitalization, disintegration of their peasant economy, overpopulation in terms of the resources exploited in them,



Source: C. Stem, 1977

Figure 6
Relative Migration trends toward Mexico City by regions of birth

etc. Outmigration from these zones to the capital was intense during this phase due to their high population densities, the ease of communication, and the lack of alternative destination points in the vicinity (aside from the intense demand for unqualified labor during the first phases of industrialization of the capital).

In a *second phase*, when most of the surplus population of nearby areas had been absorbed, other phenomena appear which in part are superimposed on the first (outmigration from near-by areas does not in any sense disappear), and which in part modify them. On the one hand, other cities get converted into "development poles" and regions of attraction. In the case of Mexico, these cities coincide with those which during the first phase were suffering the consequences of industrial concentration in the capital (with the exception of Monterrey and a few other cities along the northern border which lie outside of the recruitment area of migrants to Mexico City). The importance of these cities as sources of migration to the capital thus diminishes significantly. On the other hand, since the demand for both professional and unskilled labor in the capital continues (because of its increasing concentration of productive services), and because of the deterioration of the living conditions of the massive peasant sector, the sources for the recruitment of migrants are diversified and extended. This expansion first encompassed rural areas somewhat farther away from the capital (and relatively far from other cities which experienced a dynamic process of development during this phase) and, secondly, other intermediate size cities not converted into development poles.

Toward an explanatory model of regional differentials in migrant volume to Mexico City

Our descriptions and interpretation of the changing regional origins of migrants to Mexico City led us to attempt greater formalization and empirical testing of some of our insights, with the following questions in mind:

- a) what factors account for the differences in the volume of migrants coming from the various regions to Mexico City?
- b) do the same factors operate during various periods or are there significant differences in the set of factors operating at different periods?
- c) are migrations of rural origin explained by the same set of factors as those of urban origin?

To answer these questions we developed a partial explanatory model of regional differentials in volumes of migrants to Mexico City (see Stern, 1977, Ch. 8 and Stern and Cortés, forthcoming 1978).

Analytically, one may suppose that three main factors are involved:

- a) the differential "attraction" exerted by Mexico City on regions of various types and between different periods
- b) the overall volume of outmigration from the regions themselves
- c) the proportion of that outmigration which is directed towards Mexico City and not to other destinations.

We do not explicitly consider the first type of factors for the present study, although we included several kinds of the other two types of factors in our model. Amongst those related to the volumes of outmigration from the regions themselves, which we call "*regional*" factors, three kinds were included: those related to economic, demographic, and social structures. Amongst those factors related to the proportion of outmigration directed to Mexico City, which we call "*relational*" factors, we distinguished between those with a *direct* influence on the intensity of relationships — and migration — between any two regions, (e.g., distance, communications, and transportation facilities) and those with an *indirect* influence on the intensity of these relationships (e.g., the existence or non-existence of al-

ternative destination points for potential outmigrants from the regions).

The statistical technique used for the analysis was multiple regression. A graphic representation of the model and its variables can be seen in Figure 7. Given the limitations of space we can only illustrate some of our basic results (see Tables 4 to 6), and will therefore limit ourselves to a general discussion and interpretation.

Our empirical analysis of the determinants of regional migration differentials into Mexico City corroborates our general hypothesis that the explanatory factors and mechanisms involved would show important variations through time, and that different schemes were needed to explain rural and urban migration differentials.

In general terms, analysis shows that the more recent the migrant-cohort, the more important are the regional factors — and the less important the relational ones — in determining regional migration differentials into Mexico City. Analysis for the total number of migrants (see Table 4) shows that the two prevalent factors explaining regional migration differentials for the three migrant cohorts considered are (1) the volume of regional population and (2) the distance separating the regions from Mexico City. The behavior of the impact of these factors over time, however, is opposite: the importance of regional population volume tends to increase with more recent migrant cohorts, while the distance factor tends to decrease.

We infer from these results that distance will increasingly cease to operate as an obstacle for migrants to Mexico City and that, therefore, more migrants from regions located at greater distances will tend to come to the capital in the future, especially from regions with relatively large populations. However, there is an intervening factor to be taken into account, i.e., the alternative opportunities existing for prospective outmigrants to go to other destination areas instead of Mexico City. As shown by our empirical results, the effect of these alternative opportunities has increased somewhat between our first migrant-cohort and the more recent one (without offsetting, however, the increasing weight of the regional population volumes). Since alternative destination opportunities can be considered as a factor which can be directly affected by policy measures (i.e., decisions as to the location of public investments), we would underline its potential importance for diminishing the volume of migrants to Mexico City in the near future.

Our results also show, however, that alternative opportunities have apparently only affected *urban* migration differentials to Mexico City, and that prospective rural outmigrants have been little affected (see Tables 5 and 6). The reason probably lies in the amount and kind of jobs available in alternative destination areas. Our hypothesis would be that, up to now, only very large and economically diversified cities have been able to attract a large volume of rural migrants, while smaller and more specified cities are increasingly attracting urban migrants but have been incapable of attracting a large number of rural migrants.¹¹

From another point of view, our results show that significant changes can occur between different periods in the set of factors determining migration differentials. Thus, the set of explanatory factors for migration differentials during the 1935-1954 period, especially in the case of rural migrants, is totally different from those for other migrant cohorts. For the period mentioned (see Tables 5 and 6) none of the relational factors have any effect on migration differentials (either for rural or urban migrants), and neither the volume of regional population nor land pressure have any effect on the volume of rural migrants coming to Mexico City.

Our hypothesis is that the drastic changes in social and economic policy which took place during the Cárdenas regime (1934-1940) had lasting effects on migration movements in the country. The agrarian reforms implemented in this period probably had the immediate effect of diminishing rural outmigration from some regions, while accelerating emigration from others.¹² This differential regional effect of agrarian reform would explain why regions with a similar population but with

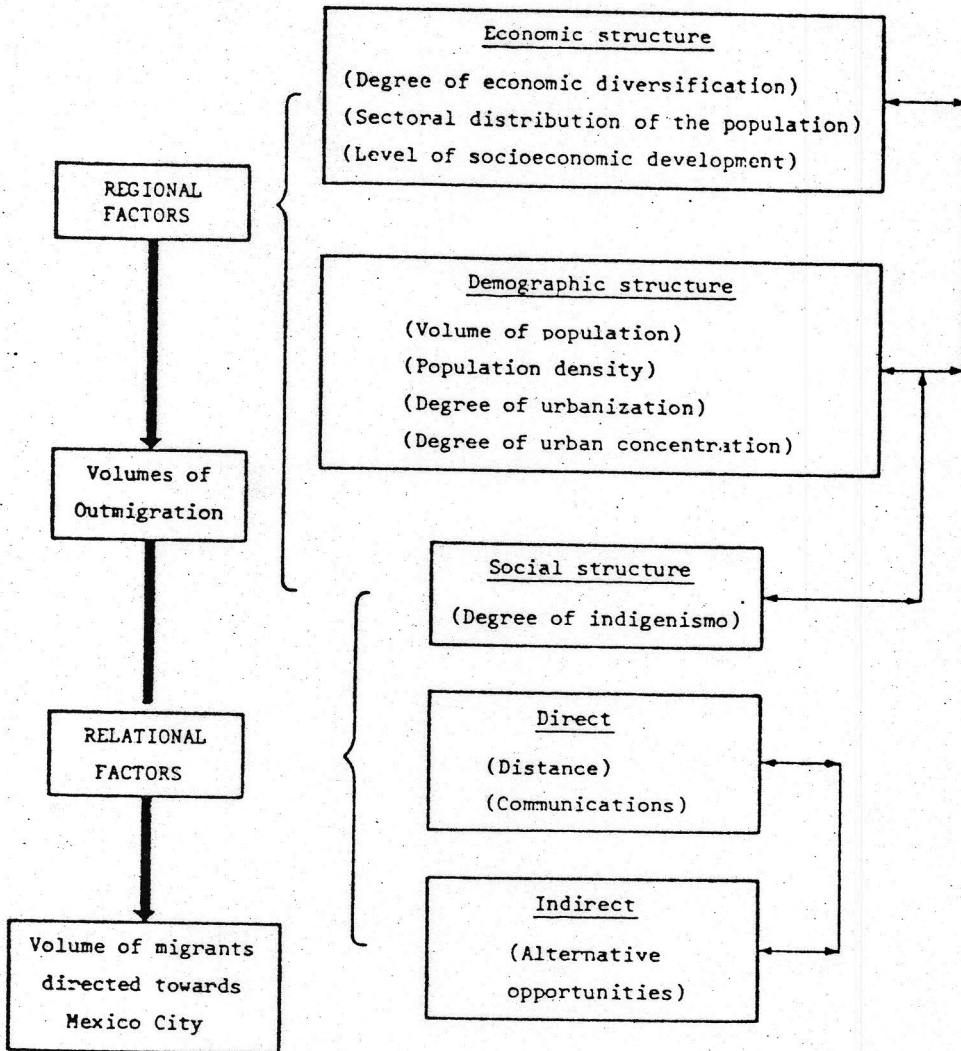


Figure 7
Interactive Model of the Determinants of Regional
Differentials in the Volume of Migrants
Directed to Mexico City

Table 4
Determinants of Regional Migration Differentials
into Mexico City, by Cohorts of Arrival
Total Migrants
(Beta coefficients)

Factors ^a	Cohort of Arrival		
	Before 1935	1935-1954	1955-1970
Regional:			
Population	.565*	.783*	.806*
Land pressure	.019	-.169	-.177
Economic diversification	.107	- c	-.045
Indigenismo	.220*	-.087	-.033
Urban concentration	.383	.654*	- c
Relational:			
Distance	.524*b	-.461*	-.412*
Communications	.316*	.334*	- d
Alternative opportunities	-.314*	-.234	-.363*
R ²	.716	.640	.616

Source: Stern, 1977:203.

* Significant at the .10 level.

a See appendix E in Stern, 1977 for a description of the indicators used.

b The sign is positive because the inverse of distance was used in this case.

c The computer eliminated this variable from the step-wise regression analysis because of its low significance level.

d Factor not considered for this cohort because all regions but one were communicated with Mexico City at this period.

different agrarian reform experiences would generate different volumes of out-migration.

On another hand, our results also show that this is the only migrant-cohort for which alternative opportunities do not constitute an explanatory factor for urban migration differentials. In our opinion, this could also be due to the social and economic process of transformation which took place during the first part of the 1935-1954 period. The nationalization of basic resources and an effort to obtain a spatially more harmonious industrial development, together with an attempt to decentralize public activities, probably diminished the pertinence of the alternative opportunities factor to explain urban migration differentials.

Once these transformations came to an end, a strategy of development based on intensive and centralized industrialization was established, during and after the regime of Presidente Miguel Alemán (1947-1952). This new strategy, which accentuated unequal regional development, created a situation where the population factor and the selective location of employment opportunities once again had important effects on rural and urban migration differentials. This implies that fundamental changes in the nation's development strategy had important modifica-

Table 5
Determinants of Regional Migration Differentials
into Mexico City, by Cohorts of Arrival
Rural Migrants
(Beta coefficients)

Factors ^a	Cohort of Arrival		
	Before 1935	1935-1954	1955-1970
Regional:			
Rural population	.401*	-.266	.631*
Land pressure	.265*	.043	.224
Economic diversification	.076	1.205* ^c	-.221
Indigenismo	.195*	.090	-.210*
Urban concentration	.072	.236	-.090
Relational:			
Distance	.521* ^b	- .d	-.123
Communications	.191	.193	- .e
Alternative opportunities	-.073	.070	-.058
R ²	.748	.749	.813

Source: Stern, 1977:213.

* Significant at the .10 level.

a See Appendix E in Stern, 1977 for a description of the indicators used.

b The sign is positive because the inverse of distance was used in this case.

c The sign is positive because an inverse indicator of degree of economic diversification was used for this cohort.

d The computer eliminated this variable from the step-wise regression analysis because of its low significance level.

e Factor not considered for this cohort because all regions but one were in communication with Mexico City at this period.

tions not only in the volume and direction of migration movements, but also in the factors explaining them.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEXICO CITY LABOR MARKET

Economic Concentration, Changes in Employment, and Labor Force Absorption in Mexico City: 1930-1970

One aspect of prime importance in the analysis of the inter-relationship between rural-urban migration and labor absorption is to establish how the demographic and economic transformation occurring in Mexico and Mexico City have shaped both the characteristics of labor demand and supply.

Intensive internal migrations and high rates of natural increase have contributed to a large population concentration in the capital city and these have affected the labor supply. On the other hand, the distinctive features of Mexico City's productive

Table 6
Determinants of Regional Migration Differentials
into Mexico City, by Cohorts of Arrival
Urban Migrants
(Beta coefficients)

Factors ^a	Cohort of Arrival		
	Before 1935	1935-1954	1955-1970
Regional:			
Population	.816*	.985*	.730*
Land Pressure	-.241*	-.361*	-.212
Economic Diversification	-.330	.035	-.318
Indigenismo	.139	- b	.029
Urban concentration	.264	.225*	.442*
Relational:			
Distance	.204*	.145	.028
Communications	.199*	.099	- c
Alternative opportunities	-.216*	-.036	-.276*
R ²	.822	.835	.730

Source: Stern, 1977:213.

* Significant at the .10 level.

a See appendix E in Stern, 1977 for a description of the indicators used.

b The computer eliminated this variable from the step-wise regression analysis because of its low significance level.

c Factor not considered for this cohort, since all regions but one were in communication with Mexico City.

structure have had an impact on the size and the characteristics of labor demand over time. While the industrialization and urbanization processes of the whole country were proceeding, Mexico City's economic structure became more complex and specialized. Its sectoral structure has reflected these changes. We have taken into account those changes by examining the growth of the labor force by industry sectors within the framework of the changes in the national economic structure.

Mexican industrial development in its first phase, from approximately 1936 to 1955, was basically oriented to the production of non-durable consumer goods (Solís, 1970), although it also involved some development of manufactured goods and complementary services. However, the proportion of labor in the manufacturing industries increased relatively little from 1930 to 1950. In fact, producer services¹³ experienced the greatest increase in the mean annual rate of employment growth throughout the country in the same period.¹⁴

In Mexico City, unlike what occurred at the national level, manufacturing experienced important increments in its labor force from 1930 to 1950. Also, the mean annual rate of employment growth in the different branches of the tertiary sector in the same period was considerably higher in Mexico City than in the

rest of the country. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the national industrialization process was strongly linked to the manufacturing developments in Mexico City which also brought about the concentration of all branches of the tertiary sector in this urban center.¹⁵

In this way, the physiognomy of the productive system in Mexico City and its increasing influence on the national economy as a whole became more clearly defined. Since then, the capital has strengthened its position as the main industrial and service center in the nation.

Since the mid-1950's the manufacturing sector has experienced important changes in its internal structure. These changes resulted in the development of practically all of the branches of the sector, among which the capital-goods industries were the most outstanding in terms of their contribution to the industrial product (Solís 1970; Reynolds 1970). The importance of manufacturing in Mexico after 1950 is also revealed by a marked increment in labor force within this sector, even though this trend occurred simultaneously with a greater use of technology and a decrease of craftsmanship.

While the mean annual rate of growth in manufacturing employment throughout the country showed a substantial increase during the two decades after 1950 in comparison with the two previous ones, in the Federal District (D.F.) this rate *decreased*. This can be explained, partially, by the development of new urban-industrial centers in the rest of the country (Unikel 1970), which demanded a greater labor force. However, the degree of concentration of manufacturing labor in Mexico City remained virtually unaltered. After 1950, the industrial infrastructure in Mexico City continued to develop and began to spread out by means of creating large modern enterprises outside the Federal District but within the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City. Throughout the country, as well as in the capital, industrial production began to depend on a more sophisticated demand for durable consumer goods, which stimulated high rates of economic development despite serving a relatively small public.

In contrast to the previous two decades, between 1950 and 1970 the absorption of labor force in each branch of the tertiary sector was smaller in Mexico City than at the national level. It is important to note that social services was the only branch in which the rate of employment growth increased from 1950 to 1970 in this urban center. Thus, in the period, the economically active population in the tertiary sector (except for distributive services) decreased in proportion to the total labor force dedicated to these activities in the whole country.

This relative decrease in employment opportunities in Mexico City from 1950-1970 occurs throughout its whole economic system. Nevertheless, manufacturing, and particularly social and producer services, have played a significant role in the absorption of the labor force in Mexico City, while distributive and personal services have contributed less in relative terms after the early fifties.

Continuous external financing, the development of the domestic market, and the availability of cheap labor have greatly contributed to industrial development and to the growth of the modern branches of the tertiary sector in the capital. The enormous reserve of workers has not been an obstacle for capital accumulation; on the contrary, it has tended to favor it by allowing the development process to occur without any significant redistribution of income for the past twenty years. Although there have been significant increments in the Gross National Product, they have not resulted in significant changes in terms of the relative participation of the lower income strata in the fruits of development (c.g., Navarrete 1970).

Migratory currents that move into urban areas such as Mexico City have played an important historical role in relation to the increment of a cheap labor supply as well as in the creation of the so-called "middle classes" and the group of manu-

facturing workers. Actually, one of the most important findings in our study is that, for Mexico City, one cannot speak of an overtteriarization of the economy, due to the role played by manufacturing and its complementary services — producer and social — in the creation of jobs. This evidence questions the link frequently established between migration to large cities and the development of the tertiary sector, particularly in those activities involving lower income workers.

In relative terms, since the 1950's Mexico City has absorbed considerable male labor¹⁶ into unskilled occupations within the manufacturing sector, particularly in capital-goods industries, as a result of the dynamic character of these industries and the expansion of manufacturing activities in the city.

We have already mentioned the relative importance of manufacturing in creating new jobs, as well as the fact that every day more migrants come from rural areas. Some results enable us to conclude that, after 1940, male workers transferred¹⁷ from agricultural activities were incorporated at high rates into the industrial sector of the city's economic system. This trend was accentuated after 1960 (see Oliveira 1976, Table 3, p. 23).

The dynamic character of manufacturing in Mexico City and its repercussions on labor absorption were favored by the existence of a broad consumer market dominated by the high and middle income population, by the arrival of a large quantity of cheap labor, by protectionist policies, by forcing investment, etc. Since these conditions are characteristic of specific historical periods in the development of some cities, our findings cannot be generalized either to other cities in Mexico or to what might happen in Mexico City itself under other circumstances.

On the other hand, our results also show that non-transferred male labor is being incorporated into unskilled jobs at relatively stable rates within the tertiary sector, particularly in non-personal services, while transferred male labor has gradually ceased to join unskilled positions within the service sectors, particularly in personal services.

Under these circumstances, male migration has had a double impact on the occupational structure of Mexico City. At an earlier period — from 1930 to the end of the forties — transference of professional workers and technicians,¹⁸ along with the changes that took place in the capital's economic structure, contributed to an increase of workers involved in non-manual activities. After 1950, and particularly in the fifties, transferred labor joined Mexico City's economically active population at lower occupational levels in relation to earlier years. Thus, during this second period, male labor migrations contributed particularly to the creation of the industrial proletariat.

Given that non-transferred workers held non-manual jobs during the 1950's-1960's in similar proportions as in past decades (see Oliveira 1976, Table 1, p. 17), it appears that fewer non-manual jobs are now available for new workers in the city. Positions at this level tended to be filled by upwardly mobile workers already in the economically active population.

Occupational Mobility of the Male Migrant and Native Populations

Industrial growth and the expansion of complementary services have contributed to changes in Mexico City's occupational structure which are linked to a rapid upward labor mobility process. It is important to note that the amount of occupational mobility experienced by the various labor-cohorts is the result of (1) the socioeconomic changes that have taken place in Mexico City throughout its long process of development; (2) the differential characteristics of the migrant and native labor that has been incorporated to the labor market; and (3) the occupational level at which they join the economically active population.

Generally speaking, male migrants whose work careers begin in Mexico City manage to occupy positions of higher rank and enjoy more upward occupational mobility than do migrants whose first job was elsewhere. Since a person's first job influences his future possibilities for upward mobility, migrants who start working in the lower strata of the occupational structure are less likely to reach higher occupational levels, compared both to other migrants and to the native male labor force.¹⁹ Since the male labor force transferred to Mexico City has been increasingly entering the lowest occupational levels, such workers will have had less opportunities for upward mobility than earlier migrant natives in general.

Thus, it seems that the economic system prevailing in Mexico City in recent decades has restricted the absorption of the labor force, which in turn has limited the opportunities for occupational promotion of unskilled manual workers. Since in recent years the proportion of migrants from rural zones has increased, and since their origins as well as their first jobs have generally been agricultural, their lack of upward occupational mobility compared with other migrant natives is understandable.

The socioeconomic heterogeneity of migrants to Mexico City is reflected by their occupational distribution compared to that of the natives. Migrants are proportionately *better* represented than natives both in high income occupational groups and in lower-strata occupational groups (see Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 7.1, p. 92). Of course, changes in employment trends and changes in migrants' characteristics over time have created differences among migrants according to the time of their arrival in Mexico City.²⁰

The earlier migrants, and to a lesser degree those who arrived in the 1950's, have been able to achieve the highest positions within the occupational structure of Mexico City (see Muñoz, Oliveira, Stern 1971). This was possible because they became part of the urban economy when they could more easily be absorbed at higher levels, and also because twenty or more years ago proportionately more migrants came from urban communities and intermediate socioeconomic strata, and thus had experience in nonagricultural occupations. For recent migrants, labor conditions have been more adverse, partly due to the fact that many lack experience to carry out specialized urban jobs (see Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 5.5, p. 67). Recent migrants, particularly those of rural origin whose labor experience has been predominantly in agriculture, are especially affected by urban poverty. This leads us to pay more attention to the characteristics of the economic and social structure underlying differences between social groups, which have resulted from the type of industrialization that has occurred in Mexico City.

Forms of Organization of Production and Urban Poverty

As a result of transformations in Mexico City's productive structure and related changes in its occupational structure, a significant share of the male population, both migrants and native, has experienced social mobility. Nevertheless, this mobility process should not overshadow the existence of a mass of workers living in severe poverty, which results not from generalized unemployment but from a lack of employment opportunities offering better wages. The coexistence of these two phenomena — increasing mobility and poverty — is partly a consequence of the type of industrialization that has taken place, since the productive system operates within a strong structural heterogeneity (Muñoz 1975).

The heterogeneity of the economy and its repercussions on poverty can be judged in different ways. On the one hand, the enormous disparities in the income received by workers in different economic sectors (see Table 7) lead us to believe that there are acute technological differences in the economy. On the other hand,

Table 7
Distribution of the Labor Force by Earnings, Groups and Industry Sectors
Mexico City, 1970

Monthly Earnings Groups (pesos) ^a	INDUSTRY SECTOR						Total
	Transformative	Construction	Distributive	Producer	Social	Personal	
Up to 1,152	26.5	29.6	26.4	11.9	21.7	43.3	27.0
1,153-1,920	33.9	44.1	35.0	17.0	32.2	29.0	32.9
1,921-3,840	26.3	11.2	24.5	32.7	23.8	11.1	23.3
3,841 and Over	13.4	15.1	14.1	38.4	22.3	16.6	16.8
Total	100.1 (1107)	100.0 (152)	100.0 (531)	100.0 (155)	100.0 (369)	100.0 (307)	100.0 (2625)
Mean Income	2,620	2,456	2,531	4,993	3,296	2,133	2,774
Median	1,531	1,314	1,633	2,735	1,697	1,240	1,563
Coefficient of Variability	1.31	1.48	1.40	1.17	1.17	1.12	1.32
Skewness	5.0	4.8	5.6	2.6	3.3	3.1	4.5

Source: Rearranged from Muñoz 1975, Table IV-3, p. 107.

a. \$12.50 Mexican pesos was equal to one dollar in 1970.

within each economic sector and each specific branch, simple forms of organization of production coexist with more complex capitalistic forms (see Muñoz and Oliveira 1976, Table 6, p. 68). In brief, in those branches where autonomous workers are heavily represented, labor receives less benefits from development. This trend is more predominant in the distributive and personal-service branches and in the construction industry, although it also appears to a considerable extent in the manufacturing sector.²¹

Generally speaking, our analyses shows that the expansion of manufacturing and its complementary services have created employment opportunities in activities which offer the highest remuneration within Mexican society. Also, it is precisely in these sectors where the establishment of technical occupations has led to an increase in the levels of specialization. This has allowed workers in such activities to benefit from the highest earnings.

Analysis of disparities in occupational, educational, and income levels both *between* and *within* economic sectors demonstrates that the greatest disparities occur within the tertiary sector, especially between the branches of personal and producer services. This result emphasizes the heterogeneity of the tertiary sector and its role in the formation of social strata ranging from the upper and middle classes to the most underprivileged groups in society.

Nevertheless, unlike other studies, we have evidence that urban poverty is *not* necessarily linked to the growth of the tertiary sector. There are occupations in all sectors of the economy where workers receive very low incomes, and there are considerable proportions of workers who carry out these varied occupations.

Our studies (see Muñoz 1975) show that, although it is true that in all sectors of the economy small enterprises have larger proportions of lower-income workers than do larger enterprises, it is also true that in the latter the proportions of such workers can be very high. This means that the capitalist sectors have greatly benefited from the existence of an abundant cheap labor force in the market. Hence, in Mexico City's economy it is not surprising that labor with very limited qualifications is absorbed in technologically more specialized activities.

Each sector of the economy contains production units whose size is related to a specific job structure, which implies differences in the significance of occupation, education, and age in workers' remuneration.²² Except for the sectors of producer and social services, it seems that occupational level, age, and schooling have a greater impact upon income in large enterprises than in small ones. This partly reflects differences in the levels of capitalization and productivity between the large and small enterprises, as well as the formalization of their activities (see Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 13-7, p. 188).

Schooling and Social Inequality

An economy such as Mexico City's, where capitalist forms of production and a greater use of technology and specialization are becoming important as manufacturing and its complementary services develop, requires an increasingly more qualified labor force. In this sense, schooling, in a context of an abundant labor force with very limited skills in the market, becomes one of the key mechanisms that underlie inequality.

In Mexico, educational opportunities are unevenly distributed among social groups and among the various regions of the country. Under these circumstances, the educational level of the labor force is related, in part, to its geographic and community origins. We have mentioned that migrants who arrive in the capital come increasingly from rural and backward places. Such origins are reflected in the decline in the average school level of migrants in recent years (see Muñoz,

Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 8-8, p. 109). This puts them at a special disadvantage compared to urban natives in the struggle to obtain adequately paid jobs, since natives have increased their average level of education over time.²³

In addition to differences in schooling due to geographic origins, class origin is also very important in understanding changing educational disparities. After 1950, the effect of class origin upon schooling has increased, becoming more important than the effect of migratory status (see Oliveira 1975, Table III-16, p. 124). This may be a result of a national expansion in educational opportunities at elementary or primary level during the last two decades. Such an expansion meant that the people born and raised in rural areas had access to at least a few years of schooling. But after this structural improvement, the achievement of an increase in schooling depends, to a great extent, on the economic conditions of the families.

The view is widespread that migrants' poverty in urban areas is due largely to their low levels of education compared to that of the total population. Furthermore, it is believed that additional formal schooling can reduce social inequalities, since more education often leads to better paying jobs. Thus, individual poverty may be transitory for a certain share of the population due to the educational opportunities associated with increased mobility. Nevertheless, poverty seems to be a permanent part of the structural process in Mexico City, because it depends on trends in the national development process as well as on the rate of creation of new jobs, the heterogeneity of the economy, the volume of labor available in the city, and wage levels. Therefore, the importance of education in determining the remuneration of the labor force depends on the nature of the entire country's economy.

An ample unskilled labor supply in the market makes education a scarce good which acts as a filter that emphasizes inequality. In our research, we found that the university educated male labor force, in every sector of the economy, obtains a disproportionately higher income compared to the rest of the active population (see Muñoz, 1975, Table IV-6, p. 226; see also Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 13-7, p. 188). On the other hand, the decrease in employment opportunities, particularly in non-manual occupations, and the existence of a great mass of unskilled workers, have increased the phenomenon called "credentialism", i.e., the requirement of school certificates in order to obtain a job. With a reduction in employment at higher income levels and because people who have achieved a certain degree of education are forced into positions of lesser rank, the necessary structural conditions for the existence of credentialism appear, and the possibilities of the great mass of workers benefitting from the development are diminished.

Evidence was also obtained in terms that the credentialism phenomenon is not exclusive to any particular sector of the economy;²⁴ at least it does not appear to be greater in the manufacturing sector than in the modern service sectors. Together with the relative reduction in labor demand, the increased complexity and bureaucratization of the enterprises offering social and producer services has implied an increase in the requirements for a formal education when hiring workers for these activities.

In this respect, we see how education plays an important role in male labor redistribution, particularly in the large enterprises that form part of each sector of the economy (see Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977, Table 13-7, p. 188). This suggests that the "modern" and "dynamic" enterprises of the different economic sectors are probably putting a greater emphasis on educational requirements for hiring and placing their workers. These findings have led us to propose the hypothesis that there is a double mechanism of competition in the labor force: First to enter the "modern" sector of the economy; and second, once this has been achieved, to achieve higher positions which offer greater incomes.²⁵

CONCLUSIONS: SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS FOR MIGRANTS TO MEXICO CITY

We have seen that until 1970 migration in Mexico was increasingly directed toward the Mexico City Metropolitan Region, that the population of the Mexico City Metropolitan Area was growing even faster than anticipated, that immigration was still contributing heavily to this population growth, and that recent migrants tended to come increasingly from rural communities and from underdeveloped regions. We have also seen that an apparent contraction of labor absorption by some economic sectors made it increasingly difficult for recent migrants to compete in the urban labor market. Given the nature of the Mexican economy and its role in the world's political economy, as well as the nation's demographic and social structure, we foresee no major changes in these trends in the near future.

The areas of destination for migrants might become more diversified, given the decision to decentralize some of the economic, governmental, and cultural activities presently concentrated in the nation's capital, in conjunction with the autonomous developments occurring in other urban centers. However, given the recent reductions in agricultural employment, rates of rural outmigration may increase in the near future, since Mexico City is located in the midst of densely populated rural areas and since there are few other cities in the vicinity which can compete with its attractions, it is likely that much of this increased rural outmigration will be directed to the Metropolitan Area.

Within the framework of the current productive structure and labor force, we believe that many of these workers from rural areas will face great difficulties obtaining adequately paying jobs in Mexico City. Capitalism in Mexico City will tend toward greater specialization and formal organization of labor and will require workers with better training and skills to carry out expanded economic functions. In this sense, unemployment and underemployment problems may worsen in the near future, particularly given the size of the labor force contingent already seeking employment in the capital.

Until 1970, industrial capitalism in Mexico City was able to develop without the appearance of obstacles forcing it to shift its course. However, during the 1970's reduction of investments, inflation, and the growth of the labor supply created great pressure on manufacturing which in turn reduced its capacity to continue absorbing workers. Thus, low income activities in the tertiary sector have probably developed faster than in earlier years which in turn increased *under*-employment.

In addition, some figures suggest that between 1970 and 1976 open unemployment increased while salaries continued to be depressed and prices were rising. In sum, the recent crisis of the national economy was reflected in Mexico City: poverty became more severe and exploitation of the labor force — both native and migrant — became more intense.

NOTES

- 1 This paper constitutes a summary report of some of the most important findings of the research project on "Internal Migration, Occupational Structure and Social Mobility in the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City", sponsored by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and El Colegio de México (COLMEX). The three authors have been the principal investigators in this project throughout the last nine years. Partial results of the project have appeared in a number of articles, theses, and dissertations. A compilation of some of the most important articles

can be found in the book *Migración y desigualdad social en la ciudad de México*, compiled by the authors and published in 1977 by UNAM and COLMEX.

The first part of this paper, entitled "Patterns of Migration to Mexico City" was written by Claudio Stern and is a product of his 1977 Ph.D. dissertation entitled "The Growth of Mexico City: Varying Sources of its Migrant Inflow, 1900-1970", Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. The second part of the paper, entitled "Main Characteristics of the Labor Market in Mexico City", was written by Humberto Muñoz and Orlandina de Oliveira and is also a product of their respective 1975 Ph.D. dissertations at University of Texas at Austin: "Occupational and Earnings Inequalities in Mexico City: A Sectoral Analysis of the Labor Force", and "Industrialization, Migration and Entry Labor Force Changes in Mexico City, 1930-1970".

The authors' names in this and other publications derived from the project are listed in alphabetical order and mention of all of them is requested in quotations and citations.

- 2 This project involved two stages. The first stage consisted of a representative sample survey of households, drawn by using a two-stage stratified sample procedure. First, the Metropolitan area was divided into 88 geographical strata according to a general index of socioeconomic level. A proportional number of blocks was selected from each stratum totaling about 500 blocks in all. Next, a list of the households in the 500 blocks was made through fieldwork. Finally, by randomly selecting five households per block, a total of 2,500 households was chosen. The purpose of this survey was to gather basic demographic and socioeconomic information, and to obtain a sampling frame for the project's second stage, which involved a detailed survey of adult males. This second sample was drawn from data obtained in the first survey through a stratified random sampling procedure. The population was stratified in 18 cells, according to three age groups, three occupational strata, and two migratory categories. A fixed number of individuals per cell was drawn randomly. The total number of interviews carried out was 1,105 males, aged 16 to 65 years old. The second stage questionnaire included items on: economic activity by occupation and industry; migration; stratification variables; and occupational changes. It also included a life-history covering migration, education, family formation, and occupation. Some analyses were based on information derived from the life-histories. For a detailed presentation of the methodology of the study, see Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern 1977.
- 3 See footnote 1.
- 4 As can be seen in Figure 1, we defined the Metropolitan Region as formed by the Federal District and the States of Mexico and Morelos. The basic reason for the definition, for the purpose of analyzing interregional currents, is that we assume that most migration movements into the states of Mexico and Morelos (especially in the last two decades and probably more so in the near future) are and will continue to be a reflection of the attraction exerted by the Metropolitan area of Mexico City. In the case of the state of Mexico, most of its growth in population in the last two decades is a direct result of the physical extension

of Mexico City into some municipalities of that state. In the case of Morelos, most of its population growth is a result of migrations directed into its capital, Cuernavaca, which has increasingly been converted into a week-end resort for the mid- and high-income population of Mexico City.

- 5 For details see Stern 1977, pp. 97-102.
- 6 We have defined as "most important" migration currents those involving two per cent or more of all interregional migration movements having taken place during each period analyzed. For details, see Stern 1977, pp. 102-116.
- 7 For the purpose of this study, Mexico City is defined as its Metropolitan Area. The spatial configuration of this area is different for the various decades analyzed. In all cases, however, the area corresponds to those districts and municipalities comprising the contiguous urban area of the city. For details, see Stern 1977, "Definition of Mexico City", pp. 120-123.
- 8 The National Household Survey estimated the population of the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City to be 12,731,000 by the Summer of 1976 (see Dirección General de Estadística, 1976).
- 9 For the procedure used, see Appendix D in Stern 1977.
- 10 For this analysis, the regional scheme developed by the National Commission of Minimum Salaries was taken as a base. It consists of 111 zones, for which Stern had previously undertaken an analysis in terms of levels of socioeconomic development (see Stern 1974a). Size of community of birth was considered according to the population census nearest to the date of a migrant's birth.
- 11 Very large cities have probably a much greater need and flexibility than smaller ones in terms of their demand for unskilled employment. Rural migrants are thus more attracted to large metropolitan areas than to smaller cities. Results which partially corroborate this hypothesis were obtained in the study being undertaken in West Mexico with respect to migrations to Guadalajara City (see W. Winnie 1977).
- 12 Unfortunately, we know of no studies undertaken in Mexico directed to evaluate the regional effects of the agrarian reform in terms of population movements. Studies undertaken in Chile (see Argüello 1974) and in Cuba (see Marejon 1977) brought to our attention the possibility that these effects can be regionally differential depending on the kind of agriculture previously practiced.
- 13 It is important to note that the tertiary sector includes a great variety of economic activities linked in different ways to the manufacturing sector. In analyzing the tertiary sector as a whole we lose the possibility of detecting differential trends of employment growth within this sector; hence the need to divide the tertiary sector into different types of services. In the present study, we used a classification of services worked

out by Harley Browning and Joachim Singelman (1972). According to this classification the service sector is divided into: distributive services (commerce, transportation, and communication); producer services (banking, finance, insurance, real state, other professional services and services to enterprises); social services (education, health, public administration, etc); and personal services (domestic services, laundry, repairing services, entertainment, hotels and restaurants).

- 14 The results presented in the present paper concerning employment changes in Mexico and Mexico City were taken from an analysis of mean annual rates of growth of employment for each economic sector between 1930 and 1950 in the Federal District and in the country (see Table 9). For further details see Muñoz and Oliveira 1976, Table 2, p. 59 .
- 15 The proportion of the economically active population in the Federal District with respect to the rest of the country by economic sectors is shown in Muñoz and Oliveira 1976, Table 5, p. 65 .
- 16 It is important to keep in mind that the studies made on the incorporation of different labor force cohorts into the city's economy and of those which revolve around income differentials by economic sectors (next section) are exclusively based on the *male* population. No doubt, inclusion of the female population is needed to complete our results, since it represents 32.9 per cent of the economically active population from 21 to 60 years of age in Mexico City's metropolitan area. Thus, we must remember that some trends examined here might be modified if the female population were included.
- 17 "Transferred labor" has already worked outside the city before entering the economically active population in the capital, whereas "non-transferred" labor enters the economically active population without having worked previously outside the capital. Table 11 shows the percentages of transferred and non-transferred workers who joined unskilled activities according to the entry cohort and the first branch of activity in Mexico City. (see Oliveira 1976, Table 2, p. 20).
- 18 A study on occupational characteristics of transferred workers can be found in Oliveira 1976, Chapter V.
- 19 For an analysis on occupational mobility of migrants and natives consult, Muñoz and Oliveira 1973.
- 20 With respect to the labor market, it is possible that with time the importance of the characteristics of labor for obtaining jobs and achieving better remuneration will be stressed, particularly in those economic sectors where production techniques have become modernized through the creation of large enterprises or institutions (see Muñoz 1977a and 1977b). Thus, a greater formalization of the market has occurred and will continue to occur as occupations become specialized, which supposes a greater emphasis in schooling and labor training mechanisms. For a discussion of the factors affecting labor market operation over time, see Oliveira 1975.

- 21 These results ignore a phenomenon that has acquired considerable importance in Mexico City. There is a flow of labor, presumably working in occupations held by autonomous (self-employed) workers, that does *not* reside within the limits of the metropolitan area. It includes two types of workers: those who temporarily incorporate themselves into Mexico City's market when the intensity of agricultural tasks diminishes, and those permanently incorporated as labor "migrants" to the large metropolis.
- 22 An analysis of the socioeconomic differences of labor by economic sectors is found in Muñoz 1975, Chapter III.
- 23 See Stern 1974. This analysis includes both males and females. The average school level of male migrants has probably not diminished in absolute terms, but it has evidently diminished in comparison with that of the native population.
- 24 The school level of the workers who become incorporated into the different sectors of the Mexican economy and its changes through time are analyzed by Oliveira 1975, Chapters IV and V.
- 25 For a more detailed analysis concerning this problem, see Muñoz 1975, Chapter IV.

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RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar algunos de los resultados y conclusiones principales derivados de un proyecto sobre Migraciones Internas a la Ciudad de México en el que los autores han estado involucrados durante los últimos nueve años.

En la primera parte del trabajo se ubica el proceso migratorio a la ciudad de México en el contexto de la redistribución de la población mexicana en el siglo veinte y en el contexto de otras corrientes migratorias que han ocurrido en las últimas décadas. Enseguida, se hace una evaluación de la importancia relativa que ha tenido el componente migratorio en el crecimiento de la ciudad de México en las tres últimas décadas. Se hace después un breve análisis de los cambios en los

orígenes regionales de los migrantes y de algunos de los factores que los explican.

En su segunda parte, el trabajo se enfoca sobre la manera en que el proceso de desarrollo económico ha afectado la transformación sectorial de la fuerza de trabajo de la ciudad de México. Se hace un análisis de la incorporación de la fuerza de trabajo a los distintos sectores de actividad a través del tiempo y del impacto que han tenido las migraciones en el desarrollo del proletariado industrial y en el proceso de terciarización. Se compara después a los migrantes y nativos en términos de su movilidad social y se incluye una amplia discusión sobre las desigualdades ocupacionales y de ingresos dentro y entre los diversos sectores económicos de la ciudad de México.

Se incluye al final un breve comentario sobre las perspectivas que presentan a corto plazo las migraciones a la ciudad de México y su posible impacto sobre la fuerza de trabajo capitalina.