

THE GEOGRAPHIC DISPLACEMENT OF POPULATION 1895–1910

Perspectives in the Study of Urban Systems

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The information for this lecture was obtained from the Mexican censuses of 1895, 1900, and 1910. This period in Mexican history was marked by the dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz and by accelerated economic growth.

This study of the national census concentrated on one of its subdivisions known as the *residencia*, which reports the number of persons residing in each district who were born outside that district. With this information it was hoped to observe the migratory patterns established within Mexico from 1895 to 1910. Unfortunately, the information in the census presents serious difficulties in accurately measuring these migratory trends. While it does indicate the number of migrant residents in each district, it does not offer information on the precise date of their arrival in the district. Information pertaining to the age, occupation, and literacy of the migrants is also lacking. Nevertheless, a general panorama of the geographic displacement of population throughout Mexico during this period was obtained.

The figure of one thousand was set as the minimum number of migrants necessary to measure population shifts. A list was then compiled of all the districts in the nation which had more than one thousand migrant residents, and their state of origin was noted. The statistics revealed that wherever there was an exodus of population (emigration) there was not a corresponding attraction of population (immigration), and vice versa. Four major areas of population shift within the nation were revealed: The region surrounding Mexico City, the area of Veracruz, the northern sections of the country, and the western coast.

The states bordering Mexico City provided the greatest number of migrants to the expanding commercial and industrial complexes of the federal capital, which was undoubtedly the greatest center of attraction for migrants between 1895 and 1910. The population in this region gravi-

tated toward Mexico City almost exclusively. In the other three regions, migrants were attracted to several urban centers, not to any one in particular.

The states of Puebla and Oaxaca drove out their native populations toward the tropical coastlands of Veracruz. The demands for tropical commodities and the discovery of petroleum fields stimulated the economic and demographic growth of Veracruz. Orizaba, Córdoba, and the port of Veracruz received the greatest number of migrants.

The third region of population flow covered three states along the western coast of Mexico. The increase in cultivation of export products, such as coffee and tobacco, provoked the migration in this area. The state of Jalisco supplied her native sons to the coffee plantations of Colima and to the tobacco fields of Nayarit.

The growth of mining, agriculture, and commercial livestock raising in the northern states produced great migratory movements in Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Aguascalientes, and Jalisco. There was a spectacular exodus from San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas to various urban centers in the northern-most states, such as Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and Chihuahua. Torreón and Monterrey, the two most notable centers of demographic growth in this region, were connected to the federal capital by railroads, which shortened the distance from the northern borderlands to the central region.