



**AgEcon** SEARCH  
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

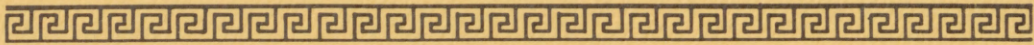
Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*



# MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE AMERICAS

**A Comparative Study of Migration  
between Colombia and Venezuela  
and between Mexico and the United States**

---

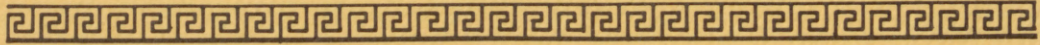
GIANNINI FOUNDATION OF  
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
LIBRARY

JAN 4 - 1985

by  
**Gabriel Murillo Castaño**

**Monograph Series, 13**

**Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies  
University of California, San Diego, Q-057  
La Jolla, California 92093**





## Research Reports and Monographs in U.S.-Mexican Studies

### Editors

WAYNE A. CORNELIUS

RICARDO ANZALDUA MONTÓYA

### Editorial Advisory Board

**Sergio Aguayo**

El Colegio de México

**Adolfo Aguilar Zinser**

Centro de Estudios Económicos y Sociales  
del Tercer Mundo

**Douglas Bennett**

Temple University

**Gustavo del Castillo**

Centro de Estudios Fronterizos  
del Norte de México

**Ina Rosenthal-Urey**

Wheaton College, Massachusetts

**Richard Fagen**

Stanford University

**E. V. K. Fitzgerald**

Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

**David D. Gregory**

Dartmouth College

**Roger D. Hansen**

The Johns Hopkins University  
School of Advanced International Studies

**Friedrich Katz**

University of Chicago

**Susan Kaufman Purcell**

Council on Foreign Relations

**Abraham F. Lowenthal**

University of Southern California

**Gabriel Murillo Castaño**

Universidad de los Andes

**Mario Ojeda Gómez**

El Colegio de México

**Olga Pellicer de Brody**

Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas

**Clark Reynolds**

Stanford University

**Carlos Rico**

Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas

**David Ronfeldt**

The Rand Corporation

**Richard Sinkin**

University of Texas, Austin

**Peter Smith**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Laurence Whitehead**

Oxford University

### Typesetting

GWEN TOCZYLOWSKI

### Editorial Assistance

SANDRA DEL CASTILLO

Publication and dissemination of important new research on Mexico and U.S.-Mexican relations is a major activity of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. Statements of fact and opinion appearing in Center publications are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply the endorsement of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, the Editorial Advisory Board, or the University of California.

**ORDERS:** A complete list of current publications and ordering information are available from the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. To request such information, please write to

Publications Coordinator  
Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, Q-057  
University of California, San Diego  
La Jolla, California 92093

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** For information regarding contributions to the Center's publications series, please see the inside back cover of this publication.

**MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE AMERICAS:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIGRATION BETWEEN  
COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA AND BETWEEN  
MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES**

by

**GABRIEL MURILLO-CASTAÑO**

Department of Political Science  
Universidad de los Andes  
Bogotá, Colombia

*translated by Sandra del Castillo*

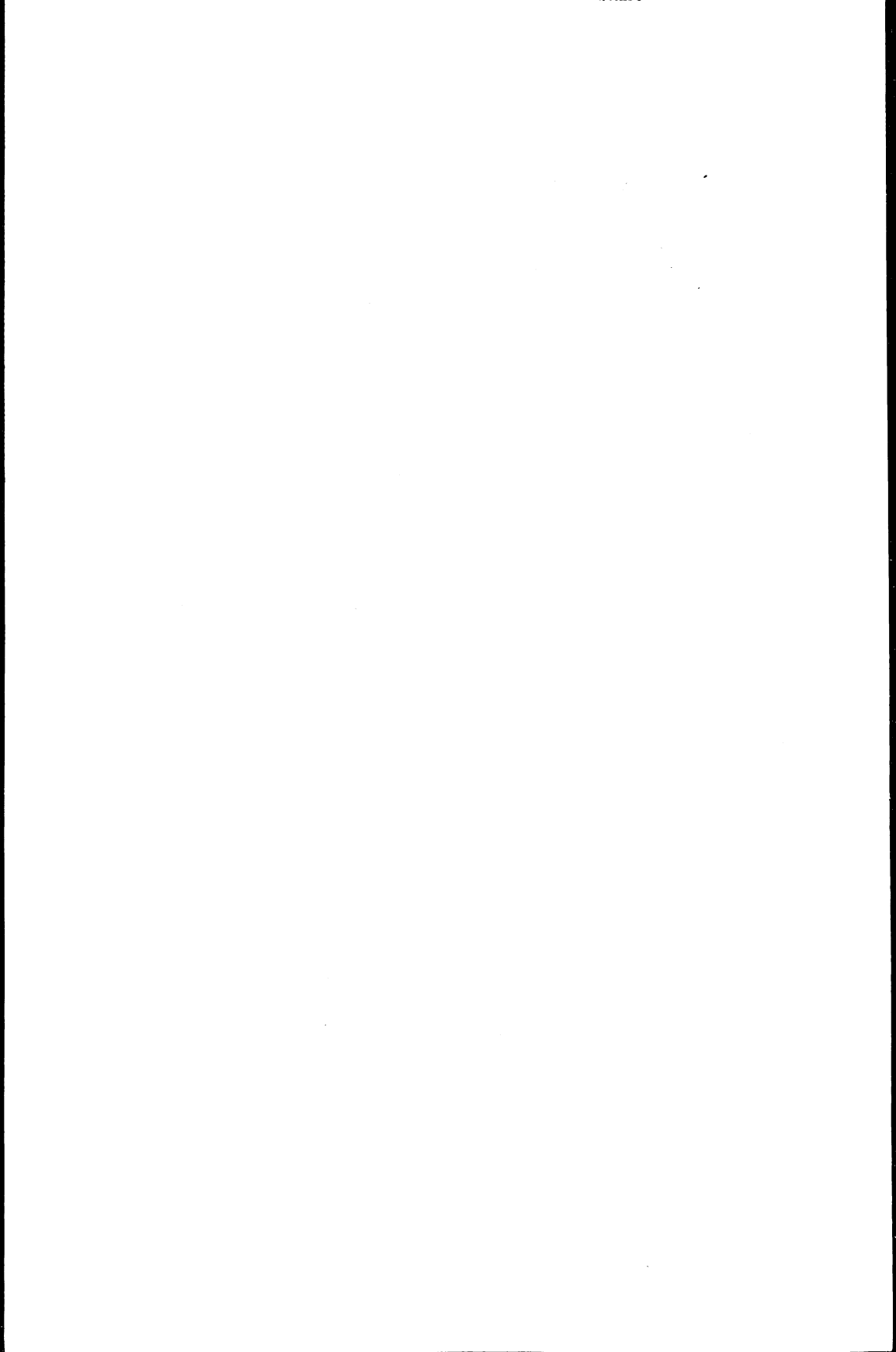
---

*MONOGRAPH SERIES, 13*

CENTER FOR U.S.-MEXICAN STUDIES  
University of California, San Diego

---

1984

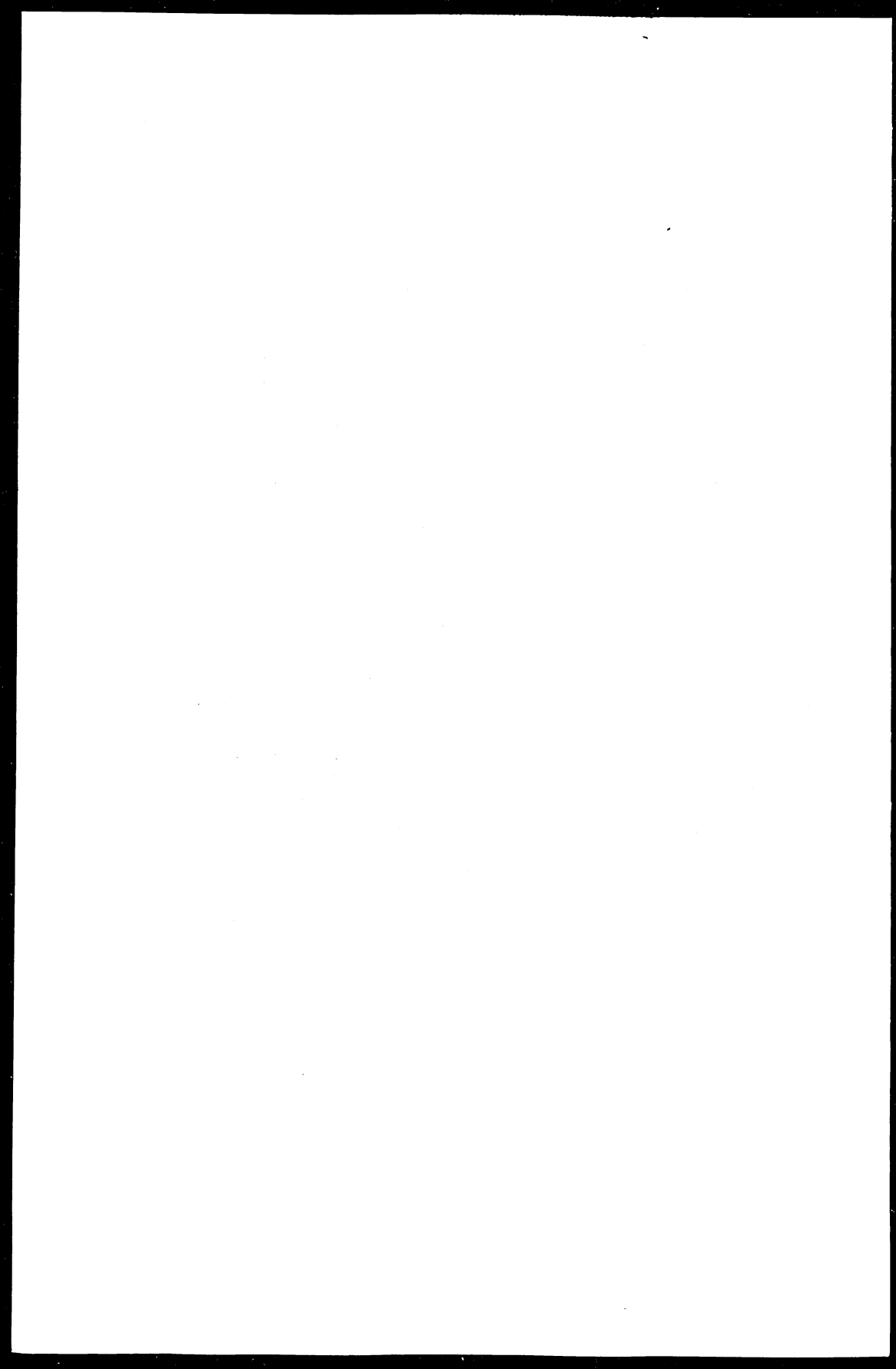


## PROLOGUE

The pattern of international migration changed in mid-1983. In Latin America, the worldwide economic recession has, without exception, substantially reduced the economic and monetary differentials which had existed among the countries of this region until recent months. As a result, international migratory flows between Latin American countries have come to a virtual halt; when or even whether these flows will reappear is still unclear.

The migration of Colombian workers to Venezuela, for example, has ceased in response to Venezuela's severe economic crisis, which followed the decline of oil prices and the resulting devaluation of the bolívar. This devaluation meant a substantial reduction in Venezuela's minimum wage, coupled with a period of unprecedented inflation. Colombian workers thus lost the opportunity to improve their precarious economic situation through migration to Venezuela. Likewise, migration has disappeared as an alternative for Bolivians and Paraguayans who formerly migrated to Argentina. And international migration is even less viable for Central American workers who had hoped to find work in Mexico.

International labor migration in the Western Hemisphere will now consist of one massive flow, originating in the countries of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean and moving toward the United States. This phenomenon should become the focus for all researchers examining the extremely complex topic of international labor migration.

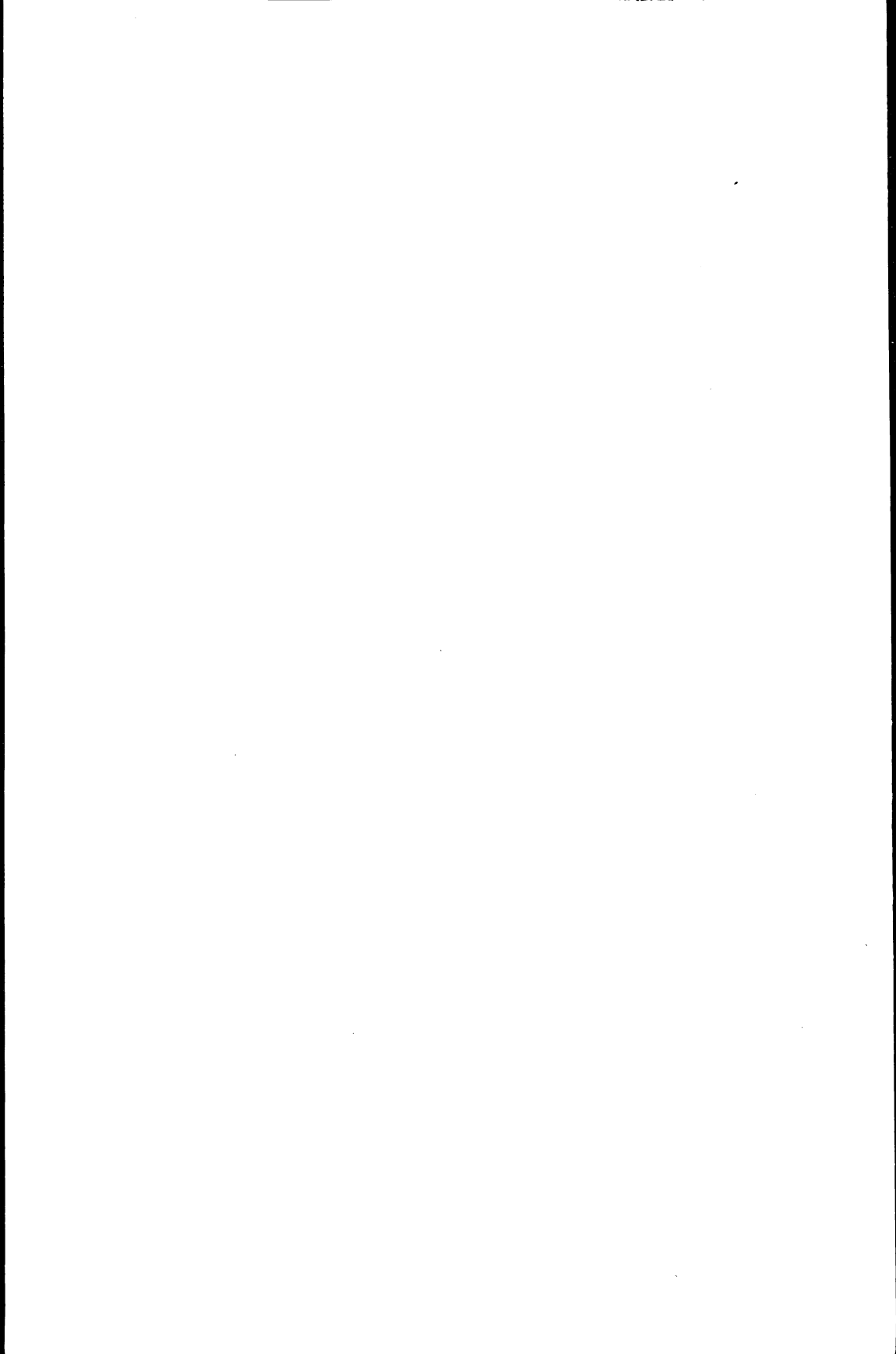


## PREFACE

During the summer of 1981 I was invited to work at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies of the University of California, San Diego. As the only Colombian in a group otherwise composed of U.S. and Mexican researchers expert in the political and socioeconomic problems of their respective countries, I had the challenging opportunity to prepare this manuscript. In it I develop a comparative study of the migration of Colombian workers to Venezuela and Mexican workers to the United States. My primary intention is to offer interested readers some descriptive and analytical elements concerning the two primary migratory labor flows currently found in the Americas. These two flows, each with characteristics determined by the stages of economic development of the countries involved, present surprising similarities.

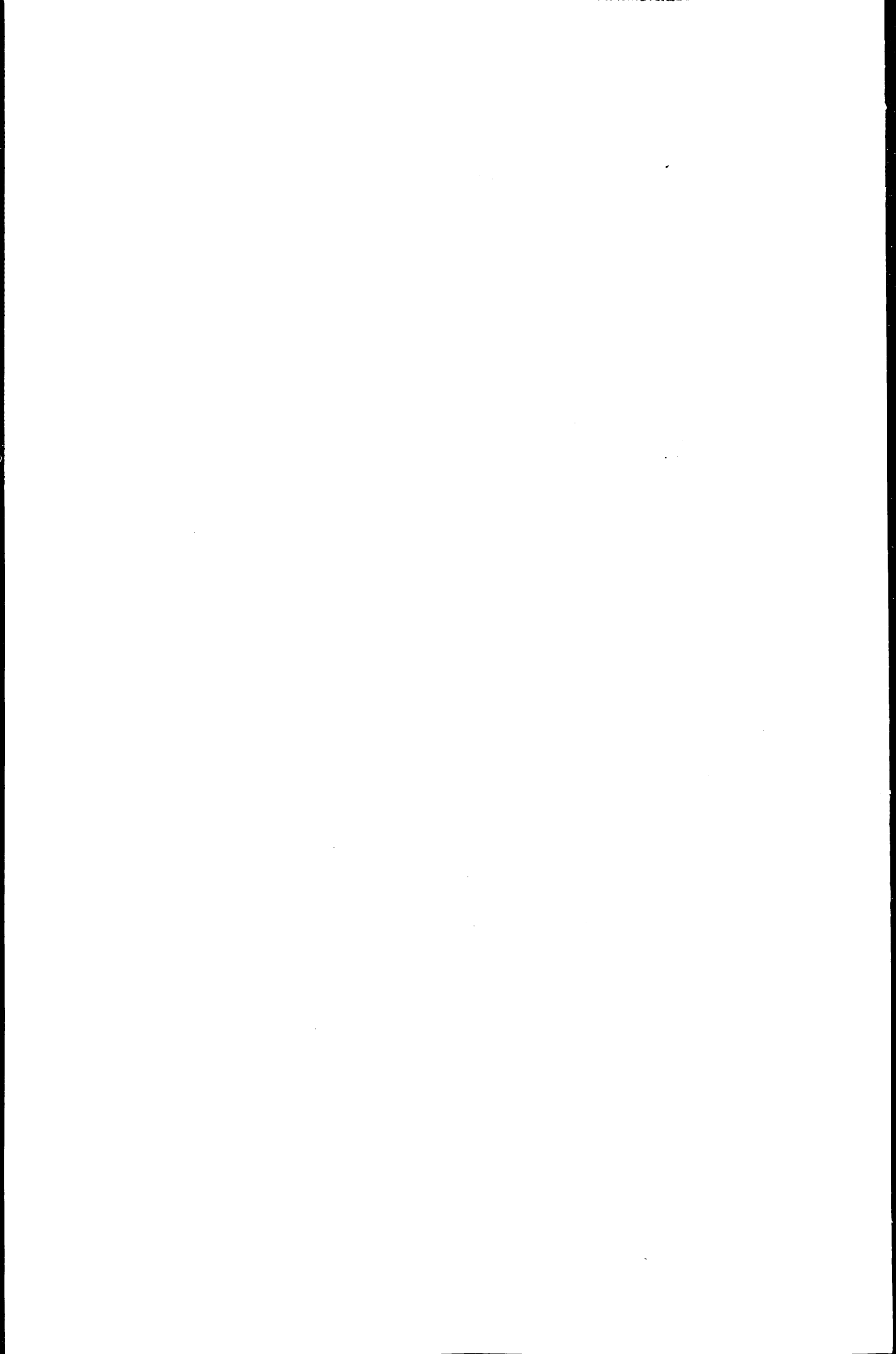
This present work results in part from my research on the recent exodus of Colombian workers to Venezuela, which 20 years ago had only a glimpse of future oil wealth and showed no great economic disparity with Colombia. The work also draws from my examination of the major writings on migration from Mexico to the United States, taking into account the magnitude and long history of this phenomenon. I have written this study in response to the urgent need to develop a comparative perspective of these two important international labor flows, which present obvious and significant differences and similarities. I would like to acknowledge the support and enthusiasm of Dr. Wayne Cornelius who, from the first, shared with me the belief that work of this nature should benefit students concerned with the situation of impoverished workers who, finding no local solution to their economic difficulties, must migrate to other countries in search of better opportunities. I also wish to express my thanks for the valuable information and commentaries about their respective countries provided to me by my fellow researchers in San Diego — among them, Richard Mines, Gustavo del Castillo, Sergio Aguayo, Alberto Hernández, and Miguel Ugalde. I am also grateful to my two Colombian colleagues in the Department of Political Science at the University of the Andes: Nicolás Rocha, who assisted with the writing of this manuscript, and Dora Rothlisberger, who helped edit it. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the interest and continuing support of my research given by the Inter-American Foundation.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue .....	iii
Preface .....	v
Introduction .....	1
PART ONE: ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL DETERMINISM IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION	
I. Economic Structure and the Emergence of Migratory Labor Flows .....	7
II. The Benefits and Drawbacks of Labor Migration .....	13
III. Perceptions of Labor Migration at Various Levels of the Sociopolitical Hierarchy .....	21
PART TWO: A SOCIOECONOMIC DESCRIPTION OF THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON: CHARACTERISTICS, RATIONALES, AND IMPACTS	
IV. The Numerical and Geographic Extent of International Labor Migration .....	41
V. Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Migrant and Migration .....	53
Conclusion .....	63
Bibliography .....	65



## INTRODUCTION

This paper compares the migration of Colombian workers to Venezuela with that of Mexican workers to the United States. Most previous studies and research projects dealing with the migration phenomenon have focused on its socioeconomic impacts and implications, but this work will deal additionally with some of its underlying political issues and will attempt to relate its socioeconomic and political dimensions. Part one of this essay comprises three chapters: the first describes the macroeconomic and macropolitical characteristics of the four countries included in the study (Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and the United States); the second analyzes the benefits and drawbacks of the migrations under present consideration; and the third examines the political implications of these phenomena. Through the utilization of a three-level vertical hierarchy, this third chapter examines similarities and differences of perception about migration phenomena in the four countries, from the perspective of the governed as well as that of governing groups and institutions.

The second part of this study consists of a systematic comparison of central aspects of the migratory labor phenomenon in neighboring countries. This comparative framework focuses on the socioeconomic characteristics of migrant workers; the way that structural socioeconomic factors affect their decision-making process; the impact of remittances in the sending countries; and the economic mobility which workers and/or their families derive from the migratory experience.

Although researchers have not studied labor migration from Colombia to Venezuela with the same intensity and care that they have devoted to examining Mexican migration to the United States, a comparative study of these two migratory flows is amply justified by several considerations. The migration of Colombians to Venezuela is now the most important Western Hemisphere migration in which the receiving country is not the United States. Furthermore, the magnitude of this migratory flow has recently stimulated increased interest on the part of researchers and the communications media, which have provided much of the material used in this study. These two migratory flows also merit consideration because of the intense controversy that they generate and because they offer an opportunity to study migration in decidedly different contexts of political and socioeconomic interaction. Finally, a study such as this offers the advantages which derive from comparison itself: by

revealing the similarities and differences of two migratory flows, the method makes possible observations about the relationship between a society's structural characteristics and level of capitalist development on the one hand, and the nature of labor migration into or out of that society on the other. While we should not forget the limitations of the comparative method, we need to recognize its value in terms of increasing our understanding of the complex phenomenon of international labor migration.

The migration of workers between countries has existed for as long as has unequal development within pre-capitalist modes of production. People have always gone, and will continue to go, to those places where they find the material resources with which to meet their most urgent needs. As imbalance and inequality between areas become more pronounced, people in the poorer, less developed areas will tend increasingly to migrate to the richer, more developed ones, in part because advances in capitalist development increase the level of interaction between unequal regions. Population movements, in turn, expedite these interactions between one space and another. As space becomes defined over time with the development of the state, and the state in turn evolves toward higher forms of political, social, and economic organization, population movements take on a specific significance. This significance relates directly to the degree of development in each state and results from the manner in which the state distributes scarce vital resources among its population.

The four countries discussed in this work differ substantially in structural form and level of capitalist development, but this study will not examine these differences in detail. And although this analysis uses the conceptual model of a world system of dynamic interdependence in the relations between center and periphery, it is beyond the scope of the study to outline the characteristics of the model or to operationalize it. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the inequalities between Mexico and the United States represent a classic case of a periphery-center relationship within a world system model,<sup>1</sup> while those between

---

1. See, among others: Estevan T. Flores, "La circulación internacional del trabajo y de la lucha de clases," in *Historia y Sociedad* 21 (1978):46-65; William Canak and Barbara Schmitter, "Uneven Development, Labor Migration and State Policy: Theoretical and Methodological Issues," mimeographed (Durham, N.C.: Center for International Studies, Duke University, 1981); and Edna Bonacich, "International Labor Migration: A Theoretical Orientation," mimeographed (Riverside, Calif.: University of California, Riverside, 1981). These works review the literature on the theory of unequal development relative to international labor migration, a literature based on the now classic postulates in works such as: Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, for the Institute of Race Relations, 1973); Manuel Castells, "Immigrant Workers



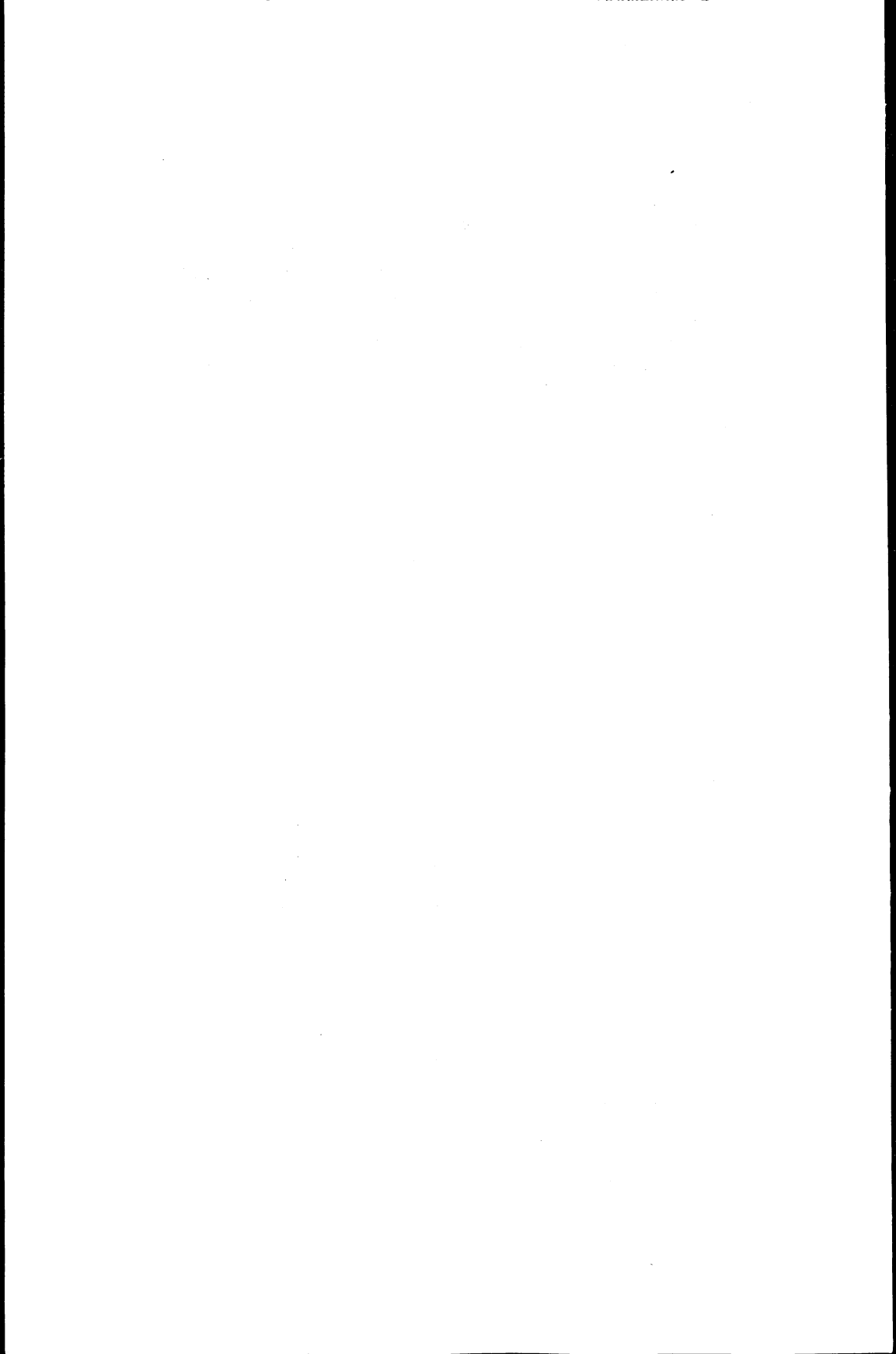
Colombia and Venezuela today correspond to an inter-periphery relationship.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, this work will briefly address the principal characteristics of the phases of capitalist development currently being experienced in the four countries under consideration, and it utilizes the theoretical perspective and categories of the world system model to illustrate the differences among them. These analytical categories hopefully provide a better basis for understanding why, although the two migratory labor flows studied here occur between countries in different stages of development — Mexico and the United States on the one hand, and Colombia and Venezuela on the other — the phenomenon's principal characteristics are quite similar in each case.

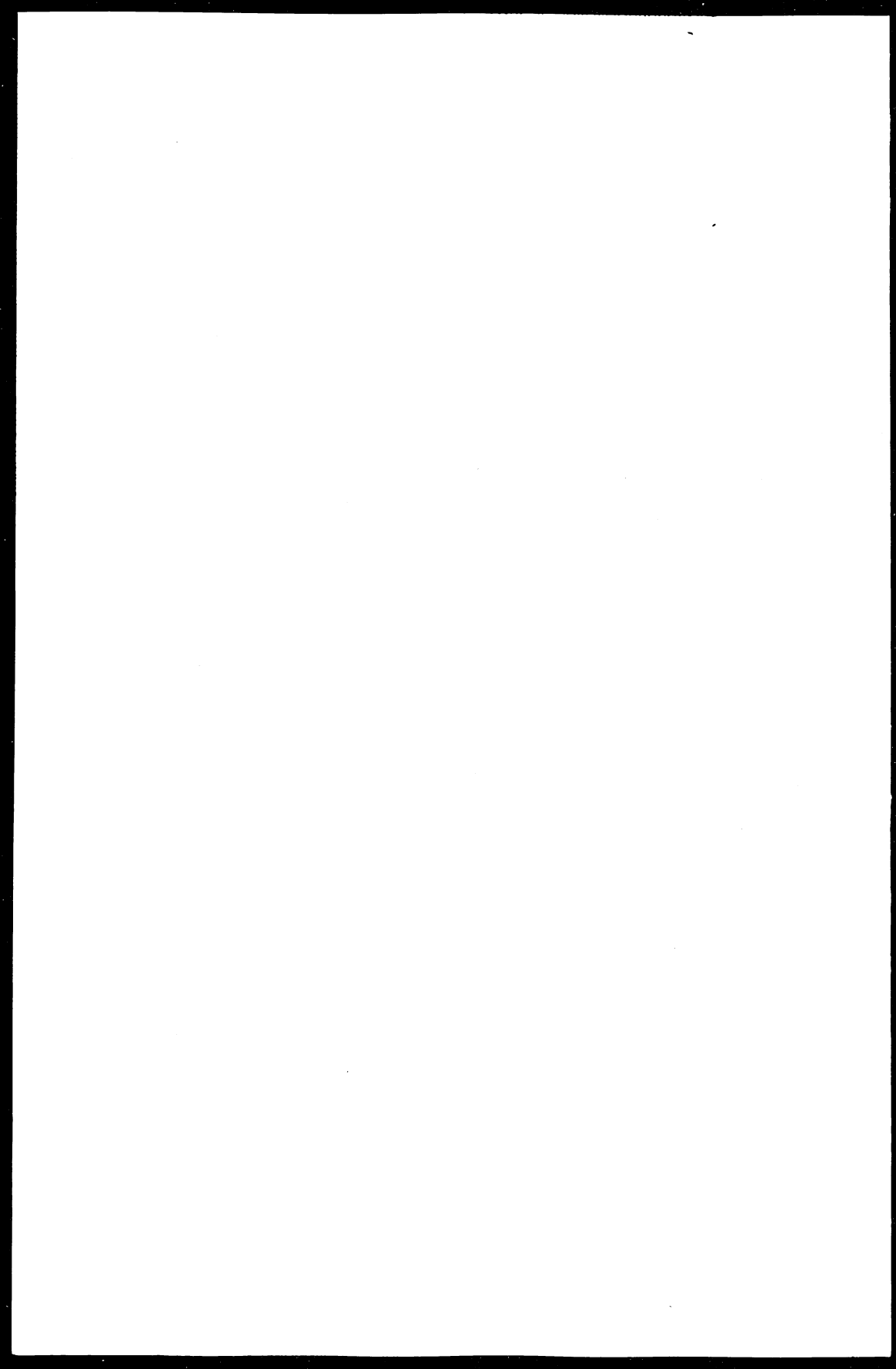
---

and Class Struggle in Advanced Capitalism: The Western European Experience," *Politics and Society* 5 (1975):33-66; Charles Bettelheim, "Economic Inequalities between Nations and International Solidarity," *Monthly Review* 2:22 (1970):19-24; and Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

2. I have presented this perspective, which still lacks sufficient development, in my recent manuscript, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia: su incidencia en la alteración de los mercados de trabajo y en la expansión del sector informal urbano de Colombia," in *Políticas de migraciones laborales internacionales en la periferia: el caso latinoamericano*, Memorias del Segundo Seminario Latinoamericano sobre Políticas de Migraciones Laborales (Bogotá, Colombia: Departamento de Ciencia Política, Universidad de los Andes and Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Servicio Nacional de Empleos, 1982). Sherri Grasmuck has also utilized this perspective in "Enclave Development and Relative Labor Surplus: Haitian Labor in the Dominican Republic," mimeographed (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University, 1981).



**PART ONE:  
ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL  
DETERMINISM IN INTERNATIONAL  
LABOR MIGRATION**



## *ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND THE EMERGENCE OF MIGRATORY LABOR FLOWS*

Some of the basic economic, social, and political characteristics of the development process in Colombia and Venezuela help to explain the appearance and strength of the migratory labor phenomenon between the two countries. These factors are population growth, the availability of a work force, dependence on the production of certain commodities, the availability of capital resources, patterns of agricultural development, the development of an internal market, educational and technical training programs, the role of the private sector in government, access to international credit, and historic immigration patterns. The following paragraphs compare the recent experiences of Colombia and Venezuela with regard to each of these factors.

Colombia reached a 3% rate of population growth during the 1960s, but this rate has declined noticeably to its current 1.9%. In contrast to the dominant Third World pattern of concentration in a few large cities, Colombia has a spatially balanced distribution of population, attested to by the large number of Colombian cities and towns. The even distribution of the Colombian population has sustained the growth of a national market based on a well-developed, integrated transport and communication system. This market has allowed the country to reduce its dependence on foreign markets and to develop industry directed toward national consumption. And the labor force in Colombia has been sufficiently large and well trained to satisfy the domestic demands for labor, including skilled labor, which have resulted from the country's development strategy. The availability of capital, not labor, has constrained Colombia's ability to realize its development plans.

In contrast, Venezuela's population has historically been concentrated in one region of the country, the North, and since 1940 the rapid expansion of the country's economy has resulted in a relative labor shortage. In response to this situation, Venezuelan governments have undertaken the construction of roads and communication networks to integrate the southern and western areas with the rest of the country, especially with the North. But the lack of a definite structure in communication networks and national markets resulting from Venezuela's uneven population distribution has hampered both the development of an import-substitution policy and a uniform national development. At the same time, the country has continued to struggle with a



relative scarcity of workers, especially in certain areas of the country and in certain sectors of the economy, such as commercial agriculture (e.g., coffee and sugar production and cattle raising). Over the last 20 years, the development of this sector has required a large skilled labor force, a need satisfied substantially by the availability of Colombian labor.

The two countries have also had markedly disparate experiences with respect to their dependence on the production of certain key commodities. The emergence of coffee as Colombia's single main product occurred without outside capital investments and technology. Coffee profits have therefore permitted the country to design a model of autonomous development and to pursue other productive activities in the transport, industrial, and financial sectors. Inherent in the development of oil, Venezuela's principal product, has been the participation of foreign capital and technology, particularly from the United States. Nevertheless, the discovery and exploitation of Venezuelan oil at a strategic moment of great demand in the world market has resulted in improved economic conditions in Venezuela. The oil surplus has permitted the implementation of major public-spending programs for rural and urban infrastructures, which in turn increase the country's growth. Although Colombia's development plans emphasized intensive public-spending programs, the country has lacked the resources necessary to implement them. In the absence of completed projects, Colombia's development plans appear to reflect more rhetoric than results.

In the area of agricultural development, both countries have emphasized increased production in commercial agriculture. But while Colombia's efforts to incorporate technologies and increase production in this sector began in the 1950s, the accelerated development of commercial agriculture in Venezuela, spurred by petroleum profits, did not occur until much more recently. Colombia's agricultural development plans and policies have emphasized certain crops and activities such as the cultivation and processing of sugar, coffee, cotton, etc., and in these sectors the country has reached a high level of technological development. Venezuela's more recent efforts, in contrast, have revealed the country's shortage of skilled labor and have required the employment of a foreign labor supply.

The uniform spatial distribution of Colombia's population has also proved beneficial for the development of educational and technical training programs. These programs, in turn, have increased the value of Colombian workers in the external labor market. In Venezuela the lack of sufficient skilled labor has prompted the ruling class to undertake remedial measures by granting many scholarships for professional study abroad, especially in the United States and Europe. At a less specialized level, Venezuelan governments have attempted to implement

extensive educational and technical training programs. However, according to the government's own estimates, these policies have failed to produce a skilled labor force of sufficient size for national development. This shortfall has forced the country to continue importing foreign labor.

Colombia's private sector has traditionally dominated the political power structure and the decision-making process in the public sector. Thus, the private sector has been able to hamper whatever redistribution policies have been proffered by reformist governments. In Venezuela this problem has not appeared, given the availability of resources and the government's need for private-sector assistance in managing them. The urgent need to implement a new development plan based on abundant resources has forced the government to seek private-sector expertise, both from Venezuela and from foreign sources.

Regarding international credit and development planning, Colombia's limited external debt and its balance of payments have provided the country a certain amount of access to such resources. This access has provided the minimum requirements for a development policy more notable for its good intentions than for concrete results. Venezuela, on the other hand, thanks to its oil production, has been able to finance its economic expansion through its large external debt; but the situation has interfered with the country's autonomous development and has required that a considerable portion of oil earnings be directed to cover this debt.

With regard to immigration patterns, Colombia has not, since colonial times, attracted European immigrants who might have influenced the national development process. Venezuela, on the other hand, has felt the impact of migrations from certain European countries (primarily Germany and the southern European nations) in the stimulation and modernization of certain areas of the economy, principally in the industrial sector.

In contrast to the approach taken in analyzing migration between Colombia and Venezuela, any consideration of migration between Mexico and the United States must take account of the non-complementary nature of interaction between the latter countries. That imbalance requires an approach in which the asymmetrical elements specific to a dependent, periphery-center relationship predominate. As a consequence of that imbalance, the way in which socioeconomic and political factors influence the migratory flow between Mexico and the United States differs considerably from the way that such factors affect migration between Colombia and Venezuela.

For example, we may take the issue of population growth. On the one hand, Mexico now has a population of 70 million, one of the highest on the continent, and an annual growth rate of 2.9%. This fact, when considered alongside Mexico's 3.4%

annual increase in working-age population, signals the inevitability of migrations of workers to the United States; Mexico's rate of population growth and the demand for jobs and services are simply greater than its capacity to attend to them effectively. In the United States, on the other hand, the annual rate of population growth fluctuates between 0.5 and 0.8%. Moreover, immigration — both legal and illegal — accounts for an estimated thirty to fifty percent of this growth, attesting to this country's ability to absorb an immigrant population.

Regarding the availability of a work force, Mexico is currently experiencing a skilled-labor shortage so severe that some experts have recommended repatriating approximately 20,000 qualified Mexican skilled and semiskilled workers and incorporating them into Mexico's Global Development Plan.<sup>3</sup> But at the same time, the country's combined unemployment and underemployment rate is hovering near 50%, causing large segments of the middle- and low-income population to emigrate temporarily or permanently to the United States in search of better economic opportunities.

In the United States, the two decades following World War II witnessed a strong demand for foreign agricultural workers, satisfied in part through the Bracero Program (1942-1964). The formal termination of this program occurred in response to political forces; it did not primarily indicate a decrease in the demand for this labor source or its employment in certain areas such as the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, in the late 1960s, demand increased for labor in urban areas, especially in low-paid and/or part-time jobs with no benefits or opportunities for advancement, jobs previously held by women, blacks, and young people born during the postwar baby boom. Today's increased aspirations and education among these groups, as well as a decreasing population of young people, have created a shortage of unskilled urban workers in addition to the already existing shortage of agricultural labor.

In terms of the dependence on certain products, Mexico has greatly increased its exports following the discovery in recent years of extensive oil reserves. The country's dependence on this product as its principal source of earnings increases daily. With this dependence comes an increased dependence on foreign technology, especially U.S. technology, for the extraction and processing of crude. At the same time, Mexico is experiencing a notable deficit in agricultural

---

3. As stated by Jorge Bustamante at the Primer Encuentro sobre Impactos Regionales de las Relaciones Económicas México-Estados Unidos, Mexico "could . . . repatriate more than 20,000 skilled and semiskilled workers currently outside the country and incorporate them into the Global Development Plan." See *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), 10 July 1981.

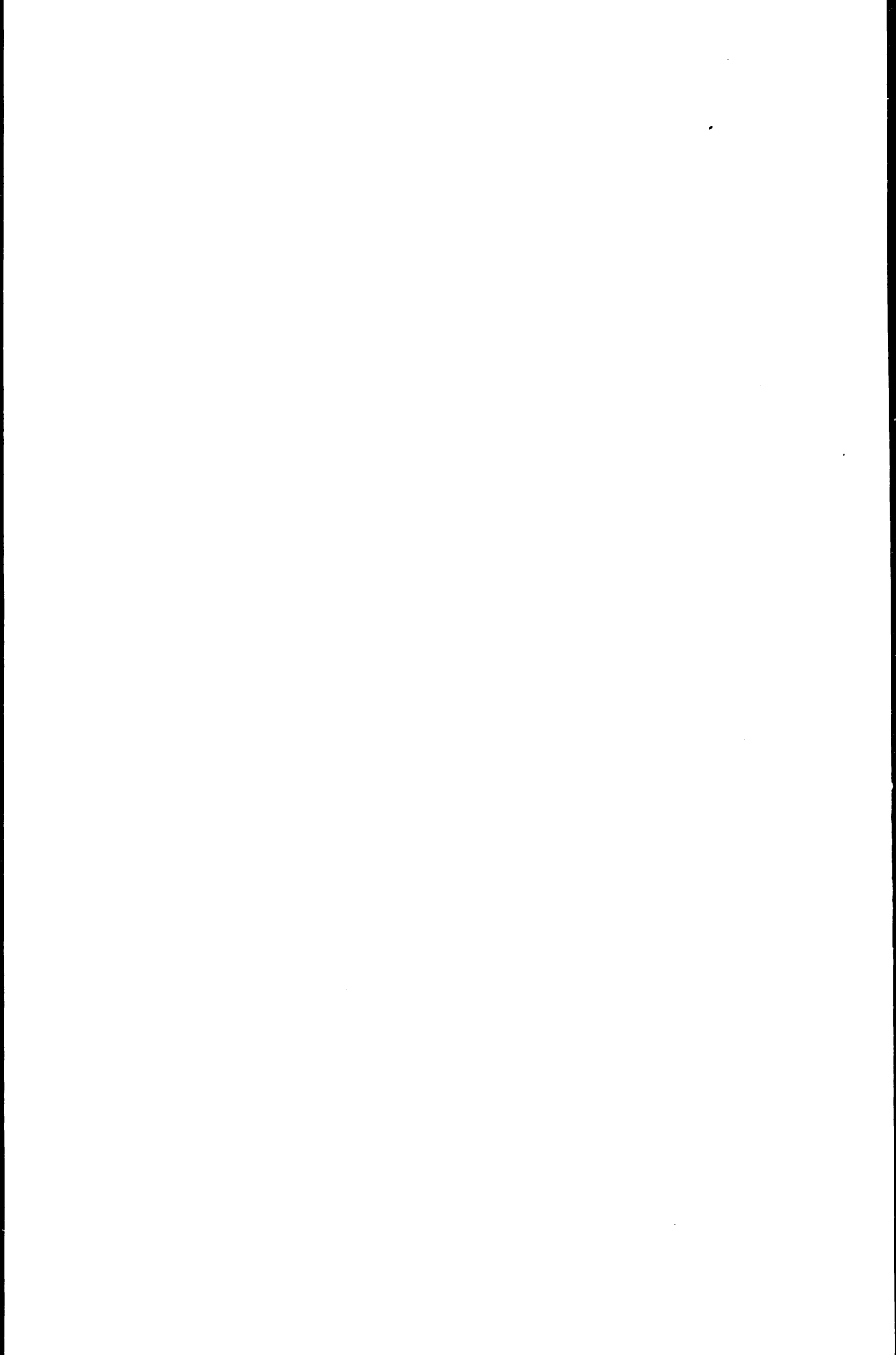
production; in order to satisfy domestic demand for food, the country must supplement agricultural production at levels reaching almost 50% of its domestic yield. By contrast, the United States, taking advantage of its highly developed economy, has successfully balanced oil production policies against the importation policies of other countries, Mexico included. It has thus managed to import oil in quantities sufficient to maintain its reserves at a level which guarantees long-term economic stability.

Regarding capital resources, the Mexican government has adopted a policy of large-scale investments in the country's economic infrastructure, accompanied by a policy of increasing the external debt, which has been among the world's highest in recent years. As a result, the country has been forced to direct a substantial percentage of its petroleum export earnings toward the payment of its immense external debt, further aggravated by high inflation and increasing interest rates. This investment strategy has resulted in a lack of attention to Mexico's agricultural problems and their many implications: a reduction in production, the expulsion of peasants from rural areas, and a failure to create jobs for the unskilled labor force. To contrast the capital resources of the United States with those of Mexico in absolute terms serves no useful purpose. But the result of plentiful capital in the U.S., in combination with the high cost of labor, does connect that country with Mexico in a very concrete way: the relative shortage of cheap, unskilled labor in the U.S. leads small businessmen to hire undocumented workers so as to cut production costs.

The disparity in the value of the two countries' currencies creates yet another force encouraging migration. The Mexican peso has undergone several major devaluations from its pre-1976 value, increasing the differential between Mexican and U.S. salaries. The current disparity in real salaries varies between 8:1 and 13:1 in agriculture and many low-skilled urban jobs, and between 3:1 and 6:1 in the manufacturing and industrial sectors.<sup>4</sup> The dollar meanwhile remains one of the strongest currencies in the world, in spite of its occasional fluctuations relative to the German mark and Japanese yen.

---

4. Wayne A. Cornelius, "Immigration, Mexican Development Policy, and the Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations," Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Research Report Series, No. 8 (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981):20-21.





## **THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF LABOR MIGRATION**

The advantages and disadvantages of labor migration vary according to context in such a way that precise parallels of the impacts on sending and receiving countries cannot be drawn. The discussion that follows points out similarities resulting from similar situations, whether in sending or receiving countries, and it also indicates characteristic structural differences in each country under study. The account begins with a summary of the benefits resulting from labor migrations, first in the sending and then in the receiving countries, and proceeds, in similar fashion, to examine the disadvantages which arise from the migration phenomena.

### **Advantages Arising from International Labor Migration**

The international migration of labor benefits sending countries, including Colombia and Mexico, by reducing social pressures resulting from low wages, unemployment, insufficient services, and the shortage of other elements necessary for the reproduction of labor.<sup>5</sup> One mechanism which contributes to this effect is the practice by many migrants of remitting and/or taking cash savings back to the sending country. In Colombia, migrants and their families use this money to satisfy the basic requirements of reproducing labor and direct their surpluses primarily to the establishment of some economic activity within the informal sector of the economy.<sup>6</sup> The expansion of this informal sector stimulates the incorporation of new sectors of the population into economic and/or productive activities outside the usual labor markets in the country. By covering a large share of the costs of reproducing labor and by generating economic activity in the informal sector, these savings from work abroad subsidize the state, which is unable to fill the basic needs of the general population. Mexico also derives such economic benefits from its migratory population, since a large percentage of its migrant workers send dollars to their families at home at least once dur-

---

5. Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 27-28.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-230.

ing their stay in the United States.<sup>7</sup> However, Mexican migrants spend a large percentage of this money on consumer durables which support neither the economic advancement of the migrant worker — or the worker's family — nor the long-term development of Mexico.<sup>8</sup>

Another way in which labor migrations lessen social tensions is by reducing demographic pressures and thus easing the demand for public services which results from high population growth rates. The international migrations of Colombians have had such an alleviative impact and have thus diminished the potential for social conflict implicit in the insufficiency of social services.<sup>9</sup> In Mexico, the fact that some migrant workers remain permanently in the United States actually affects the rate of population growth in Mexico. Moreover, given the pattern of internal migration from rural to urban areas, any emigration of laborers from Mexico will slow the rate of growth in the cities, especially in Mexico City.<sup>10</sup>

The participation of the migrant labor force in the economies of receiving countries confers many benefits to the receivers, but among them one advantage stands out. In both Venezuela and the United States, foreign migrant labor (both documented and undocumented) moves toward the sectors of the national economy where it is needed most. Both Mexican and Colombian workers head towards those areas of Venezuela and the United States where the economy is expanding most rapidly, rather than towards areas of reverse growth with high unemployment and poverty. Access to this inexpensive, highly productive, hardworking, and disciplined labor supply significantly increases economic expansion.

Migration also allows the receiving country to reduce labor costs. Venezuela, moreover, receives a labor supply that is not only cheap, but also somewhat experienced and skilled. These

---

7. Research by Carlos Zazueta has shown that migrants send money home an average of 6.35 times per trip. See Carlos Zazueta, "Mexican Workers in the United States: Some Initial Results and Methodological Considerations of the National Household Survey of Emigration (ENEF-NEU)," mimeographed (College Park, Md.: Center for Philosophy and Public Policy, University of Maryland, 1980):53.

8. Wayne Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States: The State of Current Knowledge and Recommendations for Future Research*, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 1 (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, forthcoming).

9. Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 27-28.

10. See D. R. Vining, Jr. and T. Kontuly, "Population Dispersal from Major Metropolitan Regions: An International Comparison," *International Regional Science Review* 13:1 (1978).

characteristics help to relieve the shortage of native skilled and semiskilled workers and reduce the country's costs for educational and technical training programs. In the United States, where high labor costs for American workers have been institutionalized, the availability of inexpensive migrant labor has aided the development of productive activities which, in spite of technological advances, remain substantially labor intensive (especially in fruit and vegetable cultivation and personal services). Finally, the relative currency differentials between the Colombian peso and the Venezuelan bolívar on the one hand and between the Mexican peso and the U.S. dollar on the other decrease further the cost of migrant labor. Depressed wages unprotected by labor laws in the receiving countries are relatively attractive to the migrant worker when compared to the poor wage-earning opportunities in the sending region.

Because so many migrant workers are undocumented, they adopt behavior patterns that further benefit the receiving countries in certain "hidden" ways. In the case of Venezuela, an important segment of Colombian migrants work clandestinely and must assume their own reproduction costs, saving the state the cost of services to maintain them. These labor contingents dedicate themselves to their work, developing behavior patterns characterized by extended work shifts and limited entertainment and consumption. Their lack of legal documents impedes their spatial, employment, and social mobility; and their goal of saving their earnings and returning home as soon as possible discourages them from claiming their full share of benefits from the society in which they work. In the case of the United States, undocumented migrants maintain low levels of consumption and make little attempt to obtain access to the social services available in the country. Not only do undocumented workers generally shun social services,<sup>11</sup> fearing the far reach of police networks, they generally avoid any disturbances, protests, or illegal activity, although many xenophobic groups claim otherwise. The behavior of Colombian and Mexican migrants responds to similar concerns about the migratory flow expressed by influential groups in each receiving country. As a consequence, migrant workers increasingly enter the receiving countries illegally, which in turn reinforces their cautious and semi-clandestine behavior and leads to their short-term outlook while in the receiving country.

Finally, labor migration to Venezuela confers on that country a benefit which is peculiar to the structure, characteristics,

---

11. Davis S. North and Marion F. Houstoun, "The Characteristics and Role of Illegal Aliens in the U.S. Labor Market: An Exploratory Study," report prepared for the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor (Washington, D.C.: Linton and Co., 1976).

and history of its economic development. The presence of Colombians in Venezuela has extended to the isolated, less-developed southern lowlands, thus contributing to the country's geographic integration. Evidence shows that Colombian peasants, most from the plains of Colombia, have participated actively in the efforts to settle and clear this peripheral Venezuelan region, even though their colonization efforts have resulted not in land ownership, but rather in deportation.

### **The Drawbacks of Migration**

In both Mexico and Colombia, the migration abroad of large numbers of workers projects an image of a country unable to provide its people with a satisfactory way of life. In both cases, an inadequate wage structure leaves low-income families at salary levels insufficient to defray the cost of living. These families thus confront the necessity of generating resources to satisfy the costs of labor reproduction, a need which gives rise to the development of informal economic activities that undermine stable economic and sociopolitical development. These underemployment crises, which reinforce the image of governments unable to provide sources of employment, figure in the decision of the nation's laborers to seek better economic opportunities abroad. In addition, both governments incur the costs of conflictive international relations due to xenophobia in the receiving countries, the frequent disregard in the receiving countries of the human and civil rights of migrant workers, and the exploitation of the workers themselves. Although these conflicts have not yet resulted in any major threat to peaceful relations between the sending and receiving countries, they are reflected in many sectors of the population, especially along border areas, as evident in several incidents along the Colombian-Venezuelan border.<sup>12</sup>

Out-migration also causes serious long-term problems in the structure and composition of the labor force of sending countries. Both Colombia and Mexico have lost skilled workers who are desperately needed for national development. This loss of human resources, especially at the skilled and semiskilled levels, is more injurious in Colombia than in Mexico. Empirical evidence indicates that the majority of Colombians migrating to Venezuela have some level of education; that a large number of them have received intermediate training at vocational centers; and that the great majority have had previous work experience.

---

12. These events, the discoveries of the bodies of Colombian migrant workers along border-crossing routes in Venezuela, received nationwide press coverage in the newspapers of both countries, especially *El Nacional* and *El Universal* in Caracas, and *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* in Bogotá.

Even Colombians migrating from rural areas have previous work experience (cutting cane, collecting coffee beans, herding cattle, etc.). Mexican migrants, by contrast, are often unskilled. Some of them speak neither English nor Spanish, communicating among themselves in indigenous languages such as Huasteco and Mixteco. Nevertheless, the damage resulting from Mexico's loss of human resources is reflected in the aforementioned calls to repatriate a large number of skilled and semiskilled workers in order to implement the country's current Global Development Plan.<sup>13</sup>

Lastly, some adverse consequences result from the use of sending countries as migration routes for workers of other nationalities. For example, workers from Peru, Argentina, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and other South American and Caribbean countries have begun migrating to Venezuela by way of Colombia. The principal evidence for this assertion is that the Venezuelan government has deported significant numbers of non-Colombian undocumented workers to Colombia. Thus, Colombia not only serves as a transit route for impoverished migrants, but must also assume the costs of their repatriation when they are deported to Colombia from Venezuela on the assumption that they are of Colombian nationality. Colombia's image as a sending country grows accordingly, and its government incurs costs for which it would not normally be held responsible. In the Mexican case, the tradition of migration to the United States has extended beyond Mexico's southern border, and the country now serves as a conduit for migrants from Central and South America who traverse Mexico with the intention of entering the United States, where they are taken for Mexican nationals. Mexico, which suffers from this problem more acutely than does Colombia, must absorb the social costs which accompany the presence of thousands of indigent transients, as well as the exaggeration of its disrepute as a sending country.

The disadvantages of labor migrations in the receiving countries include political problems resulting from intraclass conflict. In Venezuela and the United States, the fact that undocumented migrant workers provide significant quantities of cheap and somewhat skilled labor causes the native population to see them as the source of their economic woes. Working-class natives of the receiving country thus see migration as disruptive of the social order and call attention to the fact that the constant arrival of migrants demonstrates the lack of effective policies to control their entry into the country. In Venezuela, the conflicts arising from the influx of migrants are expressed in the discontent of the masses who not only remain indigent, but see

---

13. See footnote 3.



the demand on their country's scarce services increased by migrant workers who find themselves in a similar situation of need. In the United States, these conflicts find expression in protests organized by labor groups who, viewing international migration as a serious competitive threat, increase their demands and criticism of the political system, calling for the investment of resources to control this flow. The xenophobia which characterizes native expressions of discontent further aggravates the situation.

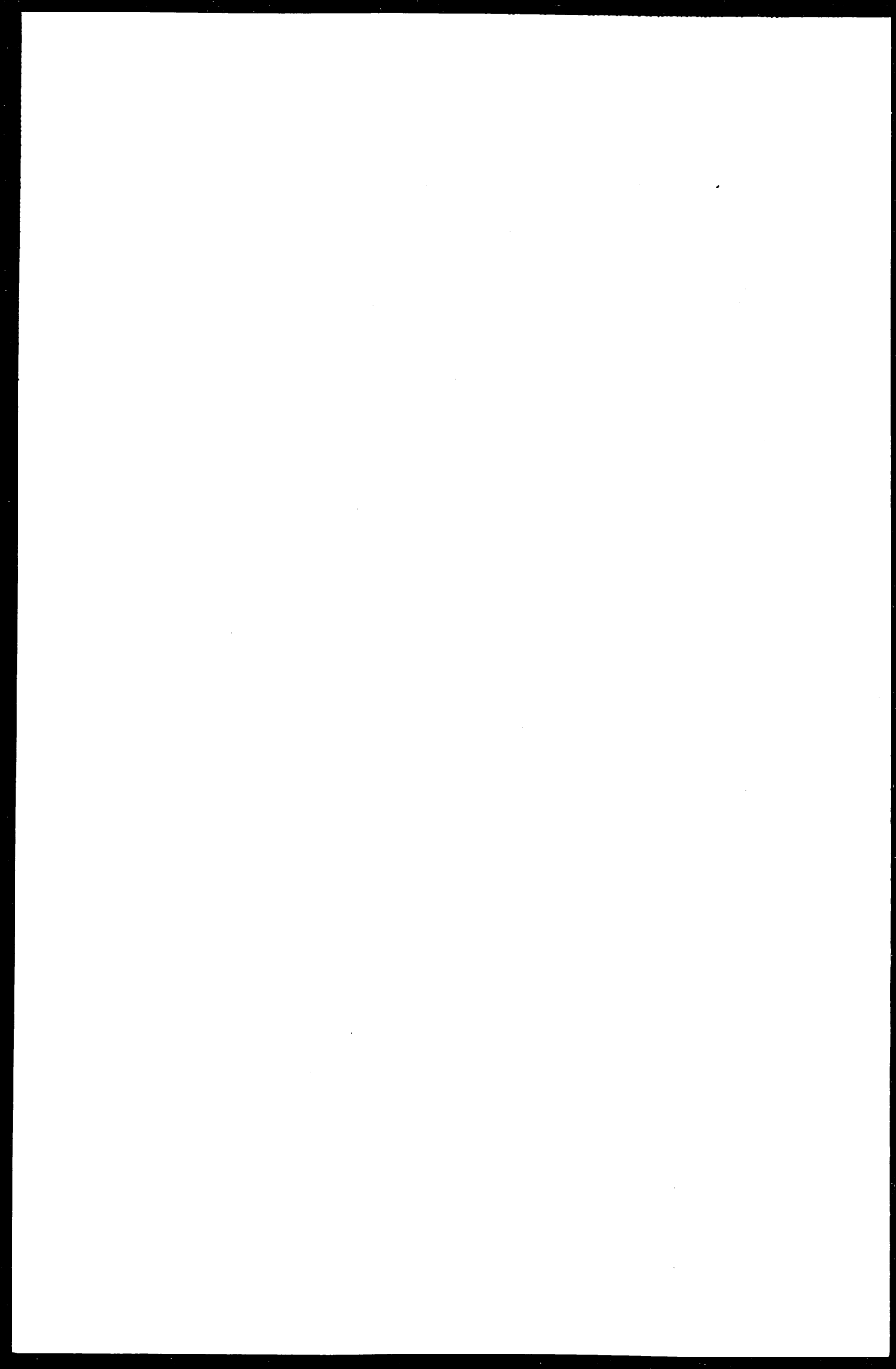
Second, although most migrants demand little in the way of public services, the addition of significant numbers of low-income migrants increases the aggregate demand in receiving countries for certain kinds of such services. The fact that Venezuelans must share with outsiders the precarious economic and social services of a marginal country threatens the socioeconomic expectations of lower-income groups. In the United States the portion of the migrant population with legal documents adds to the demand for services (education, health, etc.), hampering the provision of these services to poor citizens. This fact, intensified by the Reagan administration's budget cuts, results in high levels of poverty which belie the country's wealth and high level of development.

Third, the natives of countries receiving large influxes of migrant workers often perceive threats to their culture. Venezuelans, who have developed a deep-rooted sense of national identity in response to large waves of European immigrants, consider the migration of Colombians to Venezuela a threat to this identity. Migration has undermined relations between the two countries and has forced them to expend resources to impede further deterioration of bilateral relations. In the United States, the immigration of Mexican workers weakens the dominance of Anglo-Saxon culture as Mexican culture becomes more predominant and combines with the cultures of other Latin American groups present in the country. This well-documented situation has cast doubt on the accuracy of the "melting pot" interpretation of the U.S. population and has caused increasing discontent among U.S. natives. Government policies have been unable to stem the Hispanic cultural tide or to integrate it successfully with the national culture as had occurred with earlier migrations from Europe. Moreover, the presence of Hispanic culture produces effects of a political nature: it has resulted in the incorporation of Latin Americans into the national power structure, which increases concern in local groups.

By definition, migration serves to expand the work force. This fact works to the advantage of the receiving country except at certain times and/or in certain sectors. Despite Venezuela's ability to absorb workers because of its labor shortage, the current crisis of recession and inflation has combined with the

presence of a foreign work force to deflate salaries and increase unemployment rates. In the United States, the large number of undocumented migrants in several labor markets increases unemployment and slows salary gains in these areas. Further, their presence produces a relocation of native workers seeking better opportunities to employ their labor skills.

Lastly, migrant remittances impact the receiving countries as a deleterious currency drain. This drain is more injurious to Venezuela than it is to the United States, since Venezuela is already encountering problems in exporting primary and secondary products as it attempts to diversify its economy. In the United States, the remittance of earnings to migrants' home countries represents a loss to the local economies where the earnings are generated, since those economies will not gain the benefits of reinvestment.



### III

## *PERCEPTIONS OF LABOR MIGRATION AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE SOCIOPOLITICAL HIERARCHY*

This comparison of political perceptions of the migratory phenomenon in both sending and receiving countries will take account of the fact that conditions in the four countries clearly reflect different phases of capitalist development. It will compare these perceptions at several levels of the sociopolitical hierarchy. The upper level comprises public-sector actors such as the executive, with its infrastructure of ministers, advisors and secretariats, and private-sector individuals, such as high-level business executives and the editors and publishers of the national press.<sup>14</sup> At the middle level, this summary examines public-sector functionaries such as regional and/or local administrators (regional governors, state governors, mayors), as well as their representatives to the central government (members of national congresses); the private-sector perceptions at this level include those of clubs, discussion groups, and the local press.<sup>15</sup> Lastly, the lower-level public-sector actors considered here include the administrative employees and officials charged with implementing border security policies.<sup>16</sup> The concept of "private sector" is of questionable validity at this level, so the discussion will focus on the viewpoints of migrants themselves, as well as their families, neighbors, and friends.<sup>17</sup> The entire forthcoming discussion of political perceptions results not from an exhaustive content analysis of the sources (which are noted

---

14. The analysis of perceptions at this level of the hierarchy is based on position papers, newspaper articles, and in-depth interviews with management in the private sector, primarily in Colombia.

15. The analysis at this level is based on the study of position papers, newspaper information, and interviews with politicians and businessmen, particularly in Colombia and the United States.

16. This discussion will be based on information gathered directly from such functionaries during fieldwork. The professionalism, subordination, and forced impartiality of these officials renders such information scanty and vague, but the task of gathering more precise information at this level is extremely difficult.

17. This information comes primarily from fieldwork, since few written expressions of perceptions at this level exist.

in the bibliography), but rather from the consideration of certain pertinent information, especially news clippings and interviews.

### **The Upper Level**

The actors at high levels of the public-sector sociopolitical hierarchy see international migration as a problem requiring remedial attention. Presidential staffs in all four countries have addressed the subject and have included it in their work agendas. Nonetheless, it does not yet appear to have a position of priority in government policies. Worse yet, this subject is not considered of major importance in overall issues of bilateral interest.

In the case of Colombian migration to Venezuela, the recentness of the migratory phenomenon must be remembered, especially when comparing it to that occurring between Mexico and the United States. For this reason, migration has taken a place on the policy agenda behind such pressing issues as the urgent need to define the two countries' common border, a task which their governments have been addressing for the last two decades. More recently, executives have directed attention towards strengthening bilateral commerce and industry. Only recently has the problem of labor migration begun to occupy the attention of high-level public-sector personnel. During recent years, the increasing number of Colombians in Venezuela has required that the phenomenon be addressed within presidential platforms (those of Pérez Rodríguez and Herrera Campins) as well as within government programs (such as Herrera Campins's Matrícula General de Extranjeros in 1980 and Venezuela's Sixth National Plan). The treatment of the problem at the executive level has been broader in Venezuela than in Colombia because both the benefits and drawbacks of migration appear in the receiving country long before they affect the sending country.

In Mexico and the United States, which have a long history of labor migration, the perception of this phenomenon at the executive level has been both intense and concrete. Nevertheless, these periods of intense and concrete attention occur only when large numbers of U.S. workers are either outside the country (as in times of war) or are returning home. When the United States needs manpower to perform the work of absent U.S. laborers, the importation of foreign workers becomes a major concern; and when U.S. laborers return and the labor market becomes saturated, conflicts, pressures, and demands arise. The importation of Mexican workers under the Bracero Program of 1942-64 and their deportation during "Operation Wetback" in 1954 serve

to illustrate this point.<sup>18</sup> More recently, the rapid increase of the Hispanic population in the United States, especially in the southern states, has drawn executive attention to the migration phenomenon because of the increasingly vociferous demands of opinion groups either supporting or attacking the presence of undocumented Mexican workers within the country. Paradoxically, at the same time that executive attention to the problem of labor migration is increasing, the issue has fallen to a secondary position in terms of overall bilateral relations between Mexico and the United States. The executives of both countries have placed higher priority on issues regarding the exploitation, exchange, and utilization of Mexico's energy reserves; the implementation of joint actions to define regional policy towards the Caribbean and Central America; and the improvement of the terms of bilateral trade.

Each of these issues has a different level of importance, and that level varies further from one country to the other. While the United States places highest priority on assuring its future oil supplies, Mexico's primary interest is in establishing its regional political leadership in the Caribbean and Central America, a position which would give Mexico autonomy vis-a-vis the United States without creating the risk of any real confrontation. As a result of this complex situation, the issue of migration remains secondary on both countries' policy agendas, despite the close executive attention that it receives. The migration issue is discussed more clearly and dealt with more openly and intensely in the United States than in Mexico, where discussion of migration is avoided as much as possible. This has held true historically; the many Mexican presidents who have held office during the era of migration have, according to Bustamante, dealt hesitantly with the question of migration.<sup>19</sup> And Mexico still has no policies to retain its work force by creating a sufficient number of adequately paid jobs.

Since the executive or upper levels in these four countries tend to avoid handling the labor migration issue directly, they find it necessary to delegate it to their administrative

---

18. A fine historical treatment of this process can be found in Jorge Bustamante, "La migración indocumentada México-Estados Unidos: relación entre dinámica política y estructuras económicas," in *Primer encuentro sobre impactos regionales de las relaciones económicas México-Estados Unidos*, vol. 3, ed. Eliseo Mendoza Berrueto (México, D.F.: Impactos Regionales en las Relaciones Económicas México-Estados Unidos, A.C., 1982); see also Gilberto Cárdenas, "United States Immigration Policy toward Mexico: An Historical Perspective," *Chicano Law Review* 2 (summer 1975):166-191; and G. Sasha Lewis, *Slave Trade Today: American Exploitation of Illegal Aliens* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980).

19. Bustamante, "La migración indocumentada México-Estados Unidos."

infrastructures (ministers, advisors, and secretariats). Concrete responses to the problems of migration are formulated at this level, with the result that treatment of migration becomes fragmented, with each response addressing only one dimension of the phenomenon. Moreover, these piecemeal policies are never assembled into a coherent package specifically for submission to the various executives. And when these partial responses do occur, as in the United States, they arise from lower levels of the hierarchy. The diffusion and fragmentation of policy responses obviously correspond to and reflect the wide range of functions of the many cabinets and presidential task forces that address the issue. For example, Colombia's government has developed policies to regulate border migrations and to deter potential migrants and has proposed an overall migration bill;<sup>20</sup> Venezuela's Defense Ministry in 1981 strengthened and reorganized that country's border and population settlement plans; various Mexican ministries (PIDER, CUC, COPLAMAR, Distritos de Temporal, and SAM) have implemented rural development programs; and the U.S. Department of Labor occasionally gives restrictive interpretations of U.S. immigration laws as they apply to the seasonal employment of foreign migrant workers.<sup>21</sup>

When policy formulation addresses the migration issue indirectly, the policies usually respond to the broader goals of a government plan which calls for joint action at the national level. For example, one of the objectives of Colombia's Plan for National Integration is to stimulate the informal sector of the economy by instituting training programs which enhance workers' earning power. In the case of Venezuela, the Sixth National Plan attempts to influence the "internal makeup and rate of expansion of future labor markets" through "the control of clandestine immigration and the selective acceptance of skilled migrants."<sup>22</sup> The Mexican Global Development Plan for 1980-82

---

20. Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, "Política de migraciones laborales en Colombia," Project PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, in *Migraciones Laborales* 1:8-9. Also, their study *El éxodo de colombianos* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1980), Ramiro Cardona et al. provide a brief summary of the legislative process in Colombia as it relates to international migration (pp. 11-28). The authors conclude that this process has been disperse, uncoordinated, and ineffective, producing more good intentions than effective actions. See also the recent information policy developed by the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations directing that the period for the registration of undocumented immigrants be announced in the Venezuelan embassy and all its consulates. See *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 17 Dec. 1981: 1, 7.

21. Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 135.

22. "Lineamientos fundamentales del VI Plan de la Nación," *El Universal* (Caracas), 30 Aug. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:23 (1981).

includes a plan to create 2.2 million jobs, which would represent a 4.2% annual increase in employment.<sup>23</sup> The U.S. of course also has a long history of setting migration policy; but in the U.S., such policies have usually resulted from the efforts of various groups (politicians, academics, and opinion groups) whose recommendations have become part of legislative proposals which receive executive and legislative sanction along the way.

Little information exists on which to base an analysis of upper-level private-sector perceptions on the migration question. Just as in the public sector, expressions of opinion and the development of policies related specifically to migration occur primarily in the receiving countries. Venezuelan spokesmen for financial and banking concerns, for example, frequently indicate discontent with the presence of Colombian workers in the country, primarily because they feel that it increases unemployment.<sup>24</sup> Such spokesmen also express concern about the deflation of wages resulting from the surplus of undocumented Colombian migrants in the work force, and their statements are echoed in editorial pages of certain influential Venezuelan newspapers.

In the United States, where migration has a longer history and occurs on a larger scale, the positions taken by interest and pressure groups have themselves become controversial. Leaders in the industrial and agricultural sectors adopt restrictionist positions for self-serving reasons, condemning the employment by small and medium-sized employers of undocumented Mexican workers, and couching their rhetoric in terms of defending the interests of U.S. workers. Union (AFL-CIO) leaders take the same stance in favor of immigration restriction to defend the interests of their members, especially in sectors where they perceive an inelastic demand for labor and sense that the presence of competing undocumented workers has a deleterious effect on native workers.<sup>25</sup> But the opposite position on migration can also be found among nongovernmental elites, especially among religious and ethnic groups, which traditionally respond more on political than on economic grounds. These groups, including Chicano organizations, feel that undocumented

---

23. Cornelius, "Immigration, Mexican Development Policy, and the Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations": 13.

24. The National Banking Association stated that the extensive influx of foreign workers would cause severe unemployment. "Masivo ingreso de mano de obra extranjera puede precipitar una grave situación de desempleo," *El Universal* (Caracas), 11 Apr. 1979, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 2:9 (1979).

25. Although the AFL-CIO opposes the international migration of workers, some minor unions affiliated with the federation have repudiated this position by extending membership to undocumented Mexican workers. See Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 246.



workers receive unfair treatment and advocate the recognition of the migrants' human rights and the normalization of their immigration status.<sup>26</sup> They generally base their arguments on the fact that the United States is itself a country of immigrants which cannot reasonably deny entrance to other immigrants.

The large, low-income population groups in the sending countries who lack the economic resources necessary to satisfy their basic needs are obviously not represented by employers who officially oppose migration. Unfortunately Mexican labor leaders have not made enough explicit statements on the issue to permit a sound judgment regarding organized labor's position on the migration of Mexican workers to the United States. However, the view taken by management in Mexico's private sector may be comparable to that taken by management in Colombia. A recent series of in-depth interviews with businessmen and labor leaders in Colombia's private sector, conducted in the five cities supplying most of the migrating laborers (Bucaramanga, Cartagena, Cali, Cúcuta, and Medellín), indicate a definite tendency to view the phenomenon favorably.<sup>27</sup> A significant proportion of the interviewees felt that Colombia benefited from the fact that its low-income workers migrated in order to better their economic situation. Many individuals even felt it profitable to train these workers for work abroad, converting them, in effect, into a type of "export product." They also expressed the sense that migration provides an "escape valve" for the country's latent sociopolitical tensions.

In direct opposition to this viewpoint stands Colombia's National Association of Financial Institutions (ANIF), which discovered through a 1980 opinion poll that Colombians viewed the treatment of undocumented Colombian workers in Venezuela as "opportunistic, discriminatory, and demeaning." Moreover, people also felt that the responsibility for this situation lay with Colombia for not having provided "possibilities for employment, fair wages, and a correspondence between wages and level of training."<sup>28</sup> The organization indicated its surprise at these results, especially because the poll showed that Colombians, especially low-income groups, were generally more concerned with the question of undocumented workers in Venezuela than with the border definition issue.

---

26. Wayne A. Cornelius, "The Reagan Administration's Proposals for a New U.S. Immigration Policy: An Assessment of Potential Effects," *International Migration Review* 15:4 (1981):1-4.

27. See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 237-245.

28. Asociación Nacional de Instituciones Financieras, *No a Venezuela* (Bogotá, Colombia: Fondo Editorial ANIF, 1981):16-17.

Labor leaders have also expressed concern about certain aspects of the international migration of Colombian workers. In a joint statement issued in 1981, the leaders of the Colombian Workers Central (CTC) and the General Confederation of Workers of Venezuela (CGT) agreed to "protect, represent, and promote the rights of Colombian laborers working in Venezuela."<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, an examination of each country's national press reveals few articles which examine critically these international labor migrations. Major newspapers in both sending countries occasionally mention the exploitation and discrimination practiced against their countrymen abroad. This occurs more frequently in Mexico, especially in the more liberal newspapers such as *Unomásuno*. Nevertheless, it appears that these all-too-infrequent editorial expressions simply reflect nationalism and rarely result in concrete actions to defend the civil and human rights of these workers.

### Mid-level Perceptions

Groups, individuals, and public-sector organizations in the intermediate levels of the four countries' sociopolitical hierarchies are more aware of the international migratory labor phenomenon than are actors at any other level, and they direct their activities and attention to it. As noted previously, the administrators of local and regional entities (regional and state governors and mayors) and their representatives to the central governments deal more directly with the issue of migration than does anyone else. State governors (department governors in Colombia) and the mayors of border and near-border towns feel more pressure and receive more demands regarding the migratory labor issue than do any other government officials. In implementing policy, they must respond to the different and often conflicting pressures and expectations of diverse groups, whose positions on the issue can be reduced to two broad categories. The first, usually represented by national groups, departs from the premise that the influx of undocumented workers directly affects the groups' interests; the second finds expression among both national and foreign groups, such as resident colonies, national and international religious and political organizations, and employer organizations, which plead on behalf of undocumented migrant workers for civil and human rights. Undocumented migrants, they claim, are oppressed and exploited in the receiving countries.

---

29. "Proteger, representar y promover los derechos de los trabajadores colombianos que laboran en Venezuela," *La Religión* (Caracas), 29 Mar. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:21 (1981).

Not surprisingly, high-level government functionaries in a country's interior usually feel that handling the effects of migration (deportation, reception, socioeconomic aid, legalization and normalization of status, sanctions, etc.) falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of local border administrations. Consequently, border officials are pressured from all sides to address, but not always to resolve, problems related to the migratory phenomenon. However, they seldom have the means necessary to respond effectively to these problems, especially in peripheral countries.

In the two sending countries, mid-level public-sector actors appear to respond principally to the pressures of the moment and direct their actions toward immediate, short-term relief. The absence of visible, coordinated action programs confirms this modality, and the identification of any overall policy direction remains very difficult. As yet no study focuses directly on the decision-making process and behavior within the political structures involved in the issue of labor migration. Nevertheless, the reasons for this shortcoming are evident in the sending countries, where the issue of migration is not of central importance on the political agendas of regional and local governments and is infrequently mentioned in the local and national press. Consequently, even though bureaucrats at this level supposedly involve themselves with the issue more than do higher-level functionaries, their actions are sporadic and circumstantial, regardless of how much discussion the issue may generate.

In the two receiving countries, international migration is more widely perceived and therefore receives greater attention at this level. Nonetheless, it is difficult to draw a direct comparison between the two countries, since the appearance of the migratory flow is more recent and less intense in Venezuela than in the United States. Venezuela has yet to develop and implement explicit and definite policies towards migration; such policies as do exist address the issues indirectly and flow from more wide-ranging programs such as the Fifth and Sixth National Plans for 1976-80 and 1980-84, respectively.<sup>30</sup> Just as with

---

30. Under the Fifth National Plan, Venezuela's leaders intended to generate 900,000 jobs over a five-year period, of which 100,000 were to be unskilled and 800,000 skilled, technical, or professional. The plan projected that Venezuelan vocational centers would train 630,000 individuals, and the world labor market, especially Colombia's, would supply the remainder. See Jesús R. Márquez and Alberto Mayansky, "Sistemas de seguridad social y migración colombo-venezolana," Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Project PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, *Migraciones Laborales* 12 (1980):14-15. The Sixth National Plan placed first priority on education in hopes of satisfying the demand for skilled labor. The plan projected the involvement of a large segment of both the rural and urban work force through private and public funding and the implementation of rural development programs. The scheme also called for increased control over undocumented workers, some of whom will be incorporated

upper-level public-sector perceptions, research material on the type, frequency, and institutional origin of middle-level government actions on the migration issue is very scarce. Venezuela's control of the labor influx and the deportation of undocumented Colombian workers seemingly occur routinely, without any connection to a definite, coherent policy.<sup>31</sup>

The situation of the United States corresponds somewhat to that of Venezuela, differing fundamentally in that mid-level government actions in the U.S. carry much greater intensity. These actions arise from a context in which pressure groups are more organized and enjoy better communication channels (local television and press coverage, in contrast with the national media) and a better support infrastructure than in Venezuela. It is also noteworthy that two of the states bordering Mexico, the two which receive the greatest proportion of Mexican migrants (California and Texas), are very highly developed in relation to the country as a whole. This situation differs from that of Venezuela, where development in the states bordering Colombia (Zulia, Táchira, Apure, Bolívar, and the Federal Amazon Territory) lags behind that of the country's central area. The Sixth National Plan's consideration of these states as primary targets for national integration efforts illustrates the point. The high level of development of U.S. border states permits the mobilization of greater resources to deal with migration. These resources, when added to the polemical spirit of the American character, result in greater activity and, of course, a greater awareness of the problem. Lastly, as a result of the intensity of involvement, superior communications, the availability of resources, and a high level of activity on the issue, the question of international migratory labor appears often in campaign platforms and government programs at the regional and local levels. This occurs especially with regard to the activities of federal senators and representatives, who are recognized as spokesmen for regions of the country concerned with this phenomenon.

In the case of the sending countries, parliamentary actions dealing with this theme are generally more restrained than in the receiving countries. Unfortunately, no information is available on Mexican legislative behavior on this issue. In the case of

---

selectively into the skilled occupations for which there is a demand in the country. See *El Universal* (Caracas), 29 Aug. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:23 (1981).

31. Interviews conducted first with deported workers in Cúcuta and later in migrants' homes in five Colombian cities confirm this observation. See Gabriel Murillo, "La migración de trabajadores colombianos a Venezuela: la relación ingreso-consumo como uno de los factores de expulsión," project PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, *Migraciones Laborales* 11 (1979), and Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia."

Colombia, the little information available indicates that at least a few parliamentary actors recognize and attempt to deal with the issues at the parliamentary level. They include senators and representatives from border departments (Santander and Norte de Santander) and from those areas most affected by the migration by virtue of their being major sending areas (Valle, Antioquia, and Boyacá), as well as some liberal representatives from other departments (such as Cundinamarca). During the last five years, such actors have stimulated debate, have formed commissions to verify on the spot the serious problems associated with migration, and have designed legislative proposals to normalize the status of migrant workers and improve their living conditions in the neighboring country. Unfortunately, these efforts have received little legislative support and have therefore produced no action to alleviate the problems associated with migration.

In the receiving countries, greater pressures and demands emanating from organized groups cause senators and representatives to perceive the problem intensely and force them to act on it. However, certain anomalies appear in terms of who addresses the issue and how. In Venezuela, the *Matrícula General de Extranjeros* is more the plan of the executive than the legislative branch. For the same reasons mentioned above, United States senators and representatives have worked systematically and intensely for several decades to relieve the problem of migration, since the United States has traditionally been a "land of immigrants."<sup>32</sup> Congress is currently examining the migration policy proposal presented by the Reagan administration in mid-1981, which has been strongly influenced by the arguments and proposals offered by the Committees on Immigration of both houses of Congress. But the influence seems to run in both directions: the spirit and content of perceptions and actions regarding migration coming from the North American legislative branch are very similar to those of the executive branch. Thus, the proposals under consideration by the Committees on Immigration (relating to quotas for guest workers, employer sanctions, increased resources for the Border Patrol, and

---

32. "Legal and Illegal Migration to the United States," a report by the Select Committee on Population of the House of Representatives, 95th Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), summarizes the legislative history of this issue, beginning with the second half of the 19th century. See also the report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Tarnished Golden Door: Civil Rights Issues in Immigration* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980):158.

amnesty and naturalization processes) are very similar to those in the Reagan administration's July 1981 proposal.<sup>33</sup>

Just as in the case of mid-level public-sector actors, the majority of concrete expressions about migration by mid-level private-sector actors in the receiving countries come from groups located in border towns. The nature of their expressions, moreover, displays ambivalence about how they perceive the migratory labor phenomenon. On the one hand, private-sector individuals oppose migration when the flow of migrant workers in transit to the receiving country adversely affects border commerce dependent on customers from the receiving country. Colombian merchants in particular, unaware of the mistreatment accorded Colombian workers entering Venezuela's labor market, feel that the deportations and the resulting popular discontent only foment a campaign of anti-Venezuelan feeling which has the immediate effect of reducing the flow of Venezuelan consumers who previously crossed the border to purchase Colombian products and services.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, merchants of the sending countries also expect that their fellow countrymen, the migrant workers, will receive decent treatment and wages for their labor in the neighboring countries. In this sense, they support the positions of national (not regional) workers' organizations which call for fair and equal treatment for migrant workers.<sup>35</sup>

The mid-level private-sector groups who take positions on migration are by no means limited to business. The church hierarchy in border towns has undertaken campaigns in defense of the human rights of the migrants and economic assistance for workers either deported or jailed because of their migrant status. In Colombia the archdiocese of Cúcuta has led this campaign and, with the limited assistance of official national organizations, local philanthropic groups, and international religious associations, has organized programs providing material aid and diffusion of information about the difficulties encountered by undocumented workers. In Mexico several political organizations have mobilized their meager resources to help undocumented workers deported from the United States, as well as migrants

---

33. U.S. President, Office of the Press Secretary, "Statement by the President," Washington, D.C., 30 July 1981. It is interesting to note that congressional awareness of migration increased substantially in response to anxiety expressed by U.S. citizen groups over the fact that 85% of legal immigrants to the U.S. in 1981 were Spanish-speaking. See *New York Times*, 22 June 1981.

34. "Comerciantes de Cúcuta rechazan publicaciones antivenezolanas," *El Universal* (Caracas), 21 Jan. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:20 (1981).

35. See footnote 29.

from other countries in Central America who find themselves in Mexico, unable to gain entry into the U.S.<sup>36</sup> Lastly, the local, border-town news media of both countries often take a position either for or against migration restriction. These media positions are necessarily circumstantial in that they often react to "newsworthy" occurrences along the border.

In the middle-level private sectors of the receiving countries, awareness of and activities related to the migration phenomenon tend again to be greater than in the sending countries. In Venezuela, employers and businessmen in the private sector, both along the border and in the interior, express their confusion and disagreement with the policies for controlling undocumented workers. These policies limit their access to Colombian workers, whom these employers see as able, disciplined, and hardworking; such policies also increase costs and cause a labor shortage in the country.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, other groups, influenced by the xenophobic anti-Colombian rhetoric that often finds its way into Venezuela's communications media, oppose Colombian migration. Such opponents generally comprise local civic and labor organizations which feel themselves negatively affected by competition with Colombian workers who increase the size of the work force and lower wages.

In the United States, mid-level agents express themselves more frequently and do not limit their observations to debating the pros and cons of the presence of undocumented workers from Mexico and other countries. In fact, they react openly to the presence or absence of government policies on the issue, and the intensity of their criticism increases dramatically in times of public and governmental debate.<sup>38</sup> These expressions, often broadcast by the news media, appear most frequently in border towns among groups with differing interests and often antagonistic positions regarding migration. Moreover, migration-

---

36. Sergio Aguayo, "La situación de los migrantes centroamericanos en la frontera de Baja California Norte," mimeographed (Tijuana, B.C.N., México, 1981):4.

37. "Escasez de mano de obra en los Andes por control de la emigración en Colombia," statement by the President of the Federación de Productores Rurales de los Andes, *El Nacional* (Caracas), 13 Feb. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:20 (1981). See also "En distritos Mara y Páez: competencia en la mano de obra por expulsión de indocumentados," *El Nacional* (Caracas), 26 Feb. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:20 (1981).

38. Several groups are included here, among them the Migration Committee of the Chicano Federation (San Diego), organized labor groups, and other Latin and religious groups supporting the presence of the migrant workers. In contrast, groups such as the AFL-CIO and several conservative groups oppose the presence of these workers in the United States.

oriented research centers which have appeared in border areas are generating information used by the interested groups to continue the debate.

In summary, the most noteworthy aspect of migration-related perceptions and activities at the middle level is that all concrete responses have a short-term and functional nature and reflect the specific interests of the groups making them. Only rarely do actors at this level express support for the migrant workers who face oppression and exploitation. These workers, who lack the documents necessary to secure the rights and comforts of legal status, have become the subject of a debate in which the material interests of groups directly or indirectly involved take automatic precedence over the interests of the workers themselves. The only exceptions to this pattern are the necessarily limited efforts of a few religious and political groups — especially in Cúcuta, Tijuana, El Paso, Los Angeles and San Antonio — which work primarily to defend the human and civil rights of migrant workers.

#### **Perceptions at the Lower Sociopolitical Levels**

Identifying migration-related perceptions and activities at the lowest levels of the social hierarchy presents a somewhat paradoxical problem. On the one hand, the sentiments and positions of the masses are seldom formulated and articulated for public distribution. Therefore, any analytic effort without previous systematic fieldwork will lack the sort of information necessary for this exercise. On the other hand, the neighborhood communities of poorer social groups most susceptible to migration clearly manifest opinions on the issue, especially when responding to a particular occurrence (a border incident, deportation, or labor and/or political conflict). Thus we have evidence that materials exist which would permit the elaboration of some hypotheses about the behavior and attitudes of groups at this level of the hierarchy. Of course, the relative lack at this level of coherent statements on the issue merely points out the many structural obstacles to clear articulation of the sentiments of low-income, marginal groups. The lack of an effective political organization, of leadership, and of channels of expression and communication limits the ability of these groups to indicate their degree of awareness and constrains their possibilities for action on the labor migration issue. To accurately determine and record perceptions and actions with respect to migration at this level will require further in-depth research. Although we cannot yet measure and evaluate it, we cannot doubt that an awareness exists regarding this question, not only among those individuals who have experienced it themselves, but also among their relatives, neighbors, and general socioeconomic group.



In the public sector at this level in both the sending and the receiving countries, low-level functionaries, sometimes professionals, fill purely instrumental roles limited to carrying out orders. These functionaries, moreover, lack opportunities to express their own personal viewpoints. Although they fall institutionally within the executive branch as immigration, customs, and security officials, they have no decision-making authority; when they belong to the military or police forces, their functions are prescribed to an even greater degree — they must follow instructions without question.

The perceptions of functionaries at this level in the two sending countries exhibit few similarities. Because Mexico serves as a transit route for workers on their way to the U.S. from Central and South America, the perceptions of Mexican officials in charge of immigration and control of the undocumented differ from those of their counterparts in Colombia, where this problem is much less severe. Mexican officials find themselves in an ambivalent situation as countrymen of hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers, while also functioning as a police force to control the undocumented. Because of this position and because of the extent, history, and controversial nature of the phenomenon, Mexican officials perceive and act on the migration issue much more intensely than do their Colombian counterparts. While they express their frustrations over the mistreatment of their countrymen deported from the United States, many Mexican officials imitate the authoritarian, repressive, and even occasionally illegal behavior of North American officials when dealing with undocumented workers who have entered Mexico from the south.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, Colombian officials perceive the problem only when they come into contact with returning migrants who narrate their harrowing experiences in Venezuela. But they do not take action beyond simple border control of a basically one-directional nature (Venezuela-to-Colombia) as they attempt to control the entry of contraband and check for documents demonstrating nationality.

Neither sending country has a police force specifically charged with handling migration-related problems. This function has been assigned to each country's respective police force, which addresses the problem according to its severity in the individual country. In both sending countries, protection of the national borders forms part of overall national security arrangements.

The perceptions and actions of functionaries and officials of the public sector at the lower level in countries receiving

---

39. Aguayo, "La situación de los migrantes centroamericanos": 4; and Lewis, *Slave Trade Today*: 95-114.

undocumented migrants are necessarily more intense than those in sending countries. Since the effects of migration are more marked and widespread in the receiving countries, they have developed procedures to address and control the phenomenon. Even when border control and undocumented worker questions are not their only assigned duties, officials give these concerns a great deal of attention and allocate significant resources for the task.

In Venezuela the *Policía Técnica Judicial* (PTJ) and the National Guard share responsibility for migration-related police work. They have adequate resources to carry out their tasks and perform their duties with ardor.<sup>40</sup> In fact, confronted with the impact of migration in Venezuela, these officials often respond with heavy-handed, authoritarian, and sometimes abusive treatment, indicative of anti-Colombian sentiments.<sup>41</sup>

In the United States, a special force, the Border Patrol<sup>42</sup> of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, has responsibility for border control. Its duties are to prevent the entry of undocumented migrant workers, to define their status, and to deport them if necessary. Interestingly, this group expressly charged with these duties often lacks sufficient resources and infrastructure to carry them out. This insufficiency has led to requests for additional funding in recent legislative proposals and immigration laws. Just as in the case of Venezuelan officials, officials in the United States are keenly aware of the immigration problem in their country, where it has even more impact than in Venezuela. The behavior of Border Patrol officials is generally authoritarian and rigid — but restrained because popular concern for the civil rights of the migrants results in criticism when they receive unfair and/or extremely repressive treatment.

The limited information available about the private sector in the sending countries at this level reveals a widespread perception of the issues, as well as knowledgeability and objectivity. This sensitivity to the issues probably results from widespread contact with migration among most population groups in

---

40. And we can suppose that these duties will be increased and better defined in the future. Field research in the U.S. border districts of Brownsville, Texas and Chula Vista, California revealed that a Venezuelan mission recently visited the border installations of the U.S. Border Patrol to seek ideas and strategies for application in Venezuela's border areas.

41. An example is the recent incident involving several Colombian musicians in Venezuela who were arrested and beaten by the local authorities for their rendition of the Venezuelan national anthem in a popular dance hall. See "Veto musical a los venezolanos; 72 horas de calvario: Gutiérrez," *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 20 Nov. 1981: 1, 6.

42. "*La migra*" in the slang of the undocumented migrant workers.

Colombia and Mexico, either through personal experiences or those of relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. Informants from low-income groups interviewed in five cities in Colombia expressed overwhelming concern about the phenomenon of migration to Venezuela, indicating further that this issue is higher in importance than the Colombia-Venezuela border dispute.<sup>43</sup> This outcome surprised both the investigators and others acquainted with the details of the research in question, who shared the general impression that Colombians were more concerned with the border issue than with the issue of abuse in Venezuela of migrating Colombian workers.

Both Colombia and Mexico suffer a marked deficiency of avenues for popular expression at all levels. But in Mexico's border towns in Baja California certain popular organizations actively address the migration issue through the participation of people of meager economic and social resources.<sup>44</sup> There is no evidence that such organizations exist at this level in Colombia.

One would expect to find widespread though unarticulated opinions about the migration problem in receiving countries. While in Venezuela no opinion poll has systematically measured perceptions regarding the immigration of Colombians, informal conversations in the border area and newspapers indicate a widespread awareness of the phenomenon at the lower level and a generally unfavorable reaction to it.<sup>45</sup> The influx of undocumented Colombian migrants seems to imply the following to Venezuelan workers: first, a decrease in available resources and public services, exacerbating the already unequal distribution of wealth; second, increased insecurity about income as Colombian workers fill the labor demand. However, this negative perception does not necessarily translate into the xenophobic behavior apparent at some of the other levels of the Venezuelan hierarchy. In fact, a certain degree of class solidarity has aided many Colombians to achieve their goals in Venezuela and even to remain there permanently.

---

43. From a survey conducted by ANIF-Caracol in 1980 in the cities of Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla and Cúcuta. See ANIF, *No a Venezuela*: 11-58.

44. Sergio Aguayo, "La situación de los migrantes centroamericanos."

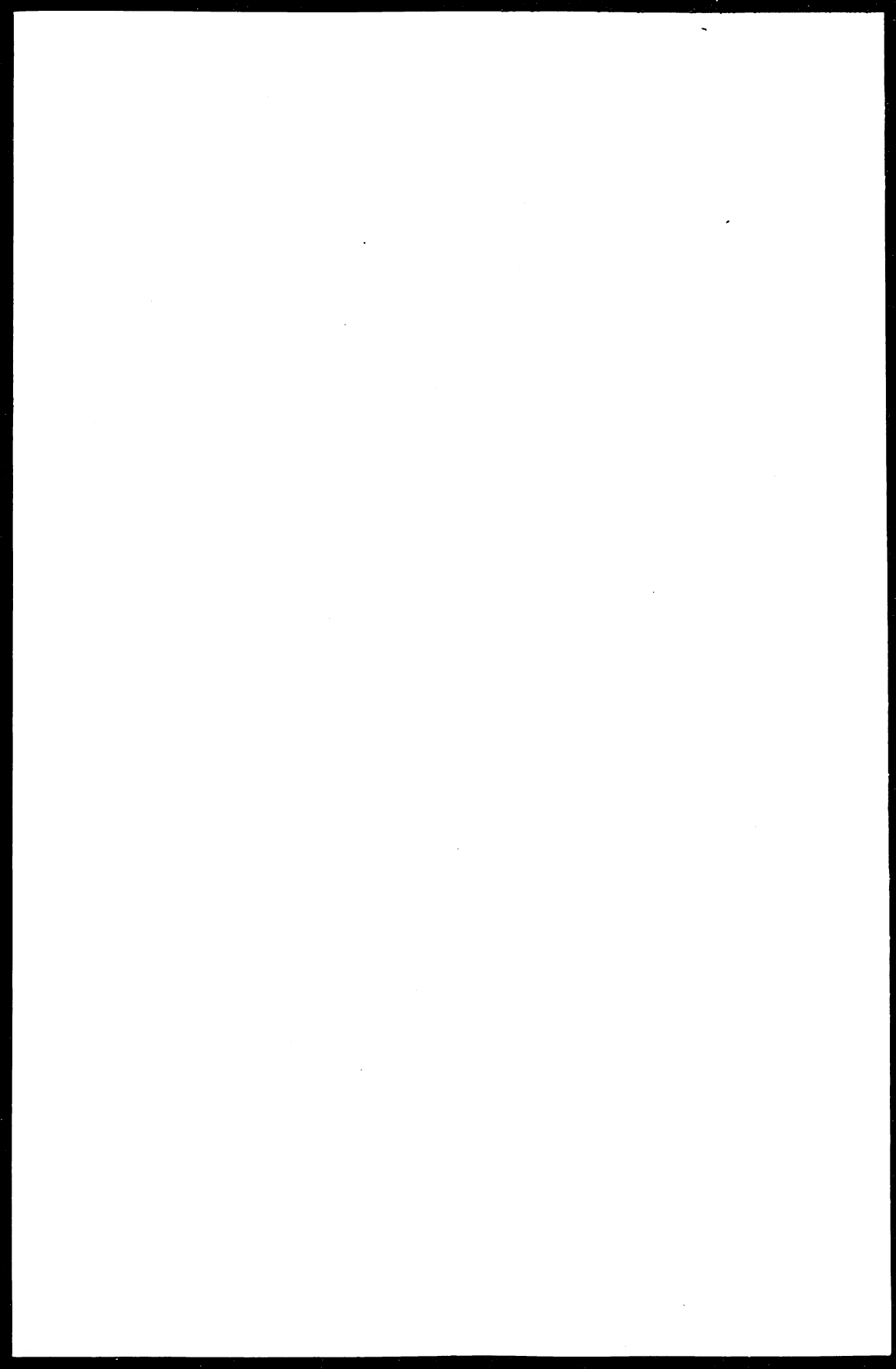
45. For an example of this, see "Qué barbaridad me parece a mí la idea de perdonar y legalizar a los dos millones y pico de indocumentados que infringiendo las leyes y burlándose de nuestras autoridades vinieron a agravar las calamidades que sufrimos los venezolanos y demás residentes legalizados . . ." and "Señor Ministro de Relaciones Interiores, Señor Director de Extranjería, más impunidad no, por favor . . .," both in "Correo del pueblo," *El Universal* (Caracas), 22 Apr. 1979, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 2:9 (1979).

Due to the wide use of opinion polls and greater press coverage of the migration issue in the United States, more information is available in that country.<sup>46</sup> This information, along with the fact that the United States is a country of immigrants, raises individual awareness of the issue and facilitates the formation of opinions about it. Also, because of the plural nature of the society and its diversity of interests, many different positions on migration are identifiable at this level. Minority groups, both of natives and resident immigrants, generally oppose migration since, just as in Venezuela, they feel that the influx of undocumented Mexicans threatens their precarious social and economic position. On the other hand, groups of recently arrived migrant workers express their solidarity with incoming migrants through class organizations which defend their common interests. Such unity originates in the class consciousness which results from shared social and work experiences and social mobility — which gives migrants access to higher levels of education, to wider professional opportunities, and to militant and professional groups with similar ideologies.<sup>47</sup>

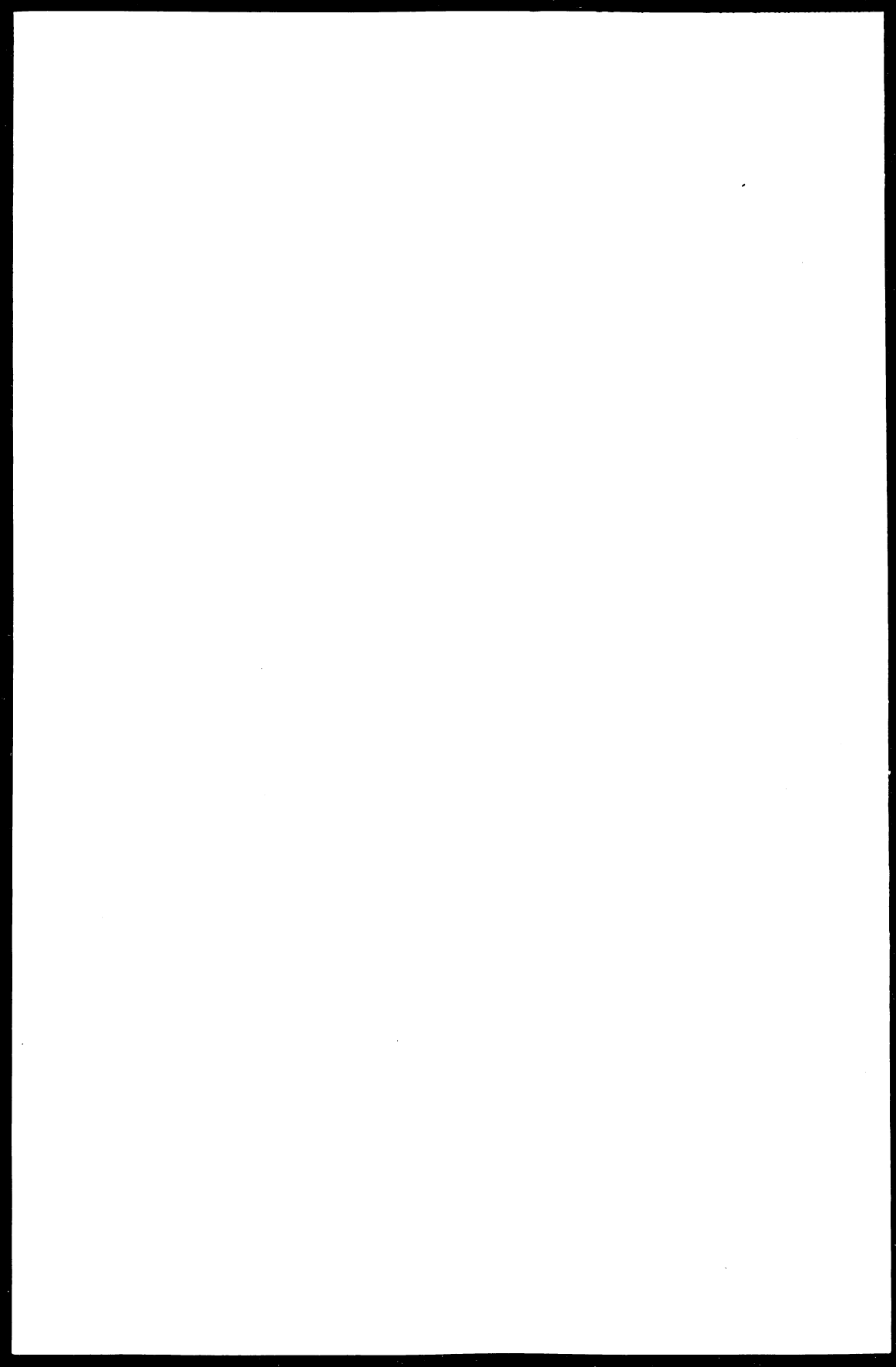
---

46. Of note among the opinion polls in the United States is one conducted jointly by the Associated Press and the National Broadcasting Corporation, which revealed that "North Americans feel that immigration to this country should be limited," *El Universal* (Caracas), 17 Aug. 1981, as cited in *Acontecer Migratorio* 4:23 (1981).

47. See Cornelius, "The Reagan Administration's Proposals for a New U.S. Immigration Policy."



**PART TWO:  
A SOCIOECONOMIC DESCRIPTION  
OF THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON:  
CHARACTERISTICS, RATIONALES,  
AND IMPACTS**



## IV

### *THE NUMERICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION*

One of the major debates in the study of international labor migration has centered on the number of workers migrating from one country to another.<sup>48</sup> The precise, reliable measurement of the number of migrants entering and leaving any specific country and the rate of their movement has proved extremely elusive. Nevertheless, both cases under present consideration involve a large number of migrants, and each case certainly merits consideration.

Whenever a marked imbalance of population density or socioeconomic development occurs between two bordering countries, individuals in the less-favored country leave their homes in search of better opportunities in the neighboring country. In this sense, migration from Mexico to the United States is not only older than that occurring between Colombia and Venezuela but also more extensive. This caveat should alert the reader to the fact that the comparisons which follow are relative, not absolute.

#### **The Numbers Question**

The Colombia-Venezuela migratory flow obviously does not compare in raw magnitude with that of Mexico to the United States. However, taking into account the relative differences in area and population, we find that the migration of labor between the two South American countries constitutes a phenomenon of considerable import, as evidenced by its impact and the debate that it generates. Recent estimates of the number of undocumented Colombian migrants in Venezuela vary widely, but they all reflect the magnitude of the phenomenon. These estimates of undocumented Colombians vary from 315,000, the number registered by the Venezuelan government in its *Matrícula*

---

48. A good review of the literature on problems encountered in estimating size and rate of growth of an undocumented population appears in Manuel García y Griego and Leobardo Estrada, "Research on the Magnitude of Mexican Undocumented Immigration to the U.S.: A Summary," presented at the Briefing Session for Professional Journalists by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego, June 1981. See also Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 35-45.



General de Extranjeros, to 3,000,000, a figure which appears in the tabloids of both countries, sometimes with xenophobic overtones in Venezuela.<sup>49</sup>

Among the estimates of undocumented Mexicans in the U.S., "guesstimates" are more common than serious and realistic calculations.<sup>50</sup> The few figures available from serious studies differ so dramatically that the only certain conclusion is that many individuals are migrating illegally. Estimates in the low range fall between 235,000 and 482,000; and figures in the upper range run from 1,200,000 to 2,900,000. Moreover, all experts in this area admit that they really do not have a precise idea of the true magnitude of this migratory flow.

The impossibility of deriving accurate estimates of numbers of undocumented migrants working in a given country results from the high degree of mobility and the clandestine lifestyle imposed on the migrant population, from the marked socioeconomic imbalance all along the borders of the neighboring countries affected by the flow,<sup>51</sup> and from numerous other factors. But this shortcoming in the data should not obscure the fact that neither having a precise count of undocumented migrant workers nor knowing the extent of migration are indispensable to understanding migration phenomena. In spite of this fact, the numbers question has become the central issue for certain individuals who attempt to manipulate the discussion

---

49. The Matrícula General de Extranjeros was conducted in Venezuela between June 23 and December 23, 1980. During this period, approximately 350,000 undocumented aliens registered in hopes of receiving the amnesty offered by the Venezuelan government and of gradually formalizing their legal and work status. Of these 350,000 registered aliens, more than 90% are Colombians. See also ANIF, *No a Venezuela*: 23-57.

50. García y Griego and Estrada, in "Research on the Magnitude of Mexican Undocumented Immigration," state that only three studies offer acceptable information on the number of undocumented Mexicans in the United States: J. Gregory Robinson, "Estimating the Approximate Size of the Illegal Alien Population in the United States," *Demography* 17:2 (1980); Manuel García y Griego, "La polémica sobre el volumen de la emigración a Estados Unidos," in *Indocumentados: mitos y realidades* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1979), and *El volumen de la migración de mexicanos no documentados a los Estados Unidos (nuevas hipótesis)*, Serie Estudios, No. 4 (México, D.F.: CENIET, 1980); and Juan Díez-Canedo, "A New View of Mexican Migration to the United States," (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1980). Another interesting perspective is found in Juan Díez-Canedo, "Undocumented Migration to the United States: A New Perspective," Latin American Institute Research Paper Series, No. 6 (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico, 1981).

51. The U.S.-Mexican border extends approximately 3,000 kilometers, and that of Colombia with Venezuela, 2,219 kilometers.

of migration both in the United States and in Venezuela. Estimates of migratory flow have given rise to increasingly negative perceptions of labor migration, and they also have contributed to the politicization of the issue when used to support the interests of groups benefited or harmed by international labor migration.

Because of their political value, these estimates of the number of undocumented migrants working in the receiving countries will continue to surface in migration-related study and debate. An increasing number of these figures will be based on rigorous, sophisticated scientific methodology which makes use of advances in statistics, modeling, and general mathematics. Others, with their basis in subjective estimates and biased impressions, will unfortunately persist as well. Neither group of figures will be precise, but both will be employed in the continuing debate on the migration issue, an issue which cannot be resolved as long as the structural imbalance between the areas involved in the migratory flow persists.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Location of Sending and Receiving Areas**

The more marked the socioeconomic imbalance between two countries affected by migratory labor flows, the greater will be the dispersal of the points of origin and destination. That is, greater imbalance will cause migration to originate in many separate areas of the sending country. The migratory influx, as it enters the receiving country, will also tend to settle in many different localities.

One would suppose that the border areas are the primary sending areas and, therefore, the origin and family residence of the majority of migrant workers. However, in the cases under present consideration, international migration arises primarily in areas geographically distant from the border with the neighboring country. And unequal development does not by itself explain why these points of origin supply the bulk of the migrants, since they are not the least developed and poorest areas of the sending country. On the contrary, they are often fertile areas with well-developed commercial agriculture and some infrastructure for its transport and marketing. The geographic selectivity of

---

52. A well-known Colombian television news program reported that during 1981 twenty persons were deported daily from Venezuela. The annual total, 7,300 individuals, indicates that neither the *Matricula General de Extranjeros* nor the companion measures to prevent the entry of Colombians into Venezuela have significantly reduced the presence of undocumented migrants in the receiving country (*Noticiero T.V. Hoy*, 3 Jan. 1982). The total number of Colombian deportees from Venezuela was 6,821 in 1977; 6,312 in 1978; 7,115 in 1979; and 2,419 in the first half of 1980.

international labor migration and the relatively advanced development level of sending areas indicate a need to identify the factors which cause migration. Geographically distant and relatively developed areas become sending regions because of internal imbalances in these areas, which generally appear as they become involved in the capitalist development process. This process, which tends to concentrate property in the hands of local, national, and even international power groups, produces an imbalance which, when added to population growth, displaces people — first toward urban areas, and then toward bordering countries.

While these arguments identify incipient capitalist development as the cause of migration in general terms, they also point out the necessity of identifying specific causal factors in each sending country. The manifestations of these factors differ according to the characteristics of each area; and these characteristics, in turn, result from the social relations and the spatial distribution of the dominant productive activities in the area.

This conceptualization of the migratory phenomenon implies that the dislocation of migrants possesses its own particular structural characteristics which require individual treatment. However, that fact should not lead to a strategy of studying migrant origin apart from the articulation between sending and receiving countries. The introduction of workers into the receiving countries results from a series of economic, sociopolitical, and labor-market factors in those countries. Just as in the sending countries, the spatial distribution of productive activities and the social relationships governing their ownership and use determine the socioeconomic dynamics of migration.

If labor migration between a poor sending country and a rich receiving one becomes structured and sufficiently widespread, it can develop into a migratory tradition. When such a tradition evolves, migrants travel the same routes under similar situations, stimulated by unchanging conditions both in the sending context and in the receiving context where they seek economic advancement.

Once a migratory flow becomes established between two bordering countries characterized by marked inequality in development, the number of sending and receiving contexts increases. Labor migration thus spreads throughout the geographic extent of the two countries, and the phenomenon reaches the most marginal areas of the sending countries. Both sending countries considered in this essay have experienced such a spreading of points of origin.

For example, workers migrate to Venezuela from all of Colombia's geopolitical units (departments, *intendencias*, and municipalities). Records of places of migrant origin are available at only three points of entry along the entire border between the

two countries: Maicao in the department of Guajira, Cúcuta in Norte de Santander, and Arauca in the *intendencia* of the same name. And only in the first two of these (more so in Cúcuta than in Maicao) have authorities kept systematic records which permit a precise identification and classification of the principal points of origin.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the records from all three locations and a few others where research on this question has been undertaken make possible the identification of those Colombian departments which are the principal sources of emigrants.<sup>54</sup> They are Valle del Cauca, Santander, Antioquia, Boyacá, Atlántico, Bolívar, and Norte de Santander. More than half of these lie a substantial distance away from the Venezuelan border, including Valle and Antioquia, which are among the four most prominent sending areas in all of Colombia. The provinces along Colombia's Atlantic coast<sup>55</sup> also form a block which is an important sending area of migrant workers to Venezuela. Migrants from this area are very hard to detect once they reach their destinations because of the following factors: first, they share ethnic and cultural similarities with Venezuelans of Caribbean origin; second, the presence of similar peasant populations in both countries masks national identity and facilitates movement among them; third, the relatively short distance between Colombia's Atlantic coast and Venezuela permits a pattern of frequent migration; and fourth, the low level of population in the area results in its being relatively unpatrolled. These four considerations lead to an underestimation of the numbers of migrants dislodged from this area in most analyses of migration to Venezuela. These facts should not lead to the conclusion that the region is Colombia's primary sending area, but they clearly indicate the region's importance as a source of migrants, a status corroborated by official figures placing Atlántico and César among the eight major sending areas in Colombia.

---

53. Many studies of migration between Colombia and Venezuela have identified major sending areas through reference to the records of deportations kept in Maicao and Cúcuta by the Foreign Section of the Department of Administrative Security and in Cúcuta by the Reception Center for Deportees. Several of these studies deserve mention: Luis Mansilla, "Inserción laboral de migrantes indocumentados," and María F. Velosa, "Mercados de trabajo y salarios diferenciales en zona fronteriza," both in *Migraciones Laborales* 8, Project PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027 (1979); and Murillo, "La migración de trabajadores colombianos a Venezuela."

54. The National Education Service (SENA) in 1979 conducted a study which identified the majority of Colombian migrants as natives of the major sending provinces listed here. This list was corroborated by primary research on places of origin of migrant workers. See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia."

55. This region comprises the departments of Atlántico, Bolívar, César, Córdoba, Guajira, Magdalena, and Sucre.

The scant data available from the small border city of Maicao seems to overstate the importance of its environs as a source of migrant workers. The data collected in Cúcuta seem to reflect more accurately the role of all the Colombian departments as sending areas, not only those along the Atlantic coast.

A final observation regarding Colombia's sending regions: Valle and Antioquia send large numbers of migrants primarily because these two provinces share types of productive activities with areas of high labor demand in Venezuela. Valle del Cauca specializes in the cultivation and processing of sugar cane, while Antioquia is a highly developed industrial center, especially in the textile industry. Because of demand factors in Venezuela, workers from these areas are in a favorable position to respond to the receiving country's labor market and to benefit from the emergence of a migratory flow. Additionally, in contrast to the Mexico-U.S. case, urban areas in Colombia also serve as sources of migrants to Venezuela. The cities and towns most involved as senders of migrant workers are the provincial capitals and their satellites.<sup>56</sup>

In Mexico, several western, northern, and central states have historically served as the primary senders of workers to the United States,<sup>57</sup> but recently, the number of migrants from northwestern Mexico, the area closest to the U.S.-Mexican border, has increased.<sup>58</sup> The earliest studies of Mexican migration to the United States noted a migratory tradition originating from the states of the Bajío, a trend which has continued from the 1920s to the present. Studies have noted that trend over time, as well as the increase in emigration from border states, especially from Baja California Norte.<sup>59</sup>

Significantly, labor emigration in both Mexico and Colombia originates not in the poorest areas of these countries, but rather in areas characterized by high population density, little industry, and serious difficulties in rural development. This statement is

---

56. Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 2-12.

57. They are Guanajuato, Michoacán, Jalisco, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, México, Hidalgo, and Guerrero.

58. Migration has increased especially from the states of Baja California Norte, Sonora, and Nayarit.

59. See Robert F. Foerster, *The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies to the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1925); CENIET, *Encuesta a trabajadores mexicanos no documentados devueltos de los Estados Unidos* (México, D.F.: CENIET, 1979); CENIET, "Informe sobre algunos resultados obtenidos en la Encuesta Nacional de Emigración a la Frontera Norte del País y a los Estados Unidos," unpublished, 1981.

particularly true of Mexico's Bajío states, where subsistence agriculture on overworked land lacking adequate irrigation typifies rural economic activity.<sup>60</sup> These states also send migrants to Mexico's urban centers, especially to the Federal District. In contrast with the case of Colombia, Mexico's sending areas are predominantly rural. The nature of the labor demand in the United States explains this characteristic: the demand for Mexican workers is principally in the agricultural sectors for workers who need not have had any previous experience.

In spite of the predominantly rural origin of Mexican migrants, a study of bank records appears to indicate that Mexico City is an important sending center for undocumented migrant workers.<sup>61</sup> However, this data may simply reflect Mexico City's role as a center for financial transactions rather than its importance as a source of migrants, who may choose to conduct their financial transactions in Mexico City rather than in their rural home communities. The clarification of this ambiguous data awaits further study, which will hopefully improve our understanding of the migration process in general.

The spatial distribution of migrants in Venezuela shares certain characteristics with the distribution of Mexicans throughout the U.S. Both Colombian and Mexican migrant populations are widely distributed throughout the respective receiving countries. Although the migration phenomenon is much more recent in Venezuela than in the United States, Colombian migrants have spread throughout all of Venezuela and have come to form part of its national labor force. The recent spurt in Venezuela's economy and its urgent need to modernize and establish a secure infrastructure for development, along with the uneven spatial distribution of its population, are principally responsible for bringing about this rapid dispersal. Official deportation records from Venezuela clearly indicate the wide distribution of Colombians throughout the work force and the various regions of the country. Nevertheless, just as in the United States, there are certain states (and within these, certain cities) where migrants concentrate.<sup>62</sup>

---

60. Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*.

61. See Díez-Canedo, "Undocumented Migration to the United States": 10-38. This study points out the tendency of migrants from Mexico City to locate in Illinois and New York City rather than in the border states of Texas and California.

62. The majority of Colombian migrants establish themselves in the Venezuelan states of Táchira, the Federal District, and Barinas. And migrants originally from Colombia's Atlantic coastal area reside most commonly in Caracas and Zulia. See Mansilla, "Inserción laboral de migrantes indocumentados": 25.

Unfortunately, this essay cannot probe in great depth the various strategies for incorporating migrants into the labor markets of Venezuelan and U.S. cities and states. But the fact that migrant workers tend to concentrate in localities where they may become involved in productive activities able to absorb a greater work force bears repeating. Simply put, migrants gravitate toward localities where there is a market for their labor. For example, concentrations of Colombian workers in Venezuela occur in cities such as Maracaibo, Caracas, Valencia, and Barquisimeto, where the service jobs usually held by Colombians are most plentiful. Similarly, significant numbers of Colombians migrate to areas which require the incorporation of additional labor in agricultural activities. In the United States, Mexican workers form significant portions of the service sectors of cities such as San Diego, Los Angeles, Houston, and Chicago, while their incorporation into the agricultural sector occurs primarily in states with labor-intensive cultivation such as California, Texas, Illinois, and Florida.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Border Regions**

The Mexico-U.S. and Colombia-Venezuela borders are comparable in several respects, especially insofar as they are both extensive,<sup>64</sup> permitting the development of complex, dynamic forms of border interaction. The Colombian-Venezuelan border region is more marginal than that of Mexico and the United States in terms of the growth of urban centers and development poles.

The intermediate urban centers of Cúcuta<sup>65</sup> and San Antonio (San Cristóbal) form a primary axis across the Venezuela-Colombia border, an axis which includes a section of the Pan American Highway (the principal highway of South America), an airport, the provincial capital on the Colombian side (Cúcuta), and two important Venezuelan cities (San Antonio and San Cristóbal). Cúcuta, the region's administrative center, is also a center of industry (construction materials, footwear), commerce (clothing, furniture), and services (hotels, restaurants, entertainment, and automotive repair shops). San Cristóbal also has administrative functions, commerce (household appliances,

---

63. For a detailed discussion of the incorporation of undocumented Mexican workers into the U.S. labor force, see Lewis, *Slave Trade Today*: 53-167, and Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 101-107, 193-213.

64. See note 51.

65. According to the 1973 Colombian census, the city of Cúcuta had 278,299 inhabitants.

cosmetics, car parts, and foodstuffs) and services (body shops, restaurants, hotels, etc.).

The second axis of this border region consists of Maicao,<sup>66</sup> a small town in the province of Guajira close to the Venezuelan border, which has no parallel urban center on the Venezuelan side. A paved road runs through it and connects it to the Venezuelan city of Maracaibo. Maicao's growth is tightly linked to sales of contraband products and to services which center around this activity.

The third and least important axis of the Colombia-Venezuela border region occurs between the town of Arauca<sup>67</sup> and Guasualito, a small border river port in the Colombian *intendencia* of the same name. Arauca is transversed by a farm road connecting the plains area of both countries, areas which remain marginal in spite of their cattle wealth and general agricultural potential. The cattle industry is the center of economic activity for this region.<sup>68</sup>

Of the three axes where border interaction and dynamics tend to concentrate,<sup>69</sup> only the first comprises two cities with socioeconomic complementarity. The remainder of the border is composed primarily of desolate areas distant from the highway infrastructure; only a few small areas are inhabited and/or involved in the contraband traffic of cattle and coffee from Colombia to Venezuela. Nevertheless, these few geographic points and this level of border interaction are sufficient for the migration of undocumented Colombian workers to have developed into a phenomenon comparable to the migration of Mexicans to the United States.

The Mexico-U.S. border, however, is substantially more complex and dynamic. The urban centers scattered all along it give rise to a higher level of interaction between these neighbor countries and reinforce the historical and political factors which underlie the emergence of a migratory tradition. Because these

---

66. According to the 1973 census, Maicao had a population of 28,985.

67. The 1973 census indicates a population in Arauca of 12,364.

68. For a more detailed examination of the socioeconomic characteristics of Arauca, see Inés Gómez et al., "Mercados de trabajo y migración en ciudades fronterizas," Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, *Migraciones Laborales* 10 (1979):21-29.

69. A fourth location which could be included here is the axis of Puerto Carreño (Colombia) and Puerto Páez (Venezuela). However, the remoteness of these two towns from the central areas of their respective countries increases their marginality, despite their potential as river ports on the Orinoco River.



historical determinants have been studied and reported elsewhere,<sup>70</sup> this essay need not embark on an analysis as detailed as that presented for the Colombian-Venezuelan border region. However, a few of the characteristics of the Mexico-U.S. border region bear examination.

Because of the extreme economic disequilibrium between Mexico and the United States, the spatial imbalances which force workers to migrate toward the location of the means of production are much more marked in the United States than in Venezuela. Thus, both the long history and magnitude of the Mexican migratory phenomenon and the deep socioeconomic gap separating Mexico and the United States have determined a specific pattern of population concentration, especially of Mexicans, along the U.S.-Mexico border. Had this economic gap not existed, the border area today would be more marginal and less populated, despite Mexico's efforts at colonization in the area.

Moreover, certain perceptible similarities exist between the border development characteristics of the Mexico-U.S. case and that of Colombia-Venezuela. Like those already examined, the urban axes along Mexico's northern border are transversed by highway and communication networks which attract and facilitate migration. And just as in the case of Cúcuta-San Antonio, these axes are characterized by the existence of pairs of complementary neighboring cities on each side of the border, a "twin city" phenomenon which forms the basis for numerous economic activities and complex urban development in general. The most notable of these axes are San Diego-Tijuana, El Paso-Ciudad Juárez, and Brownsville-Matamoros.<sup>71</sup> A third similarity is the existence of some isolated border regions where the border dynamic is less intense, less controlled, more irregular (allowing contraband traffic), and therefore, less understood.

One key difference between these two cases of border development bears emphasis. It results from the differences in relative levels of development between Colombia and Venezuela on the one hand and between Mexico and the United States on the other, and it centers on production strategies formalized in the Border Industrialization Program (BIP). These strategies

---

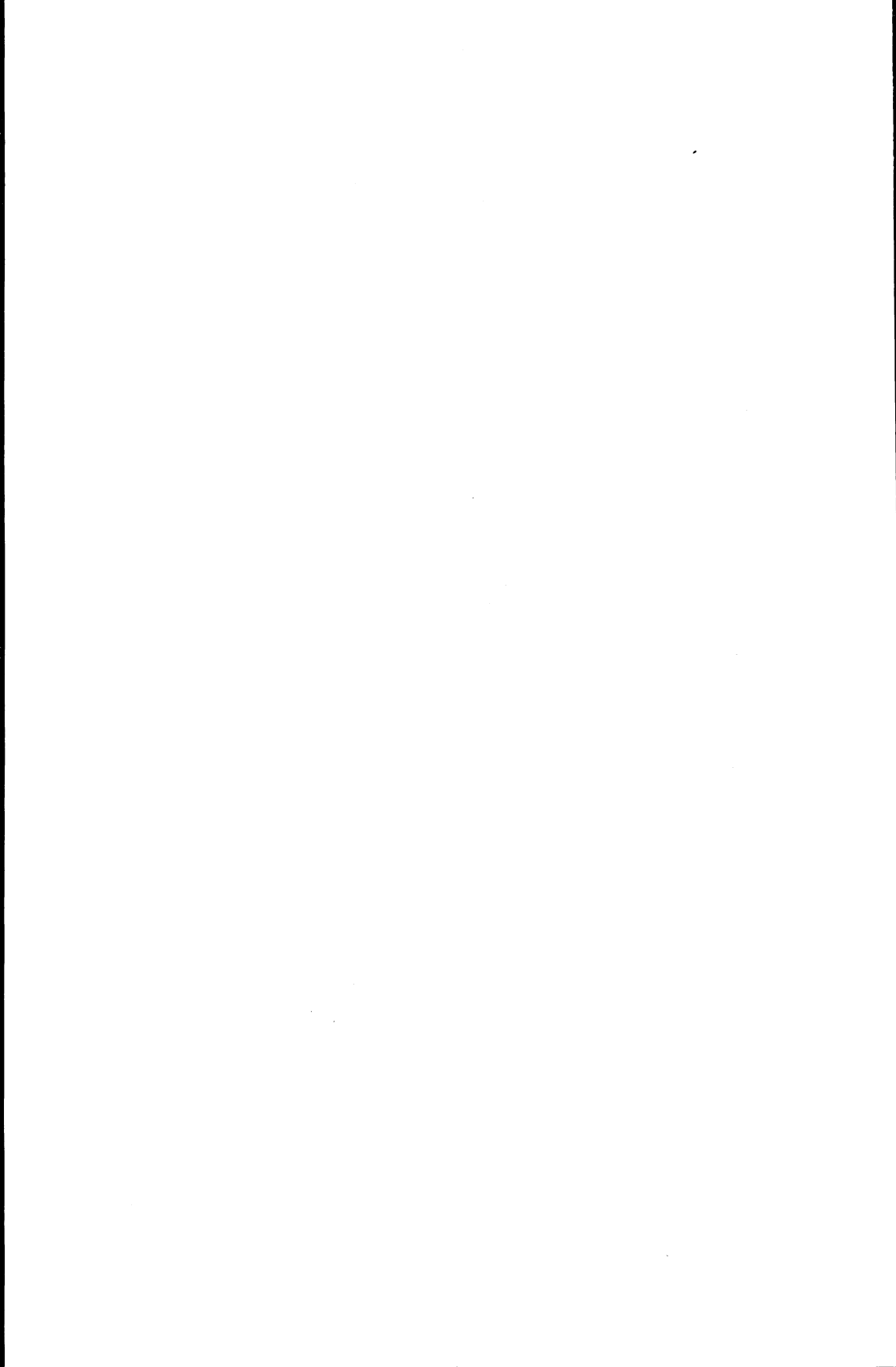
70. See, for example, Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*; Jorge Bustamante and Francisco Malagamba, *México-Estados Unidos: bibliografía general sobre estudios fronterizos* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1980); and Jorge Carrillo and Alberto Hernández, *La industria maquiladora en México: bibliografía, directorio e investigaciones recientes*, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 7 (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981).

71. Other border axes of lesser importance in the urban-spatial hierarchy include Laredo-Nuevo Laredo, Yuma-San Luis, El Centro-Mexicali, Nogales-Nogales, and McAllen-Reynosa, among others.

integrate the technology of industrial capitalism with the surplus, low-cost human resources available along the border. The rapid development of the *maquiladora* industry<sup>72</sup> along this border signals a socioeconomic complexity not yet found in the Colombia-Venezuela border relationship.

---

72. Carrillo and Hernández, *La industria maquiladora en México*.



## V

### SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANT AND MIGRATION

This chapter, which compares the socioeconomic characteristics of undocumented Colombian migrants with those of undocumented Mexicans, draws from field research conducted in South America, as well as from published studies on each of the two migratory phenomena under consideration. The field research consists of a random sampling of Colombian workers deported from Venezuela and a home survey of migrant workers residing in five Colombian cities. The data sources on Mexican migrants vary widely and will be cited as necessary.

The two field research projects on Colombian migrants produced very similar results in terms of the principal socioeconomic characteristics of the Colombian migrant worker, and other descriptive studies of migration between these two countries confirm the validity of these results.<sup>73</sup> These studies show that Colombian migrants are predominantly male (eldest sons living with their parents and to a lesser degree single independent men and husbands without children) and young (most between 15 and 30 years of age); they come from many regions of Colombia (both rural and urban), and almost all have some formal education (the majority with an incomplete primary education, some with some secondary schooling, and a small minority with some higher education).

The majority of Colombian migrants have had previous work experience at unskilled jobs, and most have access to labor markets at home. But these markets have not offered adequate wages; at most, they have removed these individuals from the ranks of the unemployed. A few Colombians have even migrated to Venezuela a second time in hopes of reobtaining their former jobs after having returned to Colombia for additional studies. Most migrants with families live in Venezuela's urban barrios, with the minority residing in rural areas (villages and crossroads). In both cases they enjoy an infrastructure of basic services (potable water, electricity, plumbing) and community

---

73. See, among others, Cardona et al., *El éxodo de colombianos*, and Mansilla, "Inserción laboral de migrantes indocumentados": 13-19.

services as well (health centers, schools, hospitals, police stations, parks, and recreation centers).<sup>74</sup>

Researchers also generally agree about the socioeconomic characteristics of Mexican migrant workers.<sup>75</sup> This overall agreement, as in the Colombian case, permits the elaboration of socioeconomic descriptions of the Mexican migrant; but in the Mexican case, the greater number of migration studies has resulted in the development of some classification systems, and the description of Mexican migrant workers tends to vary according to the classification system used. The best of these typologies (that of Wayne Cornelius) points out characteristic differences among the migrants which are related to the duration or permanence of the migration to the United States and to the area of the country in which the worker locates.<sup>76</sup>

Mexican migrants in general display the following characteristics: the majority are male (both married and single)<sup>77</sup> and young (between 20 and 30 years of age). They come from many regions of Mexico (but more rural than urban ones),<sup>78</sup> and a significant proportion have completed a course of primary education (and their level of education is generally above the average for their communities of origin). Most Mexican migrants have previous work experience, primarily in rural and unskilled employment. Their jobs in Mexico, however, have typically been insecure and poorly paid — an indication that absolute unemployment is not the principal factor in the decision to migrate.

---

74. For a detailed statistical description of these socioeconomic characteristics, see Murillo, "La migración de trabajadores colombianos a Venezuela": 57-83, and Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 183-191.

75. See, among others, U.S. Congress, House Select Committee on Population, "Legal and Illegal Immigration to the United States"; Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*; Ina R. Dinerman, "Household Composition, Land Tenure Patterns, and Propensity to Migrate: A Comparative Study of Two Rural 'Sending' Communities in Michoacán, Mexico," mimeographed, presented at U.S.-Mexican Relations Seminar, Wheaton College, Norton, Mass., 1981.

76. Cornelius, "Immigration, Mexican Development Policy, and the Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations": 78-80.

77. Cornelius has found that occasional migrant workers include a greater proportion of single men than do those who remain in the United States for longer and more regular time periods.

78. The densely populated states of the central region (Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas) have traditionally been the source of the majority of migrants. Recently, northern states such as Chihuahua, Durango, and Coahuila have also gained importance as migrant sending areas. See Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 88-91.

The majority of Mexican migrant workers come from rural tenant or *ejido* families, and a minority from families with small, private landholdings and generally inadequate housing. The data do not offer conclusive evidence regarding the sending communities' composition and the availability of domestic and infrastructural services, but available information does indicate that the insufficiency of these services is more qualitative than quantitative. Because they are of predominantly rural origin<sup>79</sup> and Mexico's rural infrastructure is precarious at best, Mexican migrants' home communities generally provide less adequate basic services than do Mexico's urban areas.

This brief look at the basic socioeconomic variables characterizing migrant workers from Colombia and Mexico indicates an overall similarity of the sending context. Nevertheless, certain important differences do exist. The fact that Mexican migrants tend to be somewhat older than their Colombian counterparts stems from improvements in Mexico's educational programs and rural services, financed by the country's growing economic resources. These services have allowed rural workers to remain at home for a longer period. In combination with the growing tendency for men to marry at a later age, this infrastructural development allows many men to postpone migration to the United States until they find themselves confronted with the task of maintaining a household in the context of Mexico's deflated wage situation, which persists despite increases in public spending.<sup>80</sup> This leads to approximate parity between married and single men in Mexico's migrant population.

The Colombian migrant worker, on the other hand, whether from a rural or urban environment, has not enjoyed any significant improvement in the availability of services as have Mexican workers. This explains the occurrence of migration at a younger age and the increase in expulsion from urban areas as low-income families opt for the migration of one family member as a means to alleviate their severe economic difficulties. Additionally, the fact that an increasing number of Colombian migrants originate in urban areas contrasts directly with the predominantly rural origin of Mexican migratory workers.

### **The Migratory Rationale**

Most studies dealing with migration between Colombia and Venezuela and between Mexico and the United States have

---

79. A national survey of Mexican households conducted in 1978-79 revealed that 80% of migrants to the United States come from Mexico's rural areas. Cornelius, "Immigration, Mexican Development Policy, and the Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations": 9.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-17.

systematically examined the rationale underlying the decision to migrate, including the migrants' justifications for, expectations of, judgments about, and economic returns from the migratory experience. These studies reveal that the decision results in most cases from the convergence of critical socioeconomic factors which force workers to migrate in search of more favorable economic conditions. And they show that the availability of favorable opportunities is especially apparent along international borders where the contradictions inherent in unequal development appear in relative proximity, free of physical obstacles (oceans, extreme distance, or difficult terrain).

Empirical studies of undocumented migrants show that the majority of migrant workers in both cases under present consideration clearly understand that they migrate because they cannot satisfy the requirements for the reproduction of labor and other needs in their home countries.<sup>81</sup> Contrary to assumptions proposed in traditional literature on labor migration, most migratory workers view themselves as forced to migrate because their home countries do not provide them with opportunities to acquire decent housing, education, food, clothing, health services, social security, etc. They very clearly are not responding primarily to traditionally cited motives such as "magnetism," "the spirit of adventure," or the attraction of luxury goods. Far from resulting from whims or the simple desire for adventure, low-income Colombians and Mexicans decide to migrate because of structural conditions in the sending countries.

The author's most recent field research revealed that Colombian workers migrating to Venezuela most frequently offered the following explanations for their decision to migrate: low salaries, unemployment, and family members living in Venezuela.<sup>82</sup> In a survey of Mexican migrants to the United States, Wayne Cornelius found several principal justifications for the decision to migrate: the lack of stable, well-paid employment; urgent economic need; a desire to maximize family income; and the lack of land to sell in case of an emergency. Thus, although the United States' industrial, consumer society attracts people from abroad, migrants flock to the country primarily because poverty forces them to leave their homes and to submit to the

---

81. See, among others, Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 149-182; Mansilla, "Inserción laboral de migrantes indocumentados": 17-18; and Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 122-128.

82. Thirty-six percent of the respondents gave insufficient salary as the primary reason for migrating, while 26% cited lack of jobs and 14% attributed the decision to the presence of family members in Venezuela. See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 179-183.

harsh treatment they receive upon joining the ranks of the undocumented in North America.<sup>83</sup>

The expectations of Colombian and Mexican undocumented workers also display remarkable similarity. The migrant worker intends primarily to "save money and return home," a goal clearly articulated by both Colombian and Mexican workers.<sup>84</sup> And the percentage of migrants with saving as their primary aim increases when added to those workers of both countries who migrate in order to send earnings home. The cyclical nature and seasonality of the two migratory patterns also display notable similarity. In neither of the two cases do significant numbers of workers express a desire to remain, reside, or establish themselves indefinitely in the receiving country, not even among migrants who have lived in the receiving countries for a considerable length of time.<sup>85</sup>

With regard to undocumented workers' evaluation of their migration experience, empirical data are difficult to gather. Apart from the material goods (money or consumer durables) acquired through the migratory experience, evaluative considerations are purely subjective and, therefore, relative to each individual case. Nevertheless, certain factors clearly affect in predictable ways the evaluations which migrants make upon returning home. Migration provides the worker with fairly easy access to money and material goods, an economic advantage which results to a significant degree from the large differentials in currency values between sending and receiving countries. Without such access, migration would cease.

Unfortunately migrants achieve this access to material advantage at the price of tremendous sacrifice and human suffering. Their undocumented status renders foreign migrants vulnerable to all manner of mistreatment and abuse, a personal strain aggravated by certain psychological factors such as those involved in adjusting to a new social environment. Precisely because they are far from their home communities' standards,

---

83. Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 122-128.

84. The data from the author's fieldwork in Venezuela indicate that once a migrant has been incorporated into Venezuela's labor market, that person's primary goal is to "save earnings and return home" in 49% of the cases: See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 180. Among the numerous categories of Mexican migrants to the United States, workers likewise display a strong determination to accumulate savings and return home. See Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 78-80.

85. Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 78-80.



moreover, these individuals perform tasks which at home would be considered demeaning. When they view this experience in retrospect, many of them feel resentment and formulate a negative evaluation of their migratory experience. In addition, xenophobic elements in the receiving society reinforce the bitter aspects of the migratory experience. The majority of Colombian workers interviewed by the author, for example, viewed their work experience in Venezuela as extremely harsh, even in relation to the material gains that they achieved. Although a few Mexican migrants report positively on their migratory experiences, their evaluations do not in general differ significantly from those of Colombians.<sup>86</sup>

These impressions may appear to contradict the cyclical or seasonal character of migratory flows between these countries. Given the overwhelming unpleasantness and hardship endured, why would any Colombian or Mexican worker return to the receiving country? First, the legal and social conditions under which this type of migration takes place — undocumented, lonely, far from family and home — impose a short-term character on the phenomenon. This length of stay, in turn, makes any substantial accumulation of economic resources impossible. Moreover, since the migrants have few resources and come from areas of the periphery (whether rural or urban), their socioeconomic context prevents the achievement of demonstrable economic improvement from the resources that they obtain as migrant workers. Therefore, these individuals are again forced to resort to international labor migration as their only alternative for survival, despite their reluctance to repeat the distasteful experience.

Finally, regarding profitability or gains from the migratory experience, the two cases again present similarities. The inequality of development and economic conditions in receiving and sending countries permits the migrants to realize some measure of economic gain. Nearly all migrants successful in evading deportation return home with something to show for their labor, usually in the form of cash savings. Many of them also acquire consumer goods (radios, tape recorders, electric appliances, and other articles for the home), small capital goods (tools and machinery), and merchandise for resale (clothing, cosmetics, and foodstuffs). When the worker leaves an economically dependent family in the home country, he or she must send some earnings home on a regular basis, a situation which changes the migrant's perspective on the gains derived from the migratory experience. This obligation to divert earnings to satisfy the basic requirements for the reproduction of labor necessarily reduces a migrant's ability to save — the primary

---

86. See, among others, Lewis, *Slave Trade Today*: 95-113.

goal of most migrant workers. In both migratory flows under study, individuals finding themselves in this situation are primarily young men whose wives and small children depend on the money sent them from Venezuela or the United States.

The earnings of migrant workers who need not make remittances to their homes while they are absent have a different character simply because they are set aside and taken home by the migrant. Of course, these savings are sometimes decreased by expenses — some essential, some less so — which the migrant incurs in the receiving country. As mentioned previously, migrants generally display low levels of consumption while in the receiving country, due both to their intention to return home quickly with substantial savings and to their position as undocumented aliens, which impedes their incorporation into the consumer society. In both Colombia and Mexico, the majority of workers who succeed at returning home with their savings intact are younger single men who do not yet have family obligations.

Migrants generally obtain very limited amounts of money and material goods while in the receiving country, a direct result of the short period of time spent there. The fact that workers most often spend their savings to satisfy the basic needs of self and family (food, clothing, housing, medicine, and education) reaffirms the limited nature of the money and goods accumulated through migration.<sup>87</sup>

With regard to the application of these savings to other economic uses, however, some profound differences emerge between the two migratory flows. Research in Colombia indicates that after satisfying their basic needs, migrants in most cases apply surpluses to the purchase, installation, or expansion of some property which has a business or economic application associated with the informal sector of the economy.<sup>88</sup> In contrast,

---

87. Migrants from Mexico to the United States direct approximately two-thirds of their savings to these ends. See Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 177-183. Colombian migrants to Venezuela spend about four-fifths of their savings on such basic needs.

88. The characteristics used here to typify the informal sector are consistent with Raymond Bromley's classification in his work on the informal sector. See Raymond Bromley, *The Urban Informal Sector: Critical Perspectives on Employment and Housing Policies* (Swansea, Great Britain: Centre for Development Studies, University College of Swansea, 1979). The principal activities to which migrants direct these surpluses are: lending money at interest; improving or expanding rental property; purchasing rental property; purchasing lots for the construction of rental property; purchasing rural land; improving or expanding a business; purchasing and/or installing a business; and investing in livestock or agriculture. See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 197-233.

research in Mexico indicates the presence of an intermediate level in the utilization of these funds. Mexican migrants seemingly direct their immediate surpluses to the purchase of nonessential consumer goods before attempting to invest in informal economic activities.<sup>89</sup> However, the differences between Colombia and Mexico in the utilization of migrant savings are not necessarily absolute. A more conclusive examination must await better and more complete empirical data from Mexico regarding the articulation between the return of migrant workers and the expansion of the country's informal economic sector. To state absolutely that a business ethic is dominant in Colombia while a consumer ethic predominates in Mexico would therefore be premature. The fact that most Mexican migrants come from rural areas while migrant Colombians increasingly come from their country's many urban centers may also account in some degree for this difference; since most studies of labor migration between Mexico and the United States have dealt with the rural sending contexts, we lack the information necessary for isolating the rural-urban variable with regard to informal economic activities.

#### **Impacts of Migrant Savings on the Migrant's Place of Origin**

Few systematic studies have examined the socioeconomic impact of either remittances or savings on the home communities of migrant workers. To design a study which would address this question and in particular the key issue of the economic mobility which workers derive from their migratory experience entails extreme methodological difficulties. People's economic strategies are so complex that available research methodologies are inadequate to the task of registering, systematizing and analyzing these questions. To accurately measure these phenomena would require the quantification of sporadic and regular remittances, as well as savings brought by the returning individual. It would also necessitate the identification and measurement of other sources of income affecting the home communities and an assessment of economic mobility in general. Even national censuses with all their resources have been unable to obtain an exhaustive inventory of such data.

---

89. Cornelius, in *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States: 177-183*, summarizes the uses of surplus migrant savings in a list which includes: payment of debts; secondary or university education for children; purchase of capital goods (land, cattle, small businesses, farm machinery, etc.); purchase, construction or improvement of housing; medical expenses; irrigation equipment (wells, pumps, etc.); clothing and/or household articles; cars and trucks; and recreation or vacations. Only a few of these belong in the category of informal economic activities.

Nevertheless, researchers have undertaken limited attempts to obtain such information, and they have produced data sufficient for some analytical considerations. The few studies of Colombian migrant households which treat such issues indicate that to a certain degree, a direct relationship exists between the return of migrant laborers and the development of small businesses, especially in urban areas. These businesses, because of the migrants' limited initial investment and the socioeconomic traits of the workers themselves, necessarily form part of the informal sector and have all the characteristics of activities which correspond to this sector of the economy.<sup>90</sup>

Analyses of the socioeconomic impacts of migration in Mexico are even less numerous. Some studies relate the informal sector to internal migration, but very few attempt to examine its relationship to international migration.<sup>91</sup> Some rural economists and anthropologists have begun to examine more closely this aspect of the international migratory phenomenon and have found that some type of articulation does exist, but such research is very rare.<sup>92</sup> The unavailability of concrete data leaves only speculation and hypothesis as ways of approaching an assessment of the impacts of migrant savings in the workers' home communities.

---

90. See Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 197-230; and Alejandro Portes, "Migraciones y sector informal: algunos aspectos de su articulación," in *Políticas de migraciones laborales internacionales en la periferia: el caso latinoamericano*: 329-340.

91. In his study "Migraciones y sector informal," Portes notes these examples: for the Mexican case, Lourdes Arizpe, *Migración, etnicismo y cambio económico* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1978), and Wayne A. Cornelius and Juan Díez-Canedo, "Mexican Migration to the United States: The View from Rural Sending Communities," mimeographed (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1976); in the cases of Huancayo and Jauja, Peru, he mentions Bryan Roberts, "The Provincial Urban System and the Process of Dependency," in *Current Perspectives in Latin American Urban Research*, eds. Alejandro Portes and Harley L. Browning (Austin, Tex.: Institute of Latin American Studies and University of Texas Press, 1976); for the case of Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela, he cites Lisa R. Peattie, *The View from the Barrio* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1968).

92. See, for example, Richard Mines, *Developing a Community Tradition of Migration: A Field Study in Rural Zacatecas, Mexico, and California Settlement Areas*, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 3 (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981); and Ina R. Dinerman, *Migrants and Stay-at-Homes: A Comparative Study of Rural Migration from Michoacán, Mexico*, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 5 (La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1982).

The observation and analysis of certain obvious impacts, however, will advance the level of understanding, and these impacts deserve mention. For example, savings from the migratory experience interact with other economic resources in individual households. Therefore, migrant savings, whether spent to satisfy basic needs or to expand economic activities, do not by themselves determine the economic mobility potential of the families of migrant laborers. These savings do, however, clearly have an impact which varies according to the amount involved. Research in Colombia indicates that the amount of savings brought from Venezuela and directed to the purchase, establishment or expansion of a business or other economic activity typically varies from \$200 to \$1,200 per individual.<sup>93</sup> For Mexican migrants, Cornelius has estimated average monthly remittances at \$170 but notes that total savings taken home by migrant workers average only \$301.<sup>94</sup>

The migratory flow between Colombia and Venezuela is too new to have had much effect on the economic mobility of migrant workers and their families. Moreover, since Colombian migration has a primarily urban base where innumerable and unobservable survival strategies evolve and develop, measuring this effect will continue to be difficult, at least for the remainder of this decade. In Mexico, on the other hand, migration has resulted in increased economic mobility, especially in the families of workers who migrated when fewer obstacles impeded their entry into the American labor force.

Lastly, the aggregate impact of the savings which migrant workers bring to their native countries deserves analysis and comment. These savings amount to millions of dollars, but their exact magnitude can only be estimated. The estimates are high simply because millions of individuals make up the migrant populations of both Colombia and Mexico. The imprecision of the estimates results from measurement difficulties which arise out of the many different figures, methodologies, and theories employed in studies on this subject. These sums of capital have had a definite but incalculable impact on the economies of the sending countries. They certainly have alleviated the poverty of the low-income groups forced by structural economic constraints and governmental incapacity to seek routes to economic betterment abroad.

---

93. Murillo, "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia": 221-222.

94. Cornelius, *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States*: 179-180.

## CONCLUSION

This comparison of international migration from Colombia to Venezuela and from Mexico to the United States has revealed little-known and rarely considered consequences of unequal development between neighboring countries. The study began with the hypothesis that the different forms of interaction and interdependence in these two cases would lead to significantly different conditions and characteristics in the two migratory patterns. While the comparison does support that hypothesis, it also demonstrates extraordinary similarities in the appearance of the phenomenon, its characteristics in terms of the populations involved, the social relationships developed by the migrant laborer, and the general outcome of the migratory experience.

By contrast, this analysis does not support the contention that Mexican migrants, with access to the resources of a center country, benefit more than their Colombian counterparts migrating to a peripheral country. The effects of unequal development on international labor migrations are comparable whether the migration occurs in the classic periphery-to-center mode or in the more recent manner involving two peripheral countries with uneven rates of development.

In both cases the low-income groups choosing to migrate to an adjacent country suffer the same circumstances of persisting poverty, abuse, social injustice, and limited remuneration for their efforts. Moreover, neither case substantially improves the economic conditions of migrants and their families. The real benefits accrue over time and in the aggregate as the migratory tradition becomes more established and bestows indirect benefits on the children of those pioneer migrants who have turned the migratory experience into a *modus vivendi* with long-term results.

Sending countries appear to benefit from migration more than receiving countries do. Migration lessens social and demographic pressures in the sending regions, and it mitigates the scarcity of resources faced by structurally limited governments struggling to satisfy the basic needs of the remaining population. But certain groups in the receiving countries also benefit greatly from migration: the economic groups in the receiving countries who employ this productive and low-cost labor force reap tremendous economic benefits from the phenomenon.

For the sake of completeness, these conclusions must make mention of the disadvantages of the migratory phenomenon. Most important among these drawbacks are the

difficulties encountered by the migrants in the receiving countries, where low-income resident groups view them as competitors both for jobs and for scarce goods and services. The phenomenon also causes difficulties for the middle-level political and administrative sectors charged with maintaining their country's status quo.

On balance, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, and for this reason international labor migration will continue. It will continue despite attempts by the governments of affected countries to control a phenomenon which they do not want but cannot eliminate. It will also continue to provide a cheap labor force for economic activities which cannot survive without this factor of production. And it will surely also continue as a subject of heated debate among interest groups and political pundits who will continue to exploit the issue to their own advantage. But above all, migration will continue to provide a ray of hope in the migrants' struggle for economic survival.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acontecer Migratorio* 1:7; 2:9; 4:20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Caracas, Venezuela: CEPAM.
- Aguayo, Sergio. "La situación de los migrantes centroamericanos en la frontera de Baja California Norte." Mimeographed. Tijuana, B.C.N., México, 1981.
- Amin, Samir. *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976.
- Asociación Nacional de Instituciones Financieras (ANIF). *No a Venezuela*. Bogotá, Colombia: Fondo Editorial ANIF, 1981.
- Bettelheim, Charles. "Economic Inequalities between Nations and International Solidarity." *Monthly Review* 22:2 (June 1970): 19-24.
- Bonacich, Edna. "International Labor Migration: A Theoretical Orientation." Mimeographed. Riverside, Calif.: University of California, Riverside, 1981.
- Bromley, Raymond. *The Urban Informal Sector: Critical Perspectives on Employment and Housing Policies*. Swansea, Great Britain: Centre for Development Studies, University College of Swansea, 1979.
- Bustamante, Jorge A. "La migración indocumentada México-Estados Unidos: relación entre dinámica política y estructuras económicas." In *Primer encuentro sobre impactos regionales de las relaciones económicas México-Estados Unidos*, edited by Eliseo Mendoza Berrueto. México, D.F.: Impactos Regionales de las Relaciones Económicas México-Estados Unidos, A.C., 1982.
- Bustamante, Jorge A., and Malagamba, Francisco. *México-Estados Unidos: bibliografía general sobre estudios fronterizos*. Colección Frontera Norte. México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1980.



- Canak, William, and Schmitter, Barbara. "Uneven Development, Labor Migration and State Policy: Theoretical and Methodological Issues." Mimeographed. Durham, N.C.: Center for International Studies, Duke University, 1981.
- Cárdenas, Gilberto. "United States Immigration Policy toward Mexico: An Historical Perspective." *Chicano Law Review* 2 (summer 1975).
- Cardona G., Ramiro, et al. *El éxodo de colombianos*. Bogotá, Colombia: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1980.
- Carrillo, Jorge, and Hernández, Alberto. *La industria maquiladora en México: bibliografía, directorio e investigaciones recientes*. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 7. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981.
- Castells, Manuel. "Immigrant Workers and Class Struggle in Advanced Capitalism: The Western European Experience." *Politics and Society* 5 (1975): 33-66.
- Castles, Stephen, and Kosack, Godula. *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*. London: Oxford University Press, for the Institute of Race Relations, 1973.
- CENIET (Centro Nacional de Información y Estadísticas del Trabajo). *Encuesta a trabajadores mexicanos no documentados devueltos de los Estados Unidos*. México, D.F.: CENIET, 1979.
- , "Informe sobre algunos resultados obtenidos en la Encuesta Nacional de Emigración a la Frontera Norte del País y a los Estados Unidos." Unpublished. México, D.F.: CENIET, 1981.
- Chicano Federation Committee on Immigration. "President Reagan's Immigration Policy Proposal." Mimeographed. San Diego, Calif.: Chicano Federation.
- Cornelius, Wayne A. "Immigration, Mexican Development Policy, and the Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Research Report Series, No. 8. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981.
- , "Interviewing Undocumented Immigrants: Methodological Reflections Based on Fieldwork in Mexico and the United States." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Research Report Series, No. 2. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981.

----- "The Reagan Administration's Proposals for a New U.S. Immigration Policy: An Assessment of Potential Effects." *International Migration Review* 15:4 (1981).

----- *Mexican and Caribbean Migration to the United States: The State of Current Knowledge and Priorities for Future Research*. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 1. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, forthcoming.

Díez-Canedo, Juan. "A New View of Mexican Migration to the United States." Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1980.

----- "Undocumented Migration to the United States: A New Perspective." Latin American Institute Research Paper Series, No. 6. Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico, 1981.

Dinerman, Ina R. "Household Composition, Land Tenure Patterns and Propensity to Migrate: A Comparative Study of Two Rural 'Sending' Communities in Michoacán, Mexico." Mimeographed. Norton, Mass.: Wheaton College, 1981.

----- *Migrants and Stay-at-Homes: A Comparative Study of Rural Migration from Michoacán, Mexico*. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 5. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1982.

*El Espectador* (Bogotá).

Fernández-Kelly, María Patricia. "Maquiladoras and Women in Ciudad Juárez: The Paradoxes of Industrialization under Global Capitalism." Mimeographed. Berkeley, Calif.: Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

Flores, Estevan T. "La circulación internacional del trabajo y de la lucha de clases." *Historia y Sociedad* 21 (1978).

Foerster, Robert F. *The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies to the United States*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1925.

Gamio, Manuel. *Mexican Immigration to the United States*. New York: Dover Publications, 1971.

- García y Griego, Manuel. "La polémica sobre el volumen de la emigración a Estados Unidos." In *Indocumentados: mitos y realidades*. México, D.F.: Centro de Estudios Internacionales, El Colegio de México, 1979.
- . *El volumen de la migración de mexicanos no documentados a los Estados Unidos (nuevas hipótesis)*. GENIET Serie Estudios, No. 4. México, D.F.: ENEFNEU, 1980.
- Gómez, Inés, et al. "Mercados de trabajo y migración en ciudades fronterizas." *Migraciones Laborales* 10. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1979.
- Gómez J., Alcides, and Díaz M., Luz Marina. "La capacidad y el gasto de la fuerza de trabajo." Bogotá, Colombia: Fundación de Investigaciones y Estudios Económico-Sociales (FINES), 1981.
- Grasmuck, Sherri. "Enclave Development and Relative Labor Surplus: Haitian Labor in the Dominican Republic." Mimeographed. Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University, 1981.
- Latin American Institute. *The Problem of the Undocumented Worker*. Albuquerque, N.M.: U.S. Community Services Administration, University of New Mexico, 1981.
- Lewis, G. Sasha. *Slave Trade Today: American Exploitation of Illegal Aliens*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1980.
- Louv, Richard. *The Mexican Migration: Southwind*. A series for *The San Diego Union*. San Diego, Calif.: San Diego Union, 1980.
- McBride, Robert, ed. *Mexico and the United States*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, for the American Assembly, 1981.
- Mansilla, Luis. "Inserción laboral de migrantes indocumentados." *Migraciones Laborales* 8. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1979.
- Márquez, Jesús R., and Mayansky, Alberto. "Sistemas de seguridad social y migración colombo-venezolana." *Migraciones Laborales* 12. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1980.
- Mines, Richard. *Developing a Community Tradition of Migration: A Field Study in Rural Zacatecas, Mexico, and California Settlement Areas*. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Monograph Series, No. 3. La Jolla, Calif.: University of California, San Diego, 1981.

Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Servicio Nacional de Empleos (SENALDE). "Política de migraciones laborales en Colombia." *Migraciones Laborales* 1. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1979.

Murillo, Gabriel. "La migración de trabajadores colombianos a Venezuela: la relación ingreso-consumo como uno de los factores de expulsión." *Migraciones Laborales* 11. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1979.

----- . "La migración laboral internacional en la periferia: su incidencia en la alteración de los mercados de trabajo y en la expansión del sector informal urbano de Colombia." In *Políticas de migraciones laborales internacionales en la periferia: el caso latinoamericano*. Memorias del Segundo Seminario Latinoamericano sobre Políticas de Migraciones Laborales. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad de los Andes and Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1982.

*El Nacional* (Caracas).

*New York Times*.

North, David S., and Houstoun, Marion F. "The Characteristics and Role of Illegal Aliens in the U.S. Labor Market: An Exploratory Study." Report prepared for the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. Washington, D.C.: Linton and Co., 1976.

North American Congress for Latin America (NACLA). "Undocumented: Immigrant Workers in New York City." *NACLA* 12:6 (Nov.-Dec. 1979).

Pessar, Patricia R. "The Role of Households in International Migration." Paper presented at New Directions on Immigration and Ethnicity Conference, 15-17 May 1981, at Duke University. Mimeographed.

Piore, Michael J. *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Portes, Alejandro. "Population, Urbanization, and Migration in the Americas: An Overview of Recent Trends." Mimeographed. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University, 1981.

----- . "Urbanization, Migration, and Models of Development in Latin America." Mimeographed. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University, 1981.

-----, "Migraciones y sector informal: algunos aspectos de su articulación." In *Políticas de migraciones laborales internacionales en la periferia: el caso latinoamericano*. Memorias del Segundo Seminario Latinoamericano sobre Políticas de Migraciones Laborales. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad de los Andes and Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1982.

Portes, Alejandro, and Walton, John. *Labor, Class and the International System*. New York: Academic Press, 1981.

PREALC. *Dinámica del subempleo en América Latina*. Estudios e Informes de la CEPAL, No 10. Santiago, Chile: United Nations, 1981.

Programa de Estudio de las Relaciones México-Estados Unidos. *Informe: Relaciones México-Estados Unidos 1:1*. México, D.F.: Centro de Estudios Económicos y Sociales del Tercer Mundo (CEESTEM), 1981.

*La Religión* (Caracas).

Robinson, J. Gregory. "Estimating the Approximate Size of the Illegal Alien Population in the United States." *Demography* 17:2 (May 1980).

Samora, Julian. *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971.

*El Tiempo* (Bogotá).

*Unomásuno* (Mexico City).

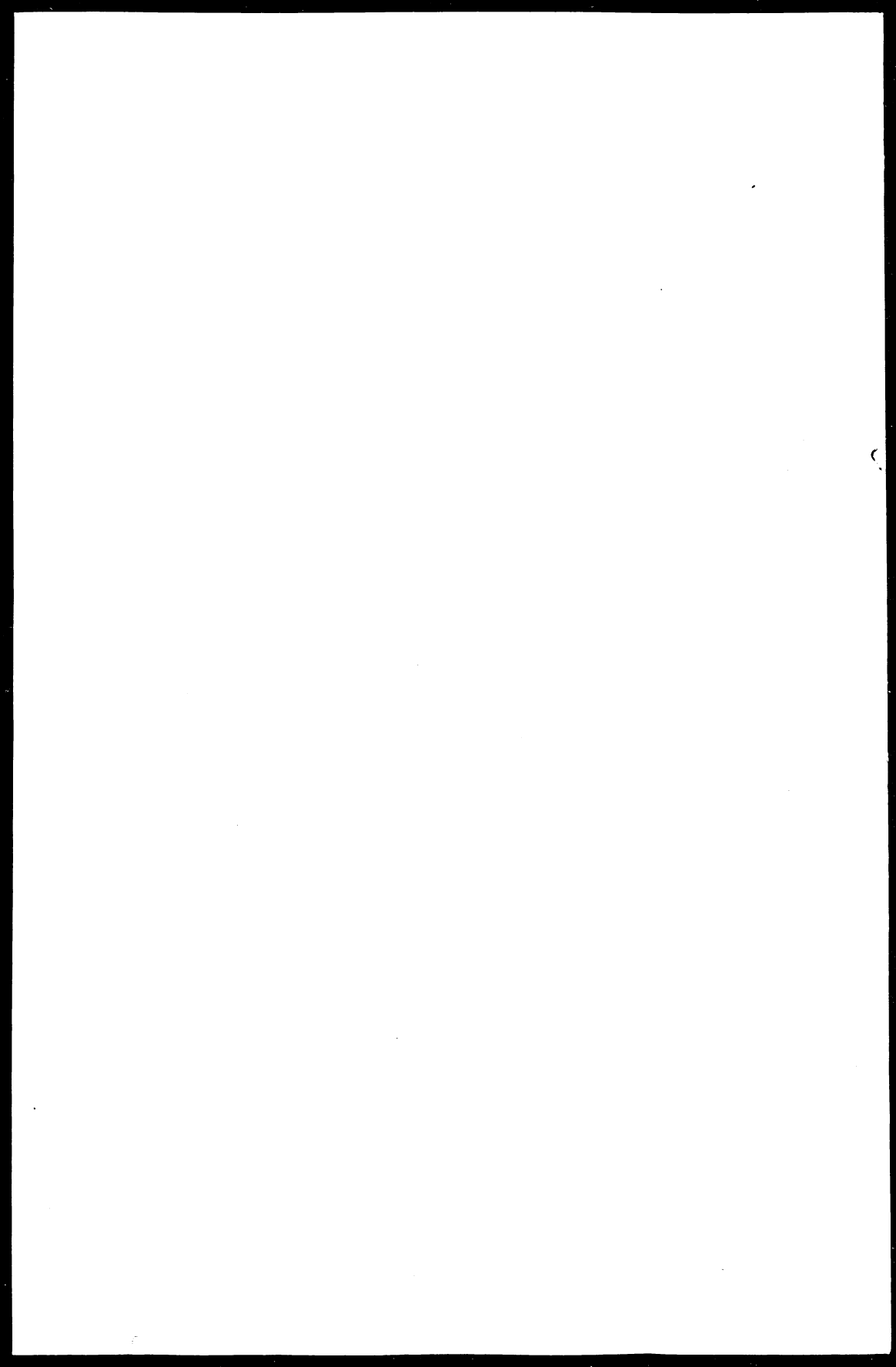
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. *The Tarnished Golden Door: Civil Rights Issues in Immigration*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980.

U.S. Congress. House of Representatives Select Committee on Population, 95th Congress, 2nd session. "Legal and Illegal Immigration to the United States." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978.

U.S. President. Office of the Press Secretary. "Statement by the President." Mimeographed. Washington, D.C., July 30, 1981.

*El Universal* (Caracas).

- Velosa, María F. "Mercados de trabajo y salarios diferenciales en zona fronteriza." *Migraciones Laborales* 8. Bogotá, Colombia: Proyecto PNUD/OIT, Col. 72/027, 1979.
- Vining, D. R., Jr., and Kontuly, T. "Population Dispersal from Major Metropolitan Regions: An International Comparison." *International Regional Science Review* 3:1 (1978):49-73.
- Weintraub, Sidney, and Ross, Stanley R. *The Illegal Alien from Mexico: Policy Choices for an Intractable Issue*. Austin, Texas: Mexico-United States Border Research Program, University of Texas at Austin, 1980.
- Zazueta, Carlos H. "Mexican Workers in the United States: Some Initial Results and Methodological Considerations of the National Household Survey of Emigration (ENEFNEU)." Paper prepared for the Working Group on Mexican Migrants and U.S. Responsibility. Mimeographed. College Park, Md.: Center for Philosophy and Public Policy, University of Maryland, 1980.



## A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

The publications of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies include first reports of research findings by the Center's Visiting Research Fellows, permanent staff research associates, University of California faculty associates, and graduate student associates. The editorial staff also occasionally considers unsolicited manuscripts for publication. The scope of the publications series is restricted to the study of Mexico and U.S.-Mexican relations from the standpoint of the social sciences — anthropology, economics, geography, history, international relations, politics, sociology, etc. — with a strong emphasis on contemporary issues. The Center releases a combined total of about ten Research Reports and Monographs each year.

### Review and editing

To promote impartiality in decisions about publication, the Center sends submitted manuscripts anonymously to selected referees, which include the Center's professional research staff, Visiting Research Fellows, and members of the Center's Editorial Advisory Board. Submissions should be original works and may be submitted in English or Spanish, but they will be published in English. Criteria for selection include significant new data or interpretations which have not been widely circulated; potential for subsequent publication in professional journals or anthologies; and readability and usefulness for non-specialists. All manuscripts are subject to editorial revision, but the Center's emphasis on the timely release of research findings requires an editorial process unencumbered by the usual delays involved in publishing books and journals. Authors will have an opportunity to review and to request revisions of editorial changes, but in most cases they will not be able to examine page proofs.

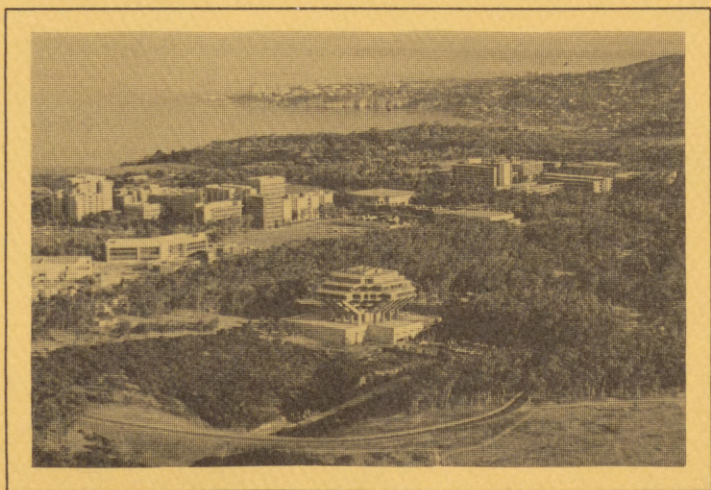
### Preparation of manuscripts

All copy, including notes, references, tables, and indented matter, should be typewritten and double-spaced on standard white paper. All notes should be appended to the text as endnotes. Contributors should submit three copies of their manuscripts (which cannot be returned) and should include an abstract of approximately 250 words, as well as a 100-word biographical statement. The editors attempt to be as flexible as possible regarding length; but they do not generally accept articles of less than 4,000 words nor manuscripts which exceed 25,000 words without prior negotiation.

### References

The Center will accept two reference formats: endnote references or in-text parenthetical references. However, the format must be consistent within a given manuscript, and the editors will not accept in-text references of more than a few words. Therefore, a manuscript which contains many references from sources such as unpublished archival material, newspapers, government documents, etc. should adopt the endnote reference format. Manuscripts which use in-text references must be accompanied by a reference list, which must contain the same information as an endnote reference, including, as a minimum: (a) *for books*, author's full name (not initials), title of book, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, and pages cited; (b) *for articles*, author's full name, title of article, title of periodical (unabbreviated), volume and issue number, year of publication, and pages cited. For the format of other types of references, authors should consult the University of Chicago's *A Manual of Style*. Titles of cited works should always appear in the original language. *Note:* inaccurate references will be considered grounds for rejecting a submitted manuscript.





## **The Center for United States–Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego**

Opened in September, 1980, the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies is the nation's largest university-based program devoted exclusively to the study of Mexico and U.S.-Mexican relations. It combines interdisciplinary research, instruction, and public service activities that deal with the full range of problems affecting economic and political relations between Mexico and the United States. The Center serves as an integrating mechanism and informational clearinghouse for research undertaken at many different sites in both the United States and Mexico. It compiles and publishes an annual inventory of current Mexico-related research being conducted at sites throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada, Western Europe, and elsewhere, in association with the University of California Consortium on Mexico and the U.S. and the Consortium of U.S. Research Programs for Mexico. The Center's conferences and workshops provide a vehicle for bringing scholars, non-academic development specialists, public officials, businessmen, labor leaders, and journalists together to examine major issues affecting U.S.-Mexican relations.

The Center is conducting a major field study of the social and economic impacts of Mexican immigration upon receiving communities in the United States, with special emphasis on health care, education, and labor market participation. Its weekly seminar on U.S.-Mexican relations attracts leading researchers from throughout the United States and Mexico. The Center also conducts an active public education program, which includes public conferences, briefing sessions for journalists who report on Mexican affairs, and a series of bilingual television and radio programs featuring in-depth interviews with the Center's guest speakers and research fellows.

Each academic year some fifteen to thirty visiting Research Fellows (scholars and non-academic specialists on Mexico) spend three to twelve months in residence at the Center. Typically, persons from Mexican institutions win over half of the Center's predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships, which are awarded through a binational competition. For further information, write: Research Director, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093, U.S.A.