

3

Urbanization, Migration, and Employment in Latin America

A Review of Trends

Adrian G. Aguilar and Antonio Vieyra

This chapter examines the rapid urbanization process that Latin America has experienced since the second half of the twentieth century to the present. The growth of the largest cities was related to industrialization in the past century (see chapter 1). This process was the outcome of high levels of rural-to-urban migration, in combination with similarly high rates of natural increase in the population. Decades later, with the arrival of neoliberal policies, some countries began to experience a process of urban deconcentration that led to a more balanced urban system. Nowadays, migration shows new trends in which urban-urban flows become more important.

Some of the main features of urbanization in Latin America include urban primacy, metropolitan expansion, and urban systems as functioning parts of the world economy. Urbanization in Latin America is also characterized by severe social problems often linked to globalization. Massive growth in urban areas, especially in intermediate cities, indicates the need for a policy agenda that addresses these urban conditions.

URBANIZATION IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Most major Latin American cities were established by the sixteenth century. In the colonial period, Latin America was divided into *core areas*, where European enterprises and the native population were concentrated, and *peripheries*, which remained largely unsettled (Newson, 1996:20). These urbanized core areas were symbols of territorial possession and centers from which the surrounding countryside could be administered and exploited. This was particularly the case in Spanish America. The most important

towns in colonial Latin America were political and cultural centers. For example, Mexico City, Lima, and Buenos Aires were capitals of viceroalties; they housed the seats of archbishops as well as universities, convents, and hospitals. Thus, they remained important cities in Latin America throughout the colonial period. Apart from main cities, a few towns such as the mining centers—for example, Potosí in Peru—and major ports performed important economic roles. Most important were the ports of call for the Spanish fleet, such as Veracruz, Portobello (Panama), Cartagena, Guayaquil, Lima-Callao, and Arica (the latter being the port through which the silver from Potosí was exported). Significantly, it is the political and administrative centers of the past that remain the major urban centers in Latin America today.

By the mid-twentieth century, there was considerable range in the level and nature of industrialization in Latin America. Countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico achieved rapid industrial growth. These nations had developed a fairly substantial and diverse industrial structure, with a variety of durable and nondurable consumer goods and some heavy industry (see Gwynne, 1996:218–219). Manufacturing activities were concentrated in the capital cities and chief ports. This pattern of concentration became significant in the post-1945 period and it had an impact on urban growth, migration patterns, and regional development strategies. Away from these manufacturing cores, export-processing industries created economic enclaves in peripheral areas.

Inward-oriented industrialization reinforced the spatially concentrated urbanization pattern in Latin America. Urban primacy became a distinctive geographic feature in most of Latin America as of the postcolonial era. For example, by 1980, after 80 years of industrialization, Lima and Buenos Aires were more than 11 times larger than their countries' second-largest city.¹

In the early 1980s, the debt crisis reflected the economically unsustainable nature of ISI (the import substitution industrialization model) and its narrow range of exports. As discussed in chapter 1, free-market policies were strongly recommended by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The IMF particularly favored structural adjustment policies that involved macroeconomic stability, deregulation, privatization, and openness to trade. Such policies were assumed to be more in keeping with the increasing internationalization of the world economy (Gwynne, 1996:225).

Opening up national economies led to increasing deindustrialization, the growth of the informal sector, and an increase in urban poverty. This, in turn, shifted growth from large metropolitan areas toward urban centers that became more competitive in the global economy, such as capital cities, border towns, or tourist centers.

THE URBANIZATION PROCESS IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin America and the Caribbean have a high proportion of their population living in cities. Indeed, Latin America has been the most highly urbanized region of the less developed world since 1900. From 1950 to 2000, its urban population grew at a rate of 1.2 percent per year, more rapidly than those of Europe or North America. By 2000, Latin America was as urbanized as Europe or North America, with three out of every four inhabitants living in cities. According to United Nations population projections, by 2030 the urbanization rate in Latin America would reach 84 percent urban, making this the second most urbanized region after North America, with 600 million urban dwellers (Zlotnik, 2004:49).

The high rate of urbanization in Latin America does not imply that other social and economic changes have also been achieved. Although the concentration of population in large cities may be a prerequisite for development, it is not a sufficient condition. In fact, recent studies show that the level of urban poverty continues to grow (see CEPAL, 2004:ch. 1).

The evolution and dynamics of urban systems in Latin America can be characterized by three main processes:

1. *Anaccelerated urbanization process that has tended to slow down in recent years.*

With an urban population of a little more than 350 million in the year 2000, Latin America's urbanization level rose from 54 percent in 1970 to 75 percent in 2000. Despite certain general trends, regional urban trends exhibit great heterogeneity. Table 3.1 illustrates four different categories of urbanization, reflecting two main points. First, the group of highly urbanized countries (high and medium-high) includes both the largest and most developed countries in the region. However, at present these countries (Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia) are experiencing slower rates of urban growth. Other countries in this same group include small island-countries where most of the people live in the one or two important cities. Second, countries belonging to the medium and low categories are those that experienced the most rapid rates of growth in the 1990s. On average, these countries recorded rates of over 3 percent, almost double that of the highly urbanized countries. It is interesting to note that these countries also have higher growth rates for the rural population.

2. *Restructuring of urban systems with a slower but continued concentration in megacities, and a greater proportion of intermediate and large cities (with more than one million inhabitants).*

The presence of cities with over one million inhabitants is one of the main features of Latin America's urban system. In thirty years, the

Table 3.1. Latin American and Caribbean Countries by Level of Urbanization, 1970–2025 (Percentage of Total Population)^a

Level of Urbanization	Country	1970	1980	1990	2000	2015	2025	
High	<i>Anguilla</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Uruguay</i>	82.0	86.1	90.5	92.6	93.9	94.2	
	<i>Argentina</i>	78.4	83.0	86.9	89.6	92.0	92.9	
	<i>Bahamas</i>	71.8	75.1	83.6	88.5	91.5	92.5	
	<i>Venezuela</i>	71.8	78.9	83.9	87.4	90.8	92.1	
	<i>Chile</i>	73.0	79.0	82.8	85.7	88.8	90.3	
Medium-High	<i>Brazil</i>	55.6	67.3	74.7	79.9	84.2	85.6	
	<i>Cuba</i>	60.1	68.0	74.8	79.9	84.7	86.5	
	<i>Mexico</i>	58.9	65.5	71.4	75.4	80.2	82.3	
	<i>Puerto Rico</i>	58.3	66.9	71.3	75.2	79.9	82.5	
	<i>Colombia</i>	57.7	64.4	69.4	74.5	80.0	82.5	
	<i>Suriname</i>	45.9	55.0	65.4	74.1	81.3	83.7	
	<i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>	63.0	63.1	69.1	74.1	79.3	81.9	
	<i>Peru</i>	58.1	64.2	68.7	72.3	75.5	77.1	
	<i>Dominica</i>	46.9	63.4	67.7	71.0	76.0	79.1	
	Moderate	<i>Netherlands Antilles</i>	67.9	67.9	68.3	69.2	73.0	76.4
<i>Dominican Republic</i>		40.3	50.5	58.3	65.0	72.6	76.2	
<i>Bolivia</i>		36.2	45.4	55.6	64.6	73.1	76.0	
<i>Ecuador</i>		39.5	47.1	55.4	62.7	70.7	74.0	
<i>British Virgin Islands</i>		28.7	38.8	50.2	61.1	71.4	75.1	
<i>Panama</i>		47.6	49.7	53.8	57.6	62.9	65.9	
<i>Jamaica</i>		41.5	46.8	51.5	56.1	63.5	68.2	
<i>Paraguay</i>		37.1	41.6	48.6	56.1	65.7	70.3	
<i>Nicaragua</i>		46.8	50.1	52.5	55.3	59.4	61.8	
<i>El Salvador</i>		39.0	44.1	49.8	55.2	62.6	66.6	
<i>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</i>		26.9	27.2	40.6	54.8	68.0	72.1	
<i>Aruba</i>		50.6	50.5	50.3	50.8	56.1	61.5	
<i>Costa Rica</i>		38.8	43.1	46.7	50.4	56.1	59.6	
Low		<i>Barbados</i>	37.1	40.2	44.8	50.0	58.4	63.7
		<i>Honduras</i>	29.0	35.0	40.8	48.2	59.5	65.7
	<i>Belize</i>	51.0	49.4	48.1	48.0	51.7	57.0	
	<i>United States Virgin Islands</i>	44.5	44.5	44.5	46.4	51.9	57.4	
	<i>Guatemala</i>	36.2	37.2	38.0	39.4	41.2	42.4	
	<i>Haiti</i>	19.7	24.5	30.5	38.1	48.4	53.8	
	<i>Grenada</i>	32.2	32.9	34.2	37.9	47.2	53.4	
	<i>St. Lucia</i>	40.0	37.3	37.2	37.8	43.6	50.1	
	<i>Antigua and Barbuda</i>	33.8	34.6	35.4	36.8	43.3	49.7	
	<i>Guyana</i>	29.4	30.5	33.2	36.3	44.0	50.4	
	<i>St. Kitts and Nevis</i>	34.1	35.9	34.6	34.1	39.3	45.9	
	<i>Montserrat</i>	11.1	12.4	12.5	13.0	16.9	22.0	
	Total^b	57.4	65.3	71.0	74.9	79.1	80.9	

Source: ECLAC. *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2003*.

^aThe term "urban" is defined as it is used in each country. For the classification of countries by level of urbanization, the year 2000 was taken as the main reference.

^bExcluding Caribbean English-speaking countries.

number of such cities more than doubled: whereas in 1970 there were 21 cities of this size, by 2000 there were already 50 (table 3.2). This can be explained by their privileged position as recipients of national and foreign investment, as well as their achievements in linking local productive sectors with international markets. Some of the largest

Table 3.2. Latin America and the Caribbean: Urban Population, Number of Cities, and Percentage of Urban Population

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
10 million or more									
Number of agglomerations	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Population*	21,024	25,703	38,492	41,591	55,038	59,705	62,134	64,394	66,390
Percentage of urban population	10.6	10.9	14.1	13.3	15.6	15.0	14.4	13.7	13.1
Growth rates		4.10	8.41	1.56	5.76	1.64	0.80	0.72	0.61
5 to 10 million									
Number of agglomerations	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	5
Population*	17,106	18,732	14,330	15,514	17,413	19,681	21,648	28,503	35,515
Percentage of urban population	8.7	8.0	5.2	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	6.1	7.0
Growth rates		1.83	-5.22	1.60	2.34	2.48	1.92	5.66	4.50
1 to 5 million									
Number of agglomerations	17	22	27	32	36	43	54	61	69
Population*	32,388	43,834	51,285	63,407	68,329	85,822	108,596	124,065	139,425
Percentage of urban population	16.4	18.6	18.8	20.3	19.4	21.9	25.2	26.4	27.5
Growth rates		6.24	3.19	4.33	1.51	4.66	4.82	2.70	2.36
500,000 to 1 million									
Number of agglomerations	26	27	32	41	47	56	57	62	64
Population*	17,826	19,303	21,999	28,241	33,192	39,050	40,702	44,660	45,380
Percentage of urban population	9.0	8.2	8.1	9.0	9.4	10.0	9.4	9.5	8.9
Growth rates		1.60	2.65	5.12	3.28	3.30	0.83	1.87	0.32
Fewer than 500,000									
Population*	109,310	127,479	147,034	164,194	177,939	188,083	197,842	208,133	220,708
Percentage of urban population	55.3	54.2	53.8	52.5	50.6	48.1	45.9	44.3	43.5
Growth rates		3.12	15.34	11.67	8.37	5.70	5.19	5.20	6.04
Total*	179,828	215,748	251,141	284,706	318,719	353,291	390,220	425,095	462,038
Growth rates		3.71	3.08	2.54	2.28	2.08	2.01	1.73	1.68

Source: United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1999 Revision* (2001:178).

*In thousands.

cities, like São Paulo or Mexico City, are considered "global cities" thanks to their importance beyond the region.

Patterns of growth in large cities vary. At least five primate cities (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Caracas, Mexico City, and Asunción) have experienced a decrease in the percentage of their countries' respective total urban population since 1970. In other countries, the degree to which the urban population is still concentrated in the largest city seems to be growing, although at different paces. This is the case of cities like Santiago, Lima, Guayaquil, Panama City, and Guatemala City (see table 3.3). In any event, there appears to be a trend among the largest cities to lose part of their prominence, which is reflected in a reduction of their primacy index and in their percentage of urban population.

This decrease in the importance of urban concentration in the largest cities has been explained in several ways. First of all, there has been a more open and export-oriented strategy causing a more deconcentrated and dispersed urban pattern. Second, the economic crisis of the early 1980s affected large cities more severely, with more limited government action and higher living costs, pushing migrants to other urban destinations. Third, as a response to severe urban problems such as pollution, crime, and traffic, the attraction of larger cities diminished. Fourth, improvements in transportation infrastructure have helped connect main cities with smaller urban centers, thus facilitating a deconcentration of population and productive activities. Finally, the diminishing attraction of the largest cities is linked to the growing importance of intermediate cities and their growing attractiveness to potential migrants.

3. Extended metropolitan areas with rapid growth in peripheral areas.

Research in the last decade has suggested the emergence of new urban forms associated with the largest cities in Latin America. These forms have been the result of what can be described as region-based urbanization, as the influence of a city is expanded to a wider region facilitated by more advanced technology. Lower rates of metropolitan growth have coincided with a more intense circulation of commodities, people, and capital between the city center and its hinterland, with ever more diffuse frontiers between the urban and rural, and a manufacturing deconcentration toward the metropolitan periphery, and in particular beyond, into the peri-urban space that surrounds large cities (Aguilar and Ward, 2003:4).

In territorial terms, and particularly in the case of megacities, they present a more polycentric spatial expansion of urban centers and subcenters following a network pattern that tends to sprawl along major highways and/or railroad lines radiating out from the urban

Table 3.3. Latin America and the Caribbean: Population in the Main Metropolitan Area (Percentage of Total Population)^a

Level of Urbanization	Country	Main Metropolitan Area	Around ^b			
			1970	1980	1990	2000
High	Argentina	Greater Buenos Aires	35.6	35.7	34.5	32.3
	Bahamas	Nassau	60.1	64.6	67.6	71.4
	Chile	Santiago	32.3	34.8	35.4	36.0
	Uruguay	Montevideo	48.2	49.5	50.3	39.5
	Venezuela	Caracas	20.3	18.1	15.3	12.9
Medium-High	Brazil	São Paulo	8.4	10.2	10.2	10.1
	Colombia	Bogotá	14.0	14.8	15.8	16.3
	Cuba	Havana	20.8	19.8	20.0	20.2
	Dominica	Roseau	28.0	27.8	—	36.6
	Mexico	Mexico City	18.5	20.8	18.5	18.2
	Peru	Lima	24.4	25.9	27.9	29.1
	Suriname	Paramaribo	27.3	—	25.0	57.3
	Trinidad and Tobago	Port of Spain	30.4	32.2	—	4.2
Moderate	Bolivia	La Paz	13.0	13.8	17.4	17.6
	Costa Rica	San José	21.8	25.1	26.1	23.9
	Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	16.7	23.3	21.9	30.9
	Ecuador	Guayaquil	13.0	14.9	15.6	17.9
	El Salvador	San Salvador	13.9	—	20.4	21.6
	Jamaica	Kingston	26.1	24.0	24.6	25.9
	Nicaragua	Managua	21.2	21.2	18.8	20.0
	Panama	Panama City	31.7	35.1	36.3	41.5
	Paraguay	Asunción	26.2	28.3	29.5	23.1
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Kingstown	27.0	25.7	24.3	24.6
	Low	Antigua and Barbuda	St. John's	34.2	—	—
Barbados		Bridgetown	47.0	46.6	44.8	50.7
Belize		Belize City	32.6	27.9	26.5	21.2
Grenada		St. George's	31.9	33.0	—	38.3
Guatemala		Guatemala City	19.6	19.9	19.6	28.8
Guyana		Georgetown	23.4	24.0	—	40.0
Haiti		Port-au-Prince	11.5	14.3	16.1	22.2
Honduras		Tegucigalpa	7.1	12.7	14.5	14.9
St. Kitts and Nevis		Basseterre	30.9	33.0	—	31.6
St. Lucia		Castries	40.5	37.9	45.9	38.3

Source: ECLAC. *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2003*.

^aMetropolitan area refers to the main city plus the high-density zones in its environs.

^bThe data refer to the years in which population and housing censuses were conducted in each country, that is, around the year at the top of the column.

core. In this pattern, mixed land uses are created in an expanded region where traditional agriculture is found side by side with new housing projects, industrial sites, recreational sites, and suburban developments. Thus, a new spatial configuration of metropolitan development has emerged, with two distinctive features: first, urban corridors, which are linear developments with a concentration of different activities (corporate developments, residential areas, etc.). Second, urban subcenters in the periphery of megacities that may be consolidating traditional towns once dominated by agricultural activities, or are the result of new developments in metropolitan municipalities (Aguilar, 2002b:130–131). In Latin America, this new territorial configuration has been described for the largest cities such as Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Santiago, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The terms used to describe these forms are “extended metropolitan areas,” “mega-urbanization with a polycentric structure,” or “expanded metropolitan peripheries” (see Aguilar, 2002a; Aguilar, 2002b; Aguilar and Ward, 2003; Campolina, 1994; Ciccolella, 1999; De Mattos, 1999; Lopes de Souza, 2001).

URBAN GROWTH AND MIGRATION

Labor considerations are clearly a vital component to understanding migration and the rural-urban transition in Latin America. In a context in which most Latin American governments have promoted policies encouraging urban-based industrialization and have neglected investment in rural areas, people have moved to towns as a result of declining opportunities for livelihood in rural areas.

All indications are that a possible increase in job opportunities, including better salaries, in a more informed world with better intercommunications will serve as a stimulus to migratory tendencies (see also chapter 12). Therefore, the erratic economic growth of countries that have traditionally exported their labor force, now assisted by foreign direct investment, helps generate an environment favorable to emigration (Villa and Martínez Pizarro, 2001:32).

People move toward areas where wage levels are high (cities) and where the quality of life—as expressed by housing availability and the degree of provision of health and education—is most satisfactory.² Urban settlements usually offer more employment and higher wages, and are better equipped with education and health facilities, thereby attracting people with young families (Chant, 1999:242). Figures on poverty in urban and rural areas regularly showed that city dwellers are better off than their rural counterparts. The United Nations estimated that in 1990, whereas 34 per-

cent of city dwellers lived in poverty, 53 percent of rural Latin Americans were poor.

Insofar as it is possible to generalize, most migrants move for economic reasons. But, while most migrants are looking to improve their lives, migration is often highly selective. A majority of the surveys show that certain groups move more frequently: young adults, particularly women, the better educated, and those with skills (Gilbert, 1998:46). Another significant aspect of Latin America's migratory flows is that women are more likely to move than men. For every three rural-urban male migrants, there were four female migrants. The age pattern of female net urban in-migration resembles that of males, except that the peak age for female migration is approximately five years lower. The highest rates of net urban in-migration for females occur at the ages of 15–19 and 20–24 (Singelmann, 1993, cited in De Oliveira and Roberts, 1996:261).

For example, in the early 1990s in Mexico City there were only 88 men to every 100 women, and in Bogotá and Cali only 90. In general, women dominate the flows to most large cities, where there are plenty of jobs waiting for them in domestic service, office cleaning, shop work, street selling, and, unfortunately, prostitution. The large number of women working as domestic servants in middle-class homes is a significant feature of the job market, and young women are often recruited directly from the countryside for this purpose (Gilbert, 1998:47).

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND MIGRATION

Evidence suggests that economic restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s has reduced the pace of rural-urban migration, at least in the medium term. This is because structural adjustment programs led to a relative increase in poverty in urban versus rural areas because of their adverse effects on wages and employment through cutbacks in public expenditure and government bureaucracies (Chant, 1999:244).

From the 1970s onward, natural increase has tended to override migration as a contributor to urban growth in Latin America as a whole as well as in the largest cities. Rural-urban migration became a less important issue in urban development, while interurban, intraurban, and international movements became more significant themes. This tendency was clearest in those countries that had high levels of urbanization and in which the rural population had declined in absolute numbers, such as Argentina and Mexico.

In 2000, net rural-urban transference of population, including the effect of international migration and the reclassification of localities, has been diminishing over time in its contribution to urban growth. During the 1950s, it accounted for 46.4 percent of urban growth, whereas by the

1990s the proportion had fallen to 38.4 percent. At the same time, the role played by migration has varied greatly among countries: during the 1990s, for instance, it ranged from 8.8 percent in Guatemala to 51.7 percent in Honduras.

There is now much evidence indicating the growing weight of urban-to-urban migration as part of internal population movements in the region. This trend was already observed in the 1970s, and became much more apparent in the 1980s and 1990s (Lattes, Rodriguez, and Villa, 2004:96). For instance, from 1987 to 1992 almost half of the movements of residents among the states of Mexico had urban origins and destinations³ (see CONAPO, 2001). A similar case was verified in Brazil, where it is estimated that more than 60 percent of the 26.9 million intermunicipal migrants from 1981 to 1991 moved among cities (see Baeninger, 1997). In more recent years, data confirm this trend, and once again the case of Mexico is highly representative. In terms of migratory flows in the period 1995–2000, nonurban migration represents only 18.1 percent of total migrants; on the contrary, urban and metropolitan migrants together represent more than 50 percent of all flows among municipalities. Clearly, in the case of Mexico, most migratory flows represented an exchange among the total of 364 urban centers existing at that time (see CONAPO, 2001:102).

Until the 1970s, most migrants from the countryside tended to settle in large, and particularly primate cities, usually capitals or major ports, which contained a disproportionate concentration of the national urban population. However, from the 1980s onward, there has been greater movement by migrants from both the countryside and large cities to “secondary” urban centers. Thus, although the proportion of the urban population living in cities of one million or more rose between 1980 and the mid-1990s, this had more to do with increased numbers of large cities than with the continued growth of primate centers. Nonetheless, it should be noted that urban dispersion is more common in larger, more urbanized countries than in smaller ones.

Secondary urbanization has been driven first and foremost by industrial relocation and/or the development and expansion of new economic activities associated with restructuring, such as international tourism and export manufacturing. This is certainly the case in Mexico, where there was net outmigration from Mexico City during the 1980s to smaller cities within a 200-kilometer radius, such as Querétaro, Toluca, Cuernavaca, and Puebla, and to core cities of the maquiladora industry on the northern border, such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez.

Nevertheless, tendencies toward metropolitan deconcentration in Latin America generally have been such that Gilbert (1995:323) argues that the recession has achieved in ten years what attempts at regional development had failed to do in thirty. Besides economic reasons for shifts away from

primate cities, there is also evidence to suggest that middle-class groups are moving to secondary centers as a result of concerns about the environment and the quality of life.

PRODUCTIVE RESTRUCTURING AND URBAN LABOR MARKETS

Composition of Urban Employment

In recent history, the first major change in employment structures occurred between 1940 and 1960 with the shift from a national economy based on agriculture to one based on industry (see chapter 1). A second stage, according to De Oliveira and Roberts (1996), took place from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. At that time, Latin America witnessed the development of its economies through a consolidation of industrial activity, the shaping of a welfare state, and the arrival of multinational firms that diversified this sector and fostered growth in the production of intermediate consumer goods and capital goods. Under this economic model, urban growth privileged the development of national capitals, and a pattern with a great deal of primacy was established in terms of both demography and economics.

The last stage, spanning from the 1970s to present, has evidenced a continuous decline in the “inward-directed” growth model; the beginning of an internationalization of markets, especially in urban economies; the exit of capital beyond its national borders through multinational firms that began operating in the countries of this region; and, above all, the exit of financial capital, whose major repercussions have been in the service sector (see chapter 2). Similarly, major advances in technoproductive innovations and the launching of neoliberal national development policies were some of the highly significant changes marking a new economic-productive scenario characterized by the unprecedented rise of the tertiary (service) sector and a new composition of the sectoral structure of urban complexes in the countries of this region.

The tertiary sector has also been characterized by its growth rate in activities involving low levels of capitalization and productivity carried out by low-skilled and low-paid labor (Méndez, 1997). In other words, these are what are known as “precarious services.” Under a new international division of labor, those services are identified with developing economies showing serious problems of unemployment and underemployment. In 1990, Latin America as a whole had 28.8 percent of its nonagricultural employment in the goods sector, whereas the remaining 71.2 percent was accounted for by the service sector. Thirteen years later, this marked disparity between the two sectors continued to increase, and so there was a drop of 3.8 percentage points for the former (25.0 percent in 2003) and, logically, a rise in the same proportion for the latter (75.0 percent in 2003).

The tertiarization process has affected both men and women. Although from 1990 to 2003 the increase in urban employment was higher in the case of men (4.5 percentage points) than in that of women (2.1 percentage points), it is interesting to note the marked difference between the proportions of workers employed in this sector. For the year 2003, men had a 67.8 percent share in the service sector, while the remaining 32.2 percent was employed in the goods sector. For their part, women had an 85.1 percent share in the former and a 14.9 percent share in the latter. Thus, women found greater access to the urban labor market performing work in the tertiary sector as compared to men, who are employed more frequently in the secondary sector.

It can be seen that the tertiarization process occurring in major Latin American urban areas is currently characterized by an expansion of unproductive services and, to a lesser extent, by the impact of productive services. For that reason, the growth recorded in this sector has mostly been in activities involving low levels of capitalization and productivity, carried out by low-skilled and low-paid labor, where women have been participating to an increasing degree.

BEHAVIOR OF URBAN LABOR MARKETS: UNEMPLOYMENT, INFORMALITY, AND PRECARIOUSNESS

In the 1990s, flexibilization of labor markets thanks to technological advances, the deregulation of labor relations stemming from new neoliberal policies, and the withdrawal of the state as a regulating agent for labor market conditions have all been translated into greater job insecurity and instability and a progressive degradation of labor conditions, a situation that has prevailed to date in Latin American countries (Berry, 1997; Serrano, 1998; Sheahan, 1997; and Ward and Pyle, 1995).

It is now recognized that unemployment is not a structural problem, but rather affects societies' structures because it has deep economic and social consequences. It generates losses in the production of goods and services, slows down economic growth, and produces major damage to affected individuals' morale and psychological well-being. This has repercussions on all of society through higher levels of crime, exclusion, insecurity, morbidity, and poverty, among other aspects (Freeman and Soete, 1994:39, cited later in Méndez, 1997:224; Gilbert, 1996).

The behavior of urban labor markets in Latin America, which began to show negative signs during the 1980s, also called the "lost decade" due to the lack of growth in the region's economies, is presently failing to exhibit substantial improvement: on the contrary, the situation of these markets has worsened.

Although Latin America has reported relatively "low" urban unemployment rates, these figures fail to reveal the true situation, since a large percentage of the population holds precarious jobs lacking certain guarantees such as social security or the rights that, by law, workers are entitled to. Thus, the dearth of "quality" employment represents one of the most serious problems confronted by this region, and is considered to be very difficult to solve.

During the 1985–2000 period, open urban unemployment tended to increase in the region as a whole: the rate went from 9.5 percent to 10.5 percent. For the year 2004, the regional urban unemployment rate accounted for approximately 19.5 million jobless urban workers (OIT, 2004). Urban unemployment also varies from one country to the next. Colombia had one of the highest rates for this region at 17.3 percent, followed by Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Uruguay, with rates of 15.1 percent, 14.1 percent, 13.9 percent, and 13.6 percent, respectively (OIT, 2004:91).

Urban unemployment, coupled with the erosion of household incomes, forces more family members to enter the labor market. This is a survival strategy to guarantee minimum earnings and to enable families to meet their needs, given the increasing difficulty of doing so on a single salary. Thus, the inclusion of women in labor markets has been fundamental. However, the circumstances under which women join the labor market are not the most favorable. The situation of women is highly vulnerable as they work precarious jobs, with long days with little or no fringe benefits and no access to social security. In the year 2000, the majority of urban areas in the region reported higher unemployment rates for women than for men. Only Peru evidenced a higher unemployment rate among men in comparison to women (8.2 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively). The higher level of unemployment rates among women is also attributable to lower possibilities for obtaining stable employment, since a large proportion of females have jobs in the informal sector.

Along with unemployment, an increase in the degree of informality⁴ in urban labor markets is another of the major problems afflicting Latin American economies. Between 1990 and 2003, there was a rise in the size of the informal sector in the region as a whole (nearly 4 percentage points, from 42.8 percent to 46.7 percent). For every 100 new urban jobs created during this period, 61 were informal (OIT, 2004:37). Colombia and Venezuela recorded the highest increments, with 15.7 and 15.2 percentage points, respectively. And in the year 2003, those two countries, along with Ecuador and Peru, surpassed the threshold of 50 percent of their occupational structures in urban informal employment (61.4 percent, 53.8 percent, 56.5 percent, and 55.9 percent, respectively) (see table 3.4).

The share of the informal sector in urban labor markets is larger for women than it is for men. At the country level, the most pronounced case

Table 3.4. Latin America, Selected Countries: Urban Employment by Formal and Informal Sectors and Gender, 1990–2003 (in Percentages)

Country/Sector	1990			2003		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Latin America	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	57.2	60.6	52.6	53.3	55.9	49.9
Informal Sector	42.8	39.4	47.4	46.7	44.1	50.1
Argentina	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	48.0	50.2	44.5	53.5	52.8	54.4
Informal Sector	52.0	49.8	55.5	46.5	47.2	45.6
Brazil	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	59.4	63.9	52.4	55.4	59.5	50.2
Informal Sector	40.6	36.1	47.6	44.6	40.5	49.8
Chile	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	62.1	66.5	54.1	61.2	65.8	54.1
Informal Sector	37.9	33.5	45.9	38.8	34.2	45.9
Colombia	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	54.3	54.9	53.4	38.6	41.0	35.8
Informal Sector	45.7	45.1	46.6	61.4	59.0	64.2
Costa Rica	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	58.8	62.3	52.5	56.6	60.8	50.2
Informal Sector	41.2	37.7	47.5	43.4	39.2	49.8
Ecuador	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	44.4	48.3	37.9	43.5	47.6	37.9
Informal Sector	55.6	51.7	62.1	56.5	52.4	62.1
Mexico	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	61.6	62.4	60.1	58.2	58.6	57.5
Informal Sector	38.4	37.6	39.9	41.8	41.4	42.5
Peru	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	7.3	53.7	37.1	44.1	49.0	37.8
Informal Sector	52.7	46.3	62.9	55.9	51.0	62.2
Uruguay	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	60.9	66.3	53.4	60.9	62.9	58.4
Informal Sector	39.1	33.7	46.6	39.1	37.1	41.6
Venezuela	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal Sector	61.0	61.7	60.7	46.2	48.3	43.4
Informal Sector	38.6	38.3	39.3	53.8	51.7	56.6

Source: Based on data from OIT (2004), using country household interviews. Argentina (31 urban agglomerations); Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador (national urban totals); Chile, Costa Rica, and Venezuela (national totals); Mexico (urban national—32 localities); Peru (Metropolitan Lima); Uruguay (1991 and 1995—Montevideo; 1999 onward—national urban total).

is Colombia, which concentrates 64.2 percent of female urban employment in the informal sector, followed very closely by Peru (62.2 percent) and Ecuador (62.1 percent), as well as Venezuela, whose rate is somewhat lower (56.6 percent). The other countries report figures of no lower than 41.6 percent.

This increase in informality gives rise to the precarious nature of employment, which can be observed in the decrease in government jobs, as well as a drop in social security coverage among workers. The public (government) sector was a victim of international financing organizations that pressured governments to cut back unsustainable bureaucracies and to privatize semistate enterprises (Chant, 1999). Such structural changes resulted in an increase of private vis-à-vis public employment under new working conditions. The deregulation or “thinning” of work contracts was one of the main causes of the privatization of employment and, therefore, of an increase in the precarious nature of those jobs. In the 1990–2003 period, 88 of every 100 new jobs created in the region’s urban areas were in the private sector.

The evolution of the social security system is another factor that has been affected by the growth of informal employment and that has led to greater precariousness in employment. From 1990 to 2003, only 53 of every 100 new salaried workers were enrolled in the social security system. It stands to reason that the informal sector has been reporting a lower percentage of salaried workers in the social security system than the formal sector. However, the proportions exhibited by both these sectors vary widely. In the year 2003, nearly 80 percent of those working in the formal sector had social security, whereas only 26.2 percent did so in the informal one. The decrease in social security coverage that has occurred among salaried workers of both sexes affected urban residents and resulted in greater precariousness in employment.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of recent trends in urban and metropolitan growth. Urbanization levels in Latin America increased markedly during the late twentieth century, and will continue to rise. The region’s urban population, estimated to have been 179.8 million in 1975, went to 353.2 million in 2000, and is expected to be 462.0 million in 2015. This constitutes a major transformation of society. Yet despite this tendency, it is evident that the rate of increase has declined from 3.7 percent in 1980 to 2.1 percent in 2000 (see table 3.3).

Most of the region’s urban population growth has been absorbed by urban centers with more than 500,000 inhabitants, a pattern that is bound to continue. Megacities, while attracting much attention owing to their

individual size and well-publicized problems, accounted for less than 20 percent of the region's urban population in 2000, and their share of the urban population seems likely to remain low in the foreseeable future.

Latin America's urban employment structure is currently characterized by a tertiarization process, with an expansion of labor in unproductive services. Therefore, the growth shown by this sector is in activities involving low levels of capitalization and productivity, carried out by low-skilled and low-paid labor, in a context of economies with high unemployment rates and increasing conditions of informality and precariousness.

Higher unemployment rates among women are also a consequence of their lesser possibilities of obtaining more stable work. To a very marked degree, the activities they engage in are related to jobs with limited guarantees of social security and where the turnover is very high, namely trade and unproductive services, with a high proportion of women in the informal sector. This increase in informality leads to the precarious nature of employment in the region's urban areas. That can be observed in the decrease in government employment as well as a drop in social security coverage among workers; this situation is even worse in the case of women.

NOTES

1. In most of the countries, with the exception of Ecuador and Brazil, for example, the primate city and the political capital have been one and the same.
2. Population censuses are the main resources available for quantifying migration and obtaining a profile of migrants. This information, although useful, has many limitations, since the data refer only to the accumulated stocks of migrants and not to the flows.
3. These data refer only to people moving to localities of 20,000 or more inhabitants, and exclude intrametropolitan movements.
4. For a wider discussion of the informal sector see: Bromley, 1978; De Soto, 1989; International Labour Office, 1972; Portes, Castells, and Benton, 1991; Santos, 1979; Thomas, 1995; Tokman, 1989.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguilar, Adrian G. "Megaurbanization and Industrial Relocation in Mexico's Central Region." *Urban Geography* 23, no. 7 (2002a): 649-673.
- Aguilar, Adrian G. "Las mega-ciudades y las periferias expandidas: Ampliando el concepto en la Ciudad de México." *EURE: Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales* 28, no. 85 (2002b): 121-149.
- Aguilar, Adrian G., and P. Ward. "Globalization, Regional Development, and Mega-City Expansion in Latin America: Analyzing Mexico City's Peri-Urban

- Hinterland." *Cities (The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning)* 20, no. 1 (2003): 3-21.
- Baeninger, R. "Redistribución espacial de la población: Características y tendencias del caso brasileño." *Notas de Población* 25, no. 65 (1997): 145-202.
- Berry, A. "The Income Distribution Threat in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 32, no. 2 (1997): 3-40.
- Bromley, R. "The Urban Informal Sector: Critical Perspectives." *World Development* 6 (1978): 1031-1198.
- Campolina, C. "Polygonized Development in Brazil: Neither Decentralization nor Continued Polarization." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2, no. 18 (1994): 293-314.
- CEPAL. *Panorama social de América Latina, 2002-2003*. Santiago de Chile: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2004.
- Chant, S. "Population, Migration, Employment, and Gender." In *Latin America Transformed: Globalization and Modernity*, edited by R. N. Gwynne and C. Kay, pp. 226-269. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Ciccolella, P. "Globalización y dualización en la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires: Grandes inversiones y reestructuración socioterritorial en los años noventa." *EURE: Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales* 25, no. 76 (1999): 5-27.
- CONAPO. *La población de México en el nuevo siglo*. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población, 2001.
- De Mattos, C. "Santiago de Chile, globalización y expansión metropolitana: Lo que existía sigue existiendo." *EURE: Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales* 25, no. 76 (1999): 29-56.
- De Oliveira, O., and B. Roberts. "Urban Development and Social Inequality in Latin America." In *The Urban Transformation of the Developing World*, edited by J. Gugler, pp. 253-314. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- De Soto, H. *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1989.
- ECLAC. *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2003*, United Nations, 2004.
- Freeman, C., and L. Soete. *Work for All or Mass Unemployment?: Computerised Technical Change into the 21st Century*. London: Pinter Publishers, 1994.
- Gilbert, A. "Debt, Poverty, and the Latin American City." *Geography* 80, no. 4 (1995): 323-333.
- Gilbert, A. "Urban Growth, Employment, and Housing." In *Latin American Development: Geographical Perspectives*, 2nd edition, edited by D. Preston, pp. 246-271. London: Longman, 1996.
- Gilbert, A. *The Latin American City*. 2nd edition. London: Latin America Bureau, 1998.
- Green, D. *Faces of Latin America*. London: Latin America Bureau, 1991.
- Gwynne, R. N. "Industrialization and Urbanization." In *Latin American Development: Geographical Perspectives*, 2nd edition, edited by D. Preston, pp. 216-245. London: Longman, 1996.
- International Labour Office. *Employment, Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya*. Geneva: International Labour Office Publications, 1972.

- Lattes, A. E., J. Rodriguez, and M. Villa. "Population Dynamics and Urbanization in Latin America: Concepts and Data Limitations." In *New Forms of Urbanization: Beyond the Urban-Rural Dichotomy*, edited by T. Champion and H. Graeme, pp. 89–111. London: Ashgate, 2004.
- Lopes de Souza, M. "Metropolitan Deconcentration, Socio-political Fragmentation, and Extended Urbanization: Brazilian Urbanization in the 1980s and 1990s." *Geoforum* 32, no. 4 (2001): 437–447.
- Méndez, R. *Geografía económica: La lógica espacial del capitalismo global*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1997.
- Newson, L. A. "The Latin American Colonial Experience." In *Latin American Development: Geographical Perspectives*, 2nd edition, edited by D. Preston, pp. 11–40. London: Longman, 1996.
- OIT. *Panorama laboral, 2004: América Latina y el Caribe*. Lima: Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2004.
- Portes, A., M. Castells, and L. Benton, eds. *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Santos, M. *The Shared Space: The Two Circuits of the Urban Economy in Underdeveloped Countries*. London: Methuen, 1979.
- Serrano, A. "Representación del trabajo y socialización laboral." *Sociología del Trabajo* 33 (1998): 27–49.
- Sheahan, J. "Effects of Liberalization Programs on Poverty and Inequality: Chile, Mexico, and Peru." *Latin American Research Review* 32, no. 3 (1997): 7–37.
- Singelmann, J. "Levels and Trends of Female Internal Migration in Developing Countries 1960–1980." In *Internal Migration of Women in Developing Countries: Proceedings of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Feminization of Internal Migration*, pp. 77–93. New York: United Nations, 1993.
- Thomas, J. J. *Surviving in the City? The Urban Informal Sector in Latin America*. London: Pluto, 1995.
- Tokman, V. "Policies for a Heterogeneous Informal Sector in Latin America." *World Development* 17, no. 7 (1989): 1067–1076.
- United Nations Population Division. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1999 Revision*. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 2001. See pp. 120, 178.
- Villa, M., and J. Martínez Pizarro. "International Migration Trends and Patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean." In *ECLAC: International Migration and Development in the Americas*, pp. 21–57. Seminarios y conferencias Series No. 15. Santiago de Chile: ECLAC, CELADE, IOM, IDB, UNFPA, 2001.
- Ward, P., and J. Pyle. "Gender, Industrialization, Transnational Corporations, and Development: An Overview of Trends and Patterns." In *Women in the Latin American Development Process: From Structural Subordination to Empowerment*, edited by C. Bose and E. Acosta-Belén, pp. 37–64. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.
- Zlotnik, H. "World Urbanization: Trends and Prospects." In *New Forms of Urbanization: Beyond the Urban-Rural Dichotomy*, edited by A. G. Champion and Graeme Hugo, pp. 43–64. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

4

Architectural Icons and Urban Form

The Power of Place in Latin America

Larry R. Ford

When I first began to travel and study in Latin America back in the 1960s, I was impressed with what I saw as the very latest in sophisticated architecture and urban form. Mexico City, for example, not only had one of the tallest buildings outside of the United States but also many exciting new types of structures at its major university campus. When the Olympics were held there in 1968, avant-garde structures in the form of stadiums and arenas added to the progressive atmosphere of the metropolis. The new Museum of Anthropology near Chapultepec Park and the string of glass-walled skyscrapers along the impressive, traffic-circled Paseo de la Reforma gave me the impression that Mexico was leading the way toward a new type of city. A variety of very unusual, even utopian, residential structures in several of its upscale neighborhoods confirmed this view.

A few years later, I traveled through a number of South American cities and my favorable impressions of Latin American urbanism were largely reinforced. The sinuous skyscrapers of São Paulo, the high-rise beachfronts of Rio de Janeiro, and the broad avenues and interesting Art Nouveau buildings of Buenos Aires convinced me that urban design was a field worth pursuing in Latin America. Brasilia, although not everyone's cup of tea, epitomized the idea that Latin America was at the forefront in urban planning and design and that the modernist icons of the future were most evident there.

Many of the cities I had visited in North America seemed to lack the aesthetic coherence and mixture of architectural styles I found in the capitals of the south. I felt certain that the dynamic cities of Latin America would remain the focus of attention for those interested in urban morphology and iconic architectural statements for some time to come. I do not think