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Residential movement among the poor: the constraints on housing choice in Latin American cities

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ABSTRACT. The paper examines the validity of current theories of intra-city migration, subjecting those theories to the test of explaining new data collected in a total of 13 low-income settlements in three Latin American cities: Bogotá, Mexico City, and Valencia, Venezuela. The study focuses attention upon the principal reception points for migrants; the location of previous place of residence for contemporary barrio dwellers; the tenure and dwelling characteristics of previous places of residence. The authors conclude that residential patterns in Latin American cities are less the outcome of migrant choice, as some theories argue, and more the product of constraints imposed upon the land and housing markets. Both markets are in turn conditioned by the socio-political structure of the city in question. Particularly critical to the residential patterns are: (1) land ownership and the ease with which low-income households are able to secure house plots either by purchase or by squatting; (2) state intervention which directly and indirectly affects opportunities for renting and sharing accommodation; (3) the physical extension and organization of the city which, combined with the quality and cost of its transportation system, constrains the search for accommodation and increasingly encourages people to look for housing and work in the same zone of the city. Understanding these constraints is especially important in formulating an appropriate governmental response to the housing situation in Latin American cities.

How poor migrants adapt to the urban environment has long held a fascination for English-speaking social scientists. One strand of this fascination has consisted of trying to understand where migrants live when they first arrive in the city and where they eventually establish their homes. The work of urban sociologists and architects has provided a series of descriptive models which purport to explain residential movement in the city and which relate different patterns of urban residential location to different stages in migrant career and family cycles. This work is important in so far as it affects our thinking about the housing priorities of low-income groups, government policy towards the poor and the nature of urban residential expansion.

This paper subjects current theories of intra-city migration to the test of explaining new data which we have collected on migrants in three Latin American cities: Bogotá (Colombia), Valencia (Venezuela) and Mexico City.¹ We examine several aspects of intra-city migration: the principal reception points for migrants; the location of previous place of residence for contemporary 'barrio' dwellers; the tenure and dwelling characteristics of previous places of residence.² We depart from the approach adopted in many earlier studies in so far as we attempt to relate observed changes to the changing structures of the land and housing markets. In

essence we ask how low-income housing opportunities for migrants have changed in recent years and examine how those changes have affected residential movements. We conclude that a broad model of residential behaviour based upon stage theories is inappropriate. Residential movement is best explained through an examination of the dynamics of the land and housing markets. It is the outcome of market forces which condition the opportunities for low-income residents whatever their housing preferences.

MODELS OF INTRA-URBAN RESIDENTIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Chicago School of urban ecology provided the background for much of the early research on Latin American residential patterns. Schnore's (1965) summary of the research carried out during the 1940s and 1950s suggested that in many Latin American cities the 'traditional' colonial residential pattern had broken down. Elites no longer lived around the central city plaza but had moved to new residences in suburban locations. This shifting pattern represented an 'evolutionary model' which, he argued, led to residential patterns similar to those outlined by Burgess (1924) and Hoyt (1939). More recently, other writers have examined in detail the changing residential preferences and locations of élite groups. Amato (1968, 1969) has demonstrated how Bogotá's élite moved from centrally located, colonial-style housing, through European-type residences to North American ranch-style suburbia. Scobie (1974) and Sargant (1972) have depicted similar processes operating in Buenos Aires.

Other work has concentrated on low-income residential behaviour, demonstrating how erroneous some of the early views of intra-city migrant behaviour actually were. The idea that migrants arrived from the provinces, without home or work, and were forced to squat on the edge of the city was a widely held but inaccurate stereotype during the fifties. Mangin and Turner (1968) showed clearly how migrant squatters in Lima were anything but raw urban recruits. They had considerable urban experience in centrally-located rental tenements before becoming involved in an invasion attempt. Later, Turner's (1968) seminal paper provided the first general model to explain low-income migrant settlement patterns. Residential location of migrants was determined essentially by three variables: (1) tenure—specifically the choice between renting and ownership; (2) location—proximity to unskilled employment opportunities mainly located in the central city; and (3) shelter—an individual's priority for modern standard shelter. Recent migrant arrivals ('bridgeheaders') favoured cheap rental accommodation in the central city, from where they could search for work, and had a low preference for ownership or high-quality accommodation. However, gradual integration into the employment market, greater urban familiarity, and growing family size would affect these priorities. The established migrant would now be in a position to become a 'consolidator': an 'owner' in the urban periphery. Such 'ownership' offered space for expansion and the possibility to extend a dwelling through self-help. The theory suggested, therefore, that most low-income migrants would first live as renters in the inner city and later move as owners into the peripheral low-income settlements. Turner recognized, however, that this two-stage model was liable to become distorted in 'late transitional' cities such as Lima and Mexico where the opportunities for cheap tenement accommodation dried up and where early squatter settlements had become integrated into the urban fabric. Residents in this consolidated 'intermediate ring' were now prepared to rent rooms to 'bridgeheaders' and to help their recently-arrived provincial friends and kin.

By the end of the decade, evidence from numerous Latin American cities had provided support for Turner's hypothesis, and the classic 'two-stage' model had become 'widely accepted' (Morse, 1971, p. 22). It had also been incorporated by Johnston (1972) into a general model of intra-urban residential movement. By relating residential patterns to stages of industrial development, Latin American processes and mosaics were equated with those found in New

Zealand and in North America: differences due to social structure were of degree rather than of kind (Johnston, 1972, pp. 98–101).

Gradually, however, further evidence on intra-city migration patterns raised questions about the validity of the two-stage model. A city-wide sample of movers in Monterrey (Mexico) found no simple Turneresque pattern (Vaughn and Feindt, 1973, p. 398). Rather than the housing priorities of the poor, socio-economic status appeared to be the major variable conditioning residential relocation. The central city area appeared to attract better-off workers and even the overall movement outwards from the centre was not to the periphery but to intermediate locations. Evidence from Bogotá also posed questions for the Turner model. In contrast with the earlier findings of Flinn (1968) and Cardona (1968), Vernez (1973) discovered that most new migrants sought rental accommodation not in the classic inner-city rental areas but in rooms contained in the consolidated low-income settlements in the south and south-west of the city. This finding was later substantiated by Brücher and Mertins (1978) and pointed to the need for a revision in the two-stage model.

Ward's (1976) work in Mexico City also pointed to a 'breakdown' in the classic two-stage pattern. He suggested that the residents of newly formed low-income settlements had rarely lived in the inner-city areas. Rather, they had either rented or had shared lots with relatives and friends. He also demonstrated that while many squatters in Mexico City during the forties and fifties had begun their urban lives in inner-city tenements, a substantial proportion had always moved direct to the periphery (see also Lomnitz, 1977, p. 56).

Recently, Conway and Brown (1980) have attempted to reformulate Turner's model so that it can accommodate the new evidence. With empirical support from Mexico City and Port of Spain, Trinidad, they present a three-stage evolutionary model. They suggest that as urbanization proceeds three distinct areas emerge: the city-centre core; inner-city low-income settlements (usually regularized low-income settlement); and peripheral low-income areas with a growing range of tenure types. Migration patterns become more complex with more migrants moving directly into the periphery. A critical determinant of change is the distribution of kin and friends who provide accommodation and information to the new arrivals. In general, this modification would seem to conform with Turner's thoughts about the late transitional city. However, our reading of their data suggests that in Port of Spain direct migration and moves from other parts of the city into the periphery have been important at least since 1945. The three-stage model, therefore, may not be linked to higher levels of urban development but an explanation of migrant moves in most Latin American cities.

There is, however, a more critical problem facing the Turner model than whether or not migrant behaviour fits into three rather than two stages. All the behavioural models tend to stress the housing preferences of the residents without investigating the constraints on their ability to obtain housing. But, are the preferences exogenously determined or are they a response to the urban environment? As Brett (1974) pointed out settlers are not the only actors in the urban process. The interests and priorities of the commercial and public sectors frequently conflict with low-income groups and 'what is most important, . . . tend to exert, usually jointly, a *dominating influence over the total context in which housing choices are made*' (Brett, 1974, p. 189, his emphasis). In order to understand residential movement both residential preferences and constraints need to be considered. The latter can only be included through an analysis of wider structural factors such as government policy towards land and servicing, the changing price of land, the impact of increased densities on land use in low-income settlement and the effects of increasing urban diseconomies. Our subsequent analysis will demonstrate how the wider urban environment critically affects the pattern of low-income residential movement in Bogotá, Valencia and Mexico City.

METHODOLOGY

The data analysed below form part of a much larger study concerned with government intervention in the housing and land markets in Bogotá, Valencia and Mexico City. Within each city, several self-help settlements were chosen, representing different types of land alienation process: invasions, land cessions, and low-cost subdivisions (Gilbert, 1981; Ward, 1981). Thirteen settlements were chosen to be broadly comparable across the cities in terms of infrastructure.³ In each city the average age of settlement was 7–8 years. No barrio was more than 15 years old and two young settlements (Liberales in Mexico and Juan Pablo I in Bogotá) were chosen to shed light on recent policies relating to land invasions.

Two teams conducted the fieldwork between July 1978 and September 1979. Most of the data presented in this paper are derived from a structured questionnaire survey applied randomly to 1170 households in the 13 settlements.⁴ The questionnaire covered a wide range of topics including the origins, employment, income and health of the household, details on land acquisition and payments, political and community participation and mobilization for services, knowledge and opinions about key local and city-wide personnel, as well as data about the dwelling and its level of servicing. One section dealt with residential movement within the city, focusing on the location, tenure and services of the first, penultimate, ultimate and current residence. In addition, migrants to the city were asked to record their education, occupations and movements before arrival in the city. Responses were coded and were analysed using an S.P.S.S. programme together with a specially developed programme designed to analyse and reproduce locational data on map outlines for each city.⁵

It is important to recognize that the data presented below are not representative samples of the city populations nor even of the urban poor. They are representative only of the processes operating in the kinds of low-income settlements that we investigated. As Figure 1 shows, most of the settlements selected were located close to the edge of the city and it is inevitable that our data over-represent processes operating in those areas and underscore residential location behaviour in 'downtown' districts. Moreover, we recognize that many settlements, because of peculiarities of location, size, tenure history—even quirks of fate—will not correspond to some of the generalizations which we derive in our conclusions. Nevertheless, the care taken in choosing a broadly representative set of settlements in each city and to achieve comparability between them, allows us to be reasonably confident that our information is, at the very least, as reliable as any other available. Wherever possible we have cross-checked our data with other studies, census information and unpublished reports.

LOW-COST HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE THREE CITIES

The populations of Bogotá, Mexico City and Valencia have all grown annually by at least 5 per cent during the past thirty years. All have grown as large numbers of migrants have moved from the countryside and from smaller towns in search of work in the rapidly expanding industrial, commercial and service sectors. While natural increase now accounts for the greater part of population growth in two of the cities, migration has been of critical importance to the demographic growth of all three. Needless to say, the cities differ considerably in terms of total population, extent of the built-up area and city-wide densities. Mexico City, the largest metropolitan area in Latin America, had a population of around 13 millions in 1978 compared with Bogotá's 4.0 millions and Valencia's 0.7 million. The built-up areas and average population densities also vary between the three cities: Mexico City occupies 886 km² with a gross

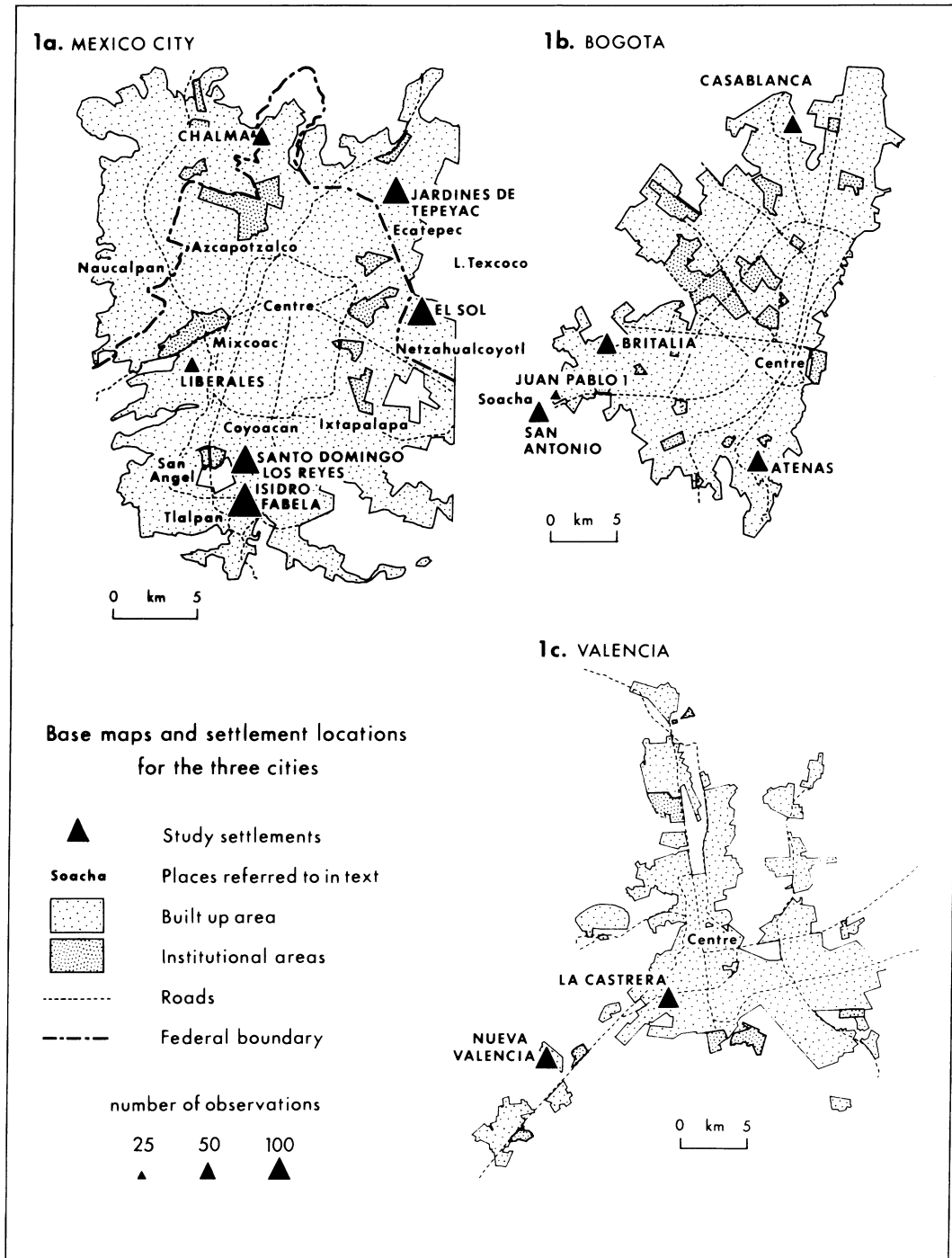


FIGURE 1. Base maps and settlement locations for the three cities

population density of 145 persons per hectare; Bogotá is much smaller, covering 164 km², but is more densely populated, with 161 persons per hectare; Valencia is smaller still, 98 km² with only 60 persons per hectare. Although population and physical size are important, intra-city migration patterns are influenced more directly by the land and housing markets operating in each city.

Opportunities for home ownership differ in each city and are critically dependent upon the ability of poor people to gain access to land. Whether this is easy or difficult depends upon a range of structural and political factors which we have analysed elsewhere (Gilbert, 1981; Gilbert and Ward, 1982). Specifically, it depends upon whether land invasions are permitted and, if not, upon the price of land. In turn, the price depends upon whether the land is legally urbanized and whether or not it has services; the poor are normally forced to occupy such illegal urban areas. In Bogotá and Mexico City, most low-income settlers acquire unserviced and illegal plots by purchase from a subdivider. In Bogotá, the process is relatively straightforward with purchasers buying on credit from the illegal subdividers (Vernez, 1973; Gilbert, 1981). In Mexico, the procedure is rather more complex and transactions may involve *ejidatarios*, large companies, and small landlords who have been prevented from selling their lands legally.⁶ All transactions are illegal in one way or another and the frequency of each kind of sale varies according to location and to the attitude of the government at the time.

Invasions are rare in Bogotá and uncommon, but more frequent in Mexico City. In Valencia, by contrast, squatting on municipal lands predominates and the authorities appear less concerned than in the other cities to prevent illegal captures of land by low-income groups. Moreover, the law allows for compensation to be paid to residents for the 'improvements' they have made to the land in the event of their dwellings being eradicated. It seems irrelevant to the authorities that the squatters may be occupying land illegally. Nevertheless, the majority of low-income settlers do not invade land but purchase it from the previous occupants once the community is reasonably secure or when basic services are within reach. The costs, for those who buy, are considerably less than the equivalent cost of land purchase in either of the other two cities.

It is clear that illegality is a critical feature of land acquisition among the poor in all three cities though the form of that illegality varies. It is clear also that a measure of illegality is accepted because some form of accommodation must be made available to the poor if the wider urban economy is to continue functioning. The availability of land allows a certain proportion of the population to begin the process of constructing and consolidating a home. The cost and availability of land varies with the degree of illegality that the authorities in each city are allowed to sanction and accept. This in turn depends upon a series of factors which we have examined elsewhere, but it seems as if land prices are increasing quite significantly for poor people in both Bogotá and Mexico (Villamizar, 1980; COPEVI, 1977; Brown, 1972).

For those without a lot, and therefore unable or not wishing to begin the process of home construction and consolidation, there are two alternative forms of housing tenure: renting or sharing. Again the incidence of renting and sharing tends to vary widely from city to city. In Bogotá tenants are common in all kinds of housing area, whether high- or low-income, government or private, centrally located or peripheral. In the low-income settlements, it is a common strategy for home owners to supplement their income by building an additional room to accommodate renters. In Mexico, the rental market functions in a similar fashion but was restricted for a time by the imposition of rent controls in the 1940s. This action reduced the incentive of landlords to develop additional rental accommodation as well as the mobility of tenants enjoying very low rents. As demand outran supply, illegal renting developed in the settlements which were established during the 1950s in the intermediate ring of the city (Brown,

TABLE I
Comparative data for the barrios sampled in each city

| Variable | Mexico | | | | | | Bogotá | | | Valencia | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------------|------------|--------|----------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Isidro Fabela | Santo Domingo | El Sol | Liberales | Chalma | Jardines | Juan Pablo I | Casablanca | Atenas | Britalia | San Antonio | Nueva Valencia | La Castrera |
| Age of settlement (in years) ¹ | 120 | 74 | 68 | 22 | 60 | 97 | 30 | 95 | 121 | 29 | 92 | 52 | 76 |
| Origin of settlement ² | Inv. | Inv. | Sub. | Inv. | Sub. | Sub. | Sub./Inv.* | Sub. | Sub. | Sub. | Sub. | Inv. | Inv. |
| % households that bought from a third party ³ | 10 | 11 | 56 | 0 | 98 | 32 | 24 | 44 | 50 | 23 | 24 | 75 | 58 |
| Services and utilities score ⁴ | 15 | 11 | 14 | 6 | 11 | 14 | 0 | 12 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 13 |
| Density: average lot space per person (m ²) | 29 | 25 | 33 | 25 | 34 | 52 | 25 | 23 | 21 | 23 | 22 | 99 | 52 |
| % households that are owners | 63 | 81 | 70 | 82 | 74 | 66 | 89 | 57 | 56 | 71 | 55 | 97 | 93 |
| % households that are renters | 15 | 4 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 19 | 11 | 42 | 43 | 28 | 43 | 2 | 7 |
| % households that share with kin, etc. | 18 | 14 | 12 | 5 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-total: excludes 'others' | 96 | 99 | 95 | 100 | 99 | 96 | 100 | 100 | 99 | 99 | 100 | 99 | 100 |
| Absolute numbers in brackets | (144) | (120) | (120) | (60) | (73) | (114) | (35) | (74) | (88) | (79) | (84) | (94) | (84) |

Notes

1. On 1 January, 1979. Birth of barrio defined as the mean of month in which owners arrived but excluding those who bought from third party. Given that it is a mean value all settlements are likely to have been established a little earlier than the age suggests.
 2. Inv. = Invasion; Sub. = Subdivision.
 3. 'Third party' is the original lot owner or someone who is not the subdivider. In Chalma almost all owners bought from an *ejidatario*, the sale being recorded as a third-party sale.
 4. See Note 3 for an explanation of this item.
- *It is unclear whether Juan Pablo began as an invasion or subdivision.

1972; Ward, 1976). Today, the process continues, with rental housing being developed in new settlements on the edge of the city. In Valencia, renting in low-income settlements is uncommon both because lots are relatively easy to obtain and because the law prevents renting in unserviced dwellings. Since so many irregular settlements are unserviced in Valencia this precludes widespread renting except in the case of illegal immigrants.⁷ While renting does occur in other parts of the city, the incidence of renting is much lower than in either Bogotá or Mexico. Perhaps for this reason the city lacks the large numbers of inner-city lodging houses and tenements (*vecindades* and *inquilinos*) which are characteristic of both Bogotá and Mexico.

Those who are unable to own, and who cannot or do not wish to rent, share a home with kin or friends. Again, the frequency of sharing tends to vary between the cities. In Bogotá, sharing for periods of more than a few weeks is uncommon, largely because of the high occupation rates and because of the well-developed rental market. In Mexico and Valencia sharing is more common.

These various differences in the housing market of the three cities are reflected in Table I which shows how renting, ownership and sharing varied in the low-income settlements we sampled. The principal factors determining the level of renting seem to be the structural factors already described, plus the availability of services, a factor linked in turn to the age of the settlement.

As we shall observe below, the rental housing market appears to function quite satisfactorily, with many consolidators offering a room to let on their plots (see also Vernez, 1973). In Mexico, however, the imposition of rent controls in the 1940s reduced the incentive of landlords to develop additional rental accommodation as well as the mobility of tenants who enjoyed anomalously low rents. Consequently, demand quickly outran supply and new opportunities were generated illegally in the settlements established during the 1950s and now found in the intermediate ring of the city (Brown, 1972; Ward, 1976). Today, the process continues and rental housing is even being developed in recent settlements at the periphery of the city. Even here, however, supply cannot meet demand and many low-income residents live rent-free by sharing their plots with kin.

ANALYSIS

First residence in the city

Where do migrants reside when they first arrive in the city? Which zones of the city are, or have been, the most important reception areas, what type of accommodation do migrants choose, and is there a discernible change in these patterns over the past three decades that might conform with Turner's two-stage hypothesis?

Migrants dominate among the populations of the three cities, and thus most of those living in our survey settlements had been born outside the city. In Bogotá and Mexico City few of the migrants had moved directly to these settlements on arrival; only 10 per cent or so had moved direct to their current settlement and many of these rented from, or shared with, kin. On the other hand, the situation in Valencia is rather unusual and merits comment. Thirty-eight per cent of the migrants we interviewed had moved directly to the current settlement; 52 per cent of them were owner-occupiers. This feature may be explained by the relative ease with which a newcomer to Valencia can establish himself as an 'owner' in a peripheral settlement. The relatively low price of land acquisition and the accessibility of even peripheral settlements to employment areas explains the direct movement of migrants to Valencia's low-income settlements and the absence of renting. Put simply, why rent when land is relatively abundant on which to build a house? Table II demonstrates that only 27 per cent of migrants to Valencia had

TABLE II
Tenure of first residence in city for migrants*

| | Mexico City | Bogotá | Valencia† |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Owners | 1.8 | 5.5 | 25.0 |
| Renters | 45.0 | 64.0 | 27.2 |
| Carers | 4.1 | 4.0 | 9.8 |
| With parents | 8.6 | 5.0 | 11.0 |
| With kin | 32.8 | 18.0 | 21.7 |
| Other | 7.7 | 3.5 | 5.4 |
| Total % (Total no.) | 100.0 (338) | 100.0 (200) | 100.1 (92) |

*Includes direct arrivals to current settlement. 'first residence' = more than 1 year.

†As noted in the text direct arrivals to current settlement are only important in Valencia, where they constituted 38% of the total migrant sample.

rented accommodation on arrival in the city, compared with 25 per cent who owned and 22 per cent who stayed with kin. Few migrants moved into the inner-city area⁸; most established themselves in the older low-income settlements situated to the immediate south-west⁹ or, more recently, in the newer settlements on the urban fringe (Fig. 2a).

Migration to Bogotá and Mexico City presents a rather more complicated picture. In both cities, renting is by far the most important first tenure for migrants. Table II indicates that in Bogotá renting is especially important, and our evidence suggests that since the early 1950s rental accommodation has consistently provided the first residence for two-thirds of the migrants. The locations of these areas of first residence are widely spread, with no clear pattern emerging. Low-income renters clearly do not move to high-income residential areas or to government housing estates. Beyond this, however, they seem to occupy a wide range of locations: the downtown area which contains many older mansions now turned into cheap rooming houses and hotels (Amato, 1968; Vernez, 1973); the central area of the small industrial town of Soacha to the south-west; older pirate settlements south of the city centre; irregular settlements established during the fifties and sixties in the west and north-west of the city. These latter areas are settlements in which owner-occupiers have sub-let rooms to incoming migrants. Vernez (1973, p. 7) estimates that more than half of all Bogotá families renting accommodation lived in pirate settlements. It is clear from his and our data that these older settlements represent the key reception areas for migrants over the past twenty years.

There is some evidence to support the idea that the location of the first foothold in Bogotá has changed through time: more migrants moved to the downtown area prior to 1965 than after. Since 1965 the city centre has declined in importance as the older established pirate settlements have begun to offer rental accommodation, as the absolute numbers of migrants have exceeded the accommodation available in the centre and as urban renewal and office expansion have eliminated many older tenements. The tendency for renting to increase as settlements get older, more consolidated and better serviced is clearly shown in Table I.

In Mexico City, around 54 per cent of all households in the city rent; of those many now live in the low-income settlements in the intermediate ring of the city.¹⁰ As in Bogotá, owner-occupiers choose, or are obliged by rising costs and land values, to supplement their incomes by letting rooms. The result is that population densities are rising in the older settlements (COPEVI, 1978). Other owners sell out and small-scale property developers construct purpose-built rental accommodation, normally single rooms with access to a narrow patio. These rooms

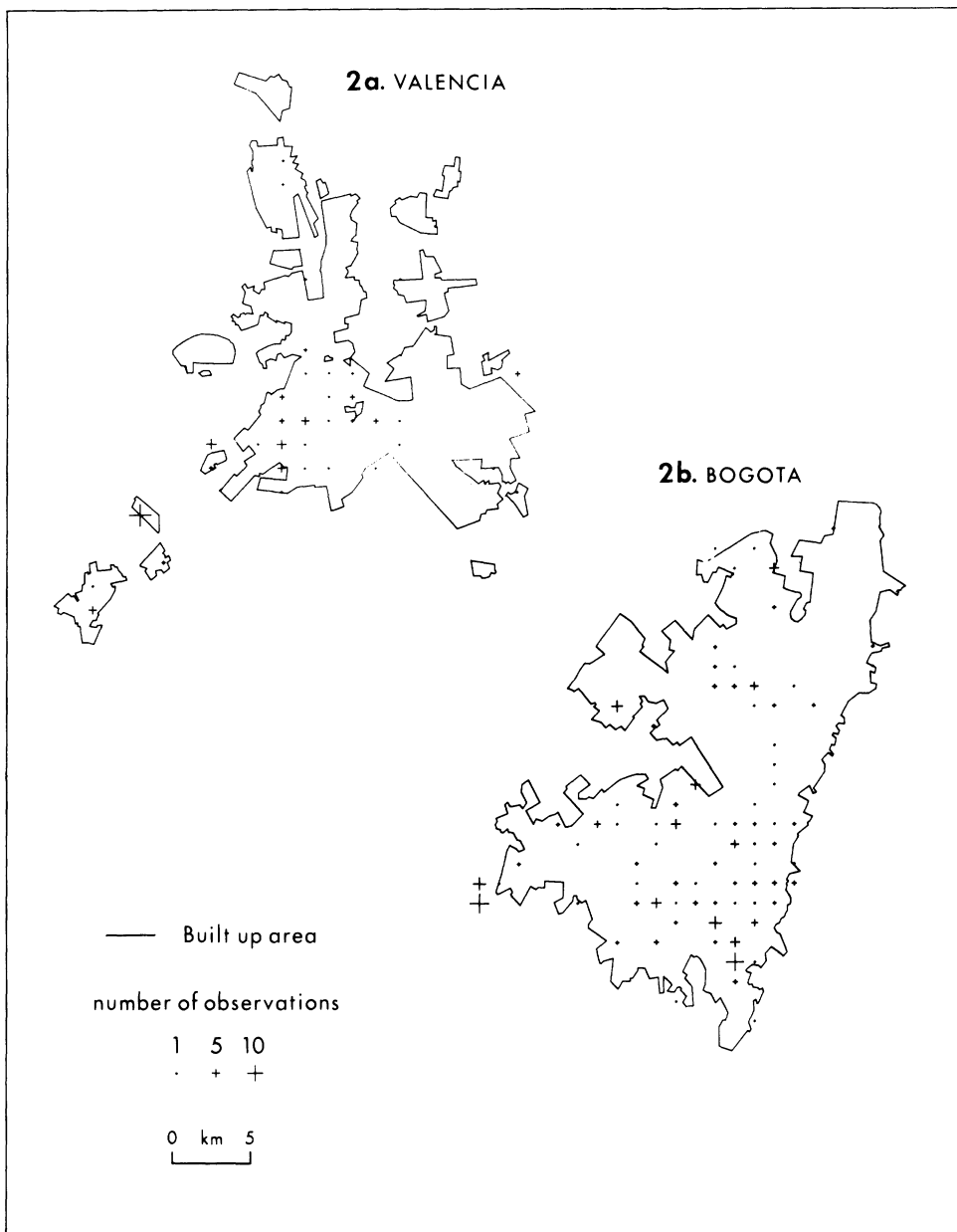


FIGURE 2. Location of first place of residence for all migrants to Valencia and Bogotá

are let to families who share services. These new *vecindades* are subject to no rent controls; they have taken over as a principal source of cheap rental housing now that the number of traditional inner-city *vecindades* has declined through demolition and disrepair. The proportion of migrant households beginning their residential careers in rental accommodation has remained relatively constant over the years. However, Figure 3 shows that there has been a shift away from the

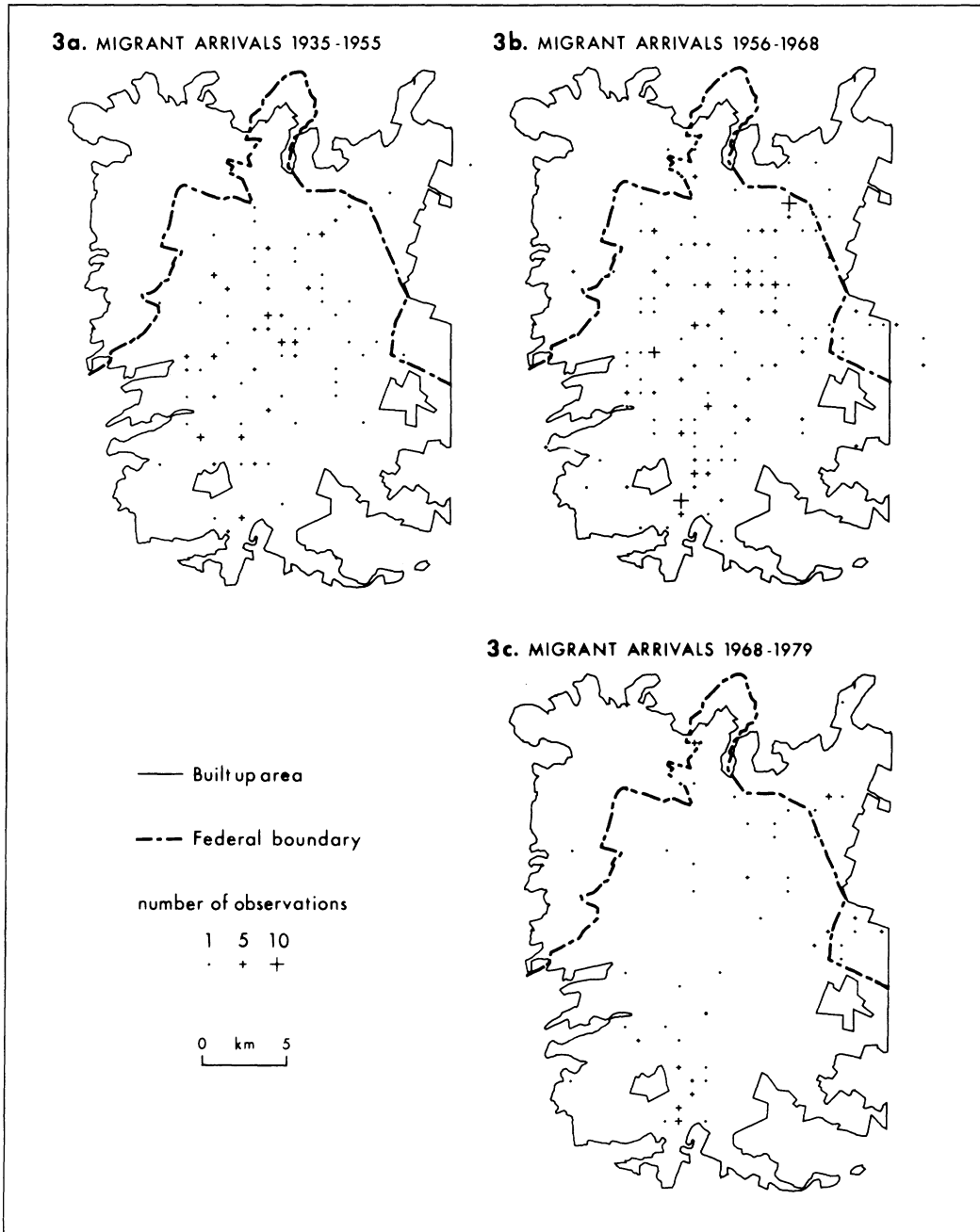


FIGURE 3. Location of first place of residence for different cohorts of migrants to Mexico City

traditional city centre, initially towards the older working-class areas to the north and east, and subsequently to the more dispersed areas of irregular housing that emerged during the fifties and early sixties (*cf.* Brown, 1972). The figures suggest that even in the earlier periods irregular settlement attracted many more migrants than is implicit in the Turner model. This conclusion

is supported by earlier evidence which showed that a substantial minority of migrants living in Sector Popular, a squatter settlement founded in 1947, came direct with no stopover in the downtown district (Ward, 1976, p. 375). It is also notable that many villages that were absorbed by the city's growth (Mixcoac, San Angel, Tlalpan, Coyoacán) also appear to function as reception centres. These areas offer many of the advantages of the city centre, and suggest the need for a further modification in the original Turner model.

Sharing a home with parents or kin is somewhat more common in Mexico than in Bogotá or Valencia. Of the migrants who arrived after 1965, 47 per cent reported that they had shared with kin for more than one year after arrival. We believe that this is symptomatic of the declining opportunities for lot acquisition in the city and of state controls on renting. However, sharing on arrival in the city is not a new phenomenon. Among migrants arriving before 1955, 36 per cent of households reported that they shared with kin for more than one year after arrival.

Migrant origins and location of first residence

Census data on birthplace of migrants were analysed, and confirmed the common finding that a few nearby states consistently provide a large proportion of the total migrant population in each city. Not surprisingly, migrants in our sample come predominantly from these locations, yet Table III shows that migrant origins in our survey settlements frequently differed markedly from the city-wide distribution, suggesting particular areal concentrations. Since previous work has demonstrated how migrants from the same village have often congregated in the same residential area, especially in inner-city or precarious shanty areas (Lomnitz, 1977, p. 46; Lloyd, 1979, p. 129), this suggests that migrants in our three cities with similar origins might congregate together. However, our data does not support this idea. Most of our migrants came from different areas, and only on one occasion did the majority originate in the same department. In addition, 'foothold' residences showed an even greater dispersion of immigrants from the same region: this contradicts previous research which suggested that antecedent migrant contacts are a critical element in the selection of first-arrival accommodation (Vaughn and Feindt, 1973; Ward, 1976). Most of our migrants reported having received assistance from friends and kin: in Mexico City 70 per cent, in Bogotá 58 per cent and in Valencia 53 per cent. This common response reflects the difficulty of finding housing and work in the cities, and the consequent dependence on friends and kin for help. The variations between the cities in the assistance sought, and indeed the variations within the cities between migrants from different regions, suggests that there are both structural and cultural factors influencing the amount and form of help sought. It is likely that differences in the housing and job markets in each city, and in the cohesiveness of migrant cohorts are critical influences here. In view of the above, it is perhaps curious that the maps for first place of migrant residence (not reproduced here) reveal no clear pattern of migrant concentration. Places of arrival were widely scattered in all three cities and there was little to corroborate a 'first stop off the bus' theory; migrants did not congregate near to the bus stations. Nor did migrants from the same region settle in the same part of the city. In Mexico City, *Oaxaqueños* were no more likely to go to one sector of the city than *Michoacanos*. In Bogotá, the 'footholds' of migrants from Boyaca and Cundinamarca were liberally distributed across the working-class districts of the city. The *Boyacenses* from the north of Bogotá did not concentrate in the north of the city; if anything, they showed a tendency to move into the southern settlements. In Valencia, where migrants come from a wider range of states, the distribution of first place of residence was also widespread. In one case a group of eleven migrants were discovered to have originated from the town of Nirgua, but even they had originally settled in different parts of the city.

TABLE III
The importance of migrants from specified states in the sample populations

| State | % of total migrant sample from state ² | % of total migrant population in city ¹ | % of migrants from each state recorded in each barrio ² | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | | | <i>Isidro Fabela</i> | <i>Santo Domingo</i> | <i>El Sol</i> | <i>Liberales</i> | <i>Chalma</i> | <i>Jardines</i> |
| <i>Mexico</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Guanajuato | 18 | 10 | 26 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 18 | 20 |
| Michoacan | 15 | 10 | 12 | 24 | 9 | 25 | 17 | 10 |
| Puebla | 12 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 19 | 15 | 8 | 12 |
| Hidalgo | 10 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 13 | 19 |
| Mexico | 10 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 26 | 13 | 9 |
| Oaxaca | 9 | 6 | 7 | 12 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| Sub-total | 74 | 50 | 70 | 73 | 74 | 88 | 76 | 76 |
| Migrants as % of total sample | 78 | 47 | 76 | 83 | 79 | 70 | 85 | 75 |
| <i>Bogotá</i> | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <i>Juan Pablo I</i> | <i>Casablanca</i> | <i>Atenas</i> | <i>Britalia</i> | <i>S. Antonio</i> | |
| Boyaca | 35 | 23 | 32 | 60 | 35 | 30 | 24 | |
| Cundinamarca | 35 | 31 | 23 | 29 | 40 | 33 | 40 | |
| Santander | 6 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 7 | |
| Tolima | 8 | 10 | 19 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 15 | |
| Sub-total | 84 | 71 | 84 | 93 | 86 | 88 | 86 | |
| Migrants as % of total sample | 84 | 51 | 89 | 74 | 87 | 91 | 81 | |
| <i>Valencia</i> | | | | | | | | |
| | | | <i>Nueva Valencia</i> | <i>La Castrera</i> | | | | |
| Yaracuy | 20 | na | 14 | 27 | | | | |
| Carabobo | 15 | na | 19 | 10 | | | | |
| Cojedes | 11 | na | 8 | 14 | | | | |
| Falcon | 7 | na | 8 | 11 | | | | |
| Sub-total | 63 | | 49 | 62 | | | | |
| Migrants as % of total sample | 79 | 39* | 83 | 75 | | | | |

Notes

1. The household sample will record a higher figure of migrants because we interviewed household heads. The census data includes the whole city population including children—many of whom were born in the city.

Sources: MEXICO, Dirección General de Estadística, IX Censo General de Población 1970, Mexico, 1971; BOGOTÁ, Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadística No. 314, September 1977, Bogotá. Cuadro 18 Población residente en capitales por lugar de nacimiento: VALENCIA, Feo Caballero (1978: 131–137).

2. Source: Barrio survey.

*Feo Caballero (1978) 131–137 records only the proportion of Valencia's population born outside the state of Carabobo. It therefore underrecords the total number of migrants in the city.

We have, therefore, an apparent paradox: there is some evidence of migrant concentration in our sample settlements, yet little evidence to suggest that migrants from specific regions congregate in the same locality upon arrival, despite their propensity to seek out early support from kin and friends. We account for this paradox quite simply: the limited process of migrant concentration begins after the period of initial residence. Residents in our settlements usually came from nearby settlements and often became aware of the opportunity to squat, buy or rent from kin or workmates from the same region. In addition, other factors were operating to attract certain migrants with common origins to similar locations. Certain districts of the city are attractive to migrants who possess specific skills and, because getting a job frequently requires the help of one's contacts, it is not unusual for migrants from similar areas to dominate particular employment categories. In Bogotá, for example, 25 per cent of *Boyacenses* were employed in construction compared with 17 per cent of *Cundinamarqueses*, which may have led to the former congregating in the north of the city where most industrialized building activity is concentrated.

Previous place of residence

So far, we have concentrated on migrant residential location. We now focus on all the residents of our survey settlements, migrants and city-born, examining the locations of their previous residence. Figures 4–6 show that residents tend to come from a handful of nearby settlements. This feature is most apparent in Mexico City, and is especially marked in new settlements such as Liberales and Santo Domingo.¹¹ Only the two oldest settlements (Isidro Fabela and El Sol) are an exception, because when they were formed their highly peripheral location drew residents from more distant settlements. In Bogotá, nearby settlements are also important but many residents are drawn from the older 'pirate urbanizations' alluded to earlier. Nevertheless, Casablanca recruited principally from the older settlements immediately to its south, Atenas drew heavily upon nearby settlements, especially the adjacent settlements of Bello Horizonte and Córdoba, and San Antonio drew heavily upon the surrounding settlements of Soacha. We account for the wider scatter observed in Bogotá in terms of the more commercialized and secure process of illegal subdivision. The use made of radio and newspaper advertising to attract buyers, together with the ease of moving about the city, means that information about new subdivisions is widely disseminated among the low-income population. In addition, the security of even illegal land tenure in Bogotá means that people can leave their plot unguarded often for several years. As a consequence, there is less need than in Mexico to live close to one's new plot; no-one is likely to usurp it.

Mexico, by contrast, is far larger, and most information about housing comes from family and friends living nearby.¹² The search for a plot of land or rented room is likely to be limited to the same zone of the city—though its physical size may well offer as great a range of choices as the whole of Bogotá. It is also important to take account of the vulnerability of individual landholding in the illegal settlement process in Mexico. The securing of a lot, by whatever means, is no guarantee of tenure; the threat that someone else might usurp it requires that an owner occupy the lot immediately. This makes for more rapid settlement and means that residents living nearby can best maintain surveillance over their plot.¹³

Valencia, like Bogotá, displays a relatively wide scatter of previous locations, a probable outcome of its smaller physical size (Fig. 6). While 49 per cent of residents in our sample settlements had relied upon information from friends and kin, 30 per cent had acquired their lot after a chance visit to the fledgling community. Clearly, the ease with which land can be acquired helps the chance visitor.

The second interesting feature about the previous place of residence is the form of tenure. Tenure is an accurate indicator of the state of the housing market in each city, and particularly of

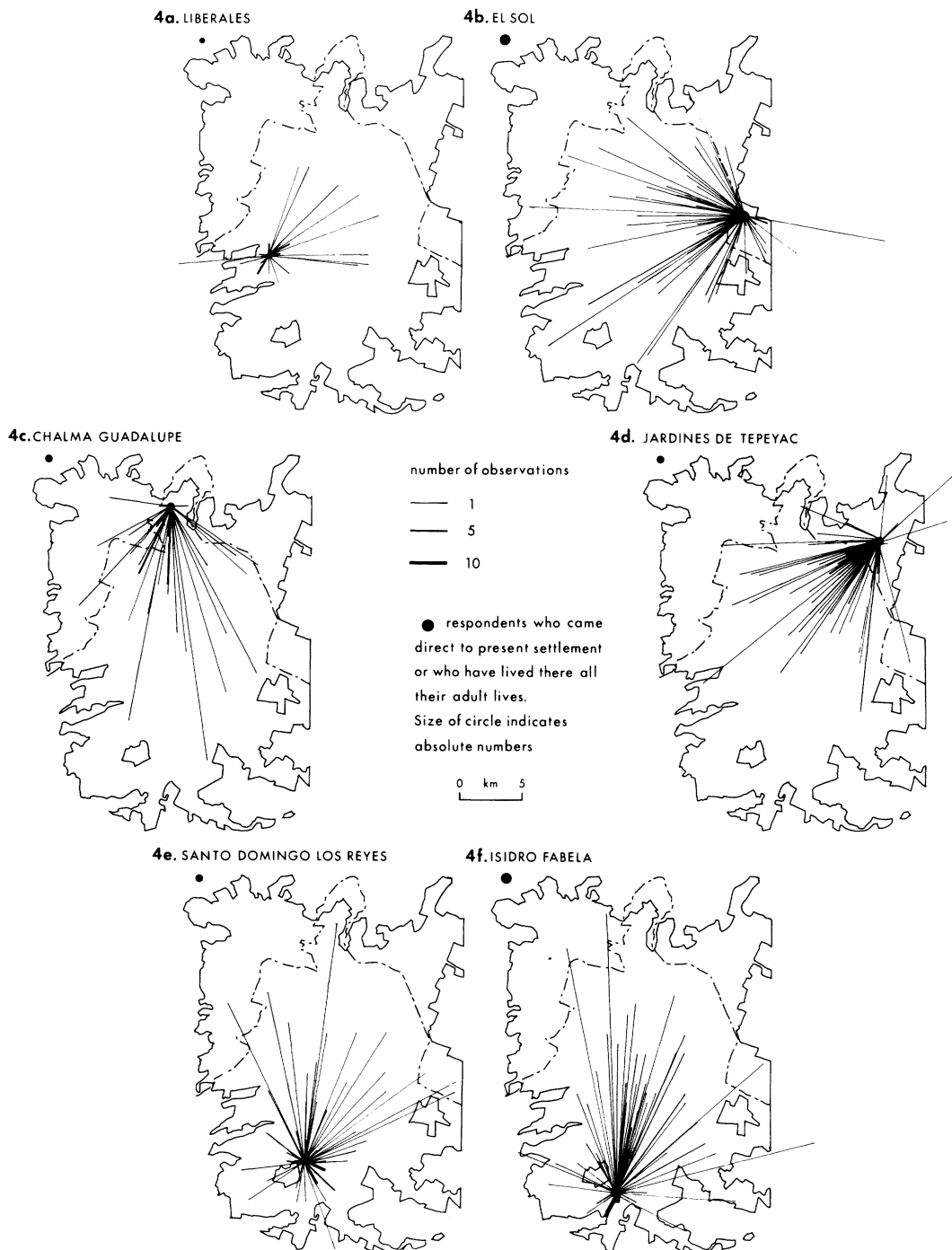
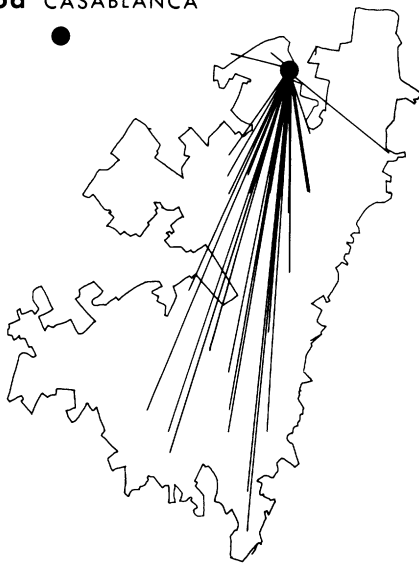


FIGURE 4. Previous place of residence for all respondents, by barrio in Mexico City

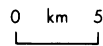
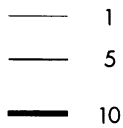
5a CASABLANCA



5b BRITALIA



number of observations



● respondents who came direct to present settlement or who have lived there all their adult lives.
Size of circle indicates absolute numbers.

5c ATENAS



5d SAN ANTONIO



FIGURE 5. Previous place of residence for all respondents, by barrio in Bogotá

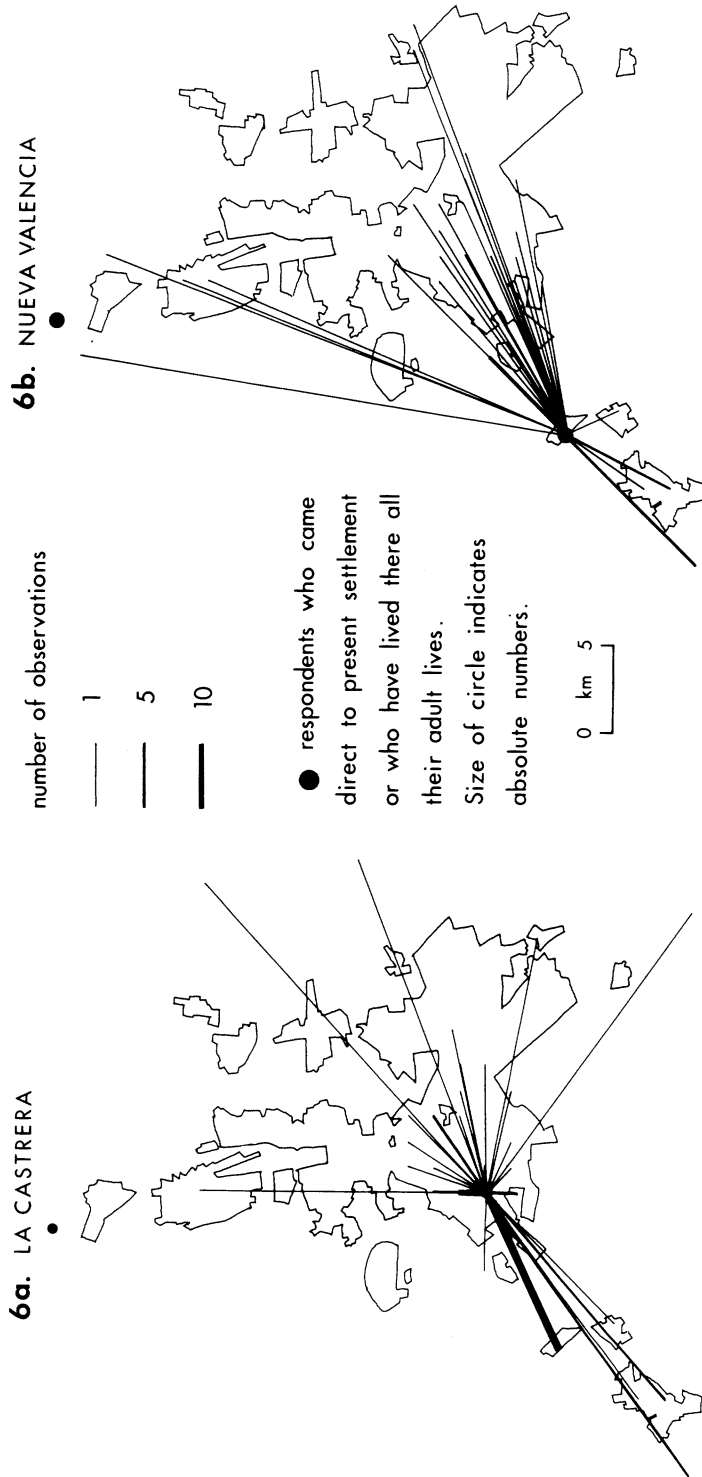


FIGURE 6. Previous place of residence for all respondents, by barrio in Valencia

the forms of accommodation available to low-income people. In Valencia, practically everyone interviewed now 'owned' his property, 34 per cent had also owned their previous dwelling and a mere quarter had previously rented. The majority shared their previous accommodation, often as young adults living with parents or as migrants lodging with kin. The limited number of previous tenants is clearly linked to the ease of land acquisition and to the relatively large size of plots and dwellings in the city.

In Bogotá, as many as 71 per cent had rented their previous accommodation, which reflects the well-established nature of the rental market. The major reason cited for vacating the previous residence varied according to current tenure: owners had normally responded to the availability of a lot (36 per cent) or to the cost of renting (36 per cent); contemporary renters cited high rents (24 per cent), evictions (18 per cent) and the desire to leave parents or kin (14 per cent).

In Mexico City, previous tenures were more varied. Fifty-four per cent of present-day owners were previously tenants while 41 per cent had shared accommodation in one form or another. This finding confirms that the rental market in Mexico is limited and that many householders share accommodation over a protracted period before renting or ownership. Once again, the reasons cited for vacating the previous place of residence varied according to current tenure. Among contemporary owners, 45 per cent left because a plot of land became available, a further 16 per cent were evicted, while others had wanted to free themselves of their family ties and establish a home of their own. As one might expect, many renters were evicted (26 per cent) as were many sharers, though we cannot state whether this was primarily the result of a deterioration in household relations or due to eviction of the whole extended household.

Thirdly, the form of tenure also influences the level of servicing available in the previous residence. Families who rented were normally housed in more consolidated settlements and therefore had access to more services. Families sharing with kin in a newly established settlement normally lacked water or drainage. Thus in Bogotá, where most of our informants had been renters, and where in any case service levels are high, the previous residence had lacked drainage in only 15 per cent of cases and water in 11 per cent. In Valencia, generally poor service conditions combined with the high incidence of sharing and original ownership meant that three-fifths of our informants had previously lacked drainage and one quarter water. In Mexico, the fact that most sharers lived previously in poorly serviced settlements accounts for the fact that 32 per cent of households had lived without drainage and 30 per cent without direct access to water.

THE DETERMINANTS OF LOW-INCOME RESIDENTIAL BEHAVIOUR

Our data lead us to conclude that residential patterns in Latin American cities are less the outcome of migrant choice, as the Turner theory argues, and more the product of constraints imposed by the land and housing markets. Given that the private sector largely controls these markets, supply is determined by a range of factors such as changing land values and rents, alternative land uses and government legislation. The availability and range of housing opportunities is an outcome of the socio-political structure of the city. The differences between Bogotá, Mexico City and Valencia are explained not by differences in the preferences of the poor but by differences in the availability of land and differing kinds of accommodation. We accept that a newly-arrived migrant may desire access to centres of employment and may find renting an acceptable housing solution. On the other hand, we are convinced that he would take up immediate ownership were it possible. In short, it is the absence of alternatives, more than the preferences of the poor, which shapes the housing market. In so far as the Turner model stresses the latter it fails to explain adequately the low-income housing market.

Three broad factors best account for the patterns we have observed. First, access to land ownership is critical. Illegal housing areas have emerged in each city, although the form of that illegality varies and hence the ease with which the poor are able to secure a plot varies too. In Valencia, squatting upon marginal land is a relatively uncontested matter though it may take several years before formal recognition and servicing are forthcoming. Here the choice is twofold: squat or buy from an earlier squatter once the community is safe from eviction.

The poor can usually opt to live 'rent-free' and it is unnecessary to impose for long upon the hospitality of kin or antecedent contact. In Bogotá and Mexico, however, the supply of land for low-income groups is more limited. Entry to the land market is quite expensive and time is required to save the deposit. In Mexico, illegal subdivisions are more limited and more risky than in Bogotá; the owner needs to protect his lot after purchase. The greater difficulties of lot acquisition and the high cost of poor rental accommodation have together encouraged many Mexicans to share lots with kin on a long-term basis. There are complex reasons why the availability of land to the urban poor varies in Latin American cities. Essentially, supply is the outcome of the pattern of land ownership, the alternative uses of land, and the role of the state. Where much land is in the hands of the state, as in Valencia, invasions may be more common (Gilbert, 1981). Where land is held privately and the market price is high, the state will tend to protect owners from invasion but turn a blind eye to illegal subdivisions (Gilbert and Ward, 1982). This lack of constraint is conditional upon the lack of any alternative use and upon the absence of a perceived threat to the interests of élite groups.

Secondly, state action to regulate and service irregular housing may have a critical effect on housing and land markets. In so far as regularization and servicing raises the real cost of home ownership and consolidation, it is likely to raise the threshold to home ownership and to encourage owners to rent rooms. In turn, the incidence of renting is also affected by the form of state intervention and non-intervention. For example, small-scale landlords in low-income settlements are accepted in Bogotá, ignored in Mexico and actively discouraged in Valencia. The important point to recognize is that state action invariably obeys a rationale quite unrelated to low-income residents' priorities and the ease with which rental needs are met by the market (Gilbert and Ward, 1982).

Thirdly, the physical fabric and rate of growth of the city are also likely to affect residential patterns. Before 1950, renting was the principal form of low-income accommodation in both Bogotá and Mexico City. It was available either in purpose-built tenements or in converted élite residences. However, rapid population growth quickly led to saturation of this rental stock, a tendency further accentuated by rent controls in Mexico and urban renewal in both cities. The result was the growth of rental opportunities in the more consolidated low-income housing areas and the consequently wider spread of rental households (see also Edwards, 1981).

Finally, we would argue that the physical extension and organization of the city combined with the quality and cost of its transportation system exerts an important influence on low-income residential patterns. In Valencia, location is less critical than in Bogotá or Mexico City: most settlements are accessible to work, schools and markets. The search for accommodation is less constrained, therefore, by locational considerations. By contrast, the distances and time involved in crossing Mexico City mean that few commute across the city to work. Most people look for accommodation and work in the same zone of the city (Jackson, 1973). Interestingly, our data on mean travel time to work in the three cities show that the round trip was much shorter in Valencia (49 minutes) but very similar in Bogotá (73 minutes) and Mexico City (75 minutes). We explain the latter similarity in terms of the greater propensity for Mexicans to live in the same broad zone as their workplace. Physical size and forms of transportation eventually affect the process of residential choice.

NOTES

1. This paper is an outcome of a major research project under way at University College, entitled 'Public intervention, housing and land use in Latin American cities'. The project, directed by the authors between 1978 and 1981, was financed by the Overseas Development Administration and involves a comparative analysis of the cities of Bogotá, Mexico City and Valencia. Thanks and recognition are due to Dr James Murray, Ms Ann Raymond, Mr William Bell and Dr Carlos Zorro Sánchez for their contributions to the project's success and vitality
2. Throughout this paper we will use the term 'barrio' to mean low-income settlement in which residents take on major responsibility for housing production using self-help. Their local generic names are: *ranchos* in Venezuela, *barrios piratas* (pirate settlements) in Bogotá and *colonias proletarias* in Mexico City
3. Clear criteria were established before making our final selection of settlements. These cover variables such as age, size and land tenure, and include a points system to grade the level of services: water, electricity, drainage, paved roads, public telephones and utilities such as markets, schools and churches. A maximum score of 20 points was possible and settlements were selected within the range 6 to 15 points. The score for each settlement is shown in Table I
4. The data analysed at an aggregate level for Bogotá include information gathered in Juan Pablo I, in which only 33 households were interviewed. Given the low sample size we have not included this settlement in any of the figures that accompany this text
5. This work was carried out on a PRIME 600 machine and we are grateful to Mr John Barradell for his assistance in producing the programme and to the Department of Geography for providing the necessary financial and hardware support
6. Lands purchased illegally from recipients of land distributions that have taken place under the Agrarian Reform programme. *Ejidatarios* have only usufruct rights and land parcels are legally inalienable
7. Illegal immigrants cannot denounce the owner of the *ranchito* to the authorities and therefore the landlord does not run the risk of losing his land and being fined (*Ley de Regulación de Alquileres, 1960: Artículo 20*)
8. Incorporating the following settlements: Flores, San Blas, El Carmen and Calvaro (east section)
9. In settlements such as Cañaveral, Don Basco, 19 de abril, Amarindo
10. Percentage calculated from the following sources: *Departamento del Distrito Federal, Estudio de economía urbana del plan director para el desarrollo urbano del DF, capítulo III, Estructura del uso del suelo, cuadro 14, 126*, mimeo, October 1976; *Edo. de México, Compendium, Toluca, 1975*; municipalities of Naucalpan, Tlanepantla, Ecatepec, Netzahualcóyotl
11. The reader should appreciate that the difference of map scales may accentuate this appearance of concentration. Reduction of the figures has rendered the lower-order line values indistinguishable. However, the aim of figures 4, 5 and 6 is to indicate the range of settlements from which residents were drawn, and most of the fine lines indicate one or two persons only. Should the reader require accurate data, these can be obtained by writing directly to the authors
12. Sixty-nine per cent of our informants got their information from family or friends
13. This is especially important in invasions where it is necessary to guard the plot at night, to be within easy access to attend meetings that may affect the fledgling community and to be on hand to resist attempts to eradicate the settlement

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