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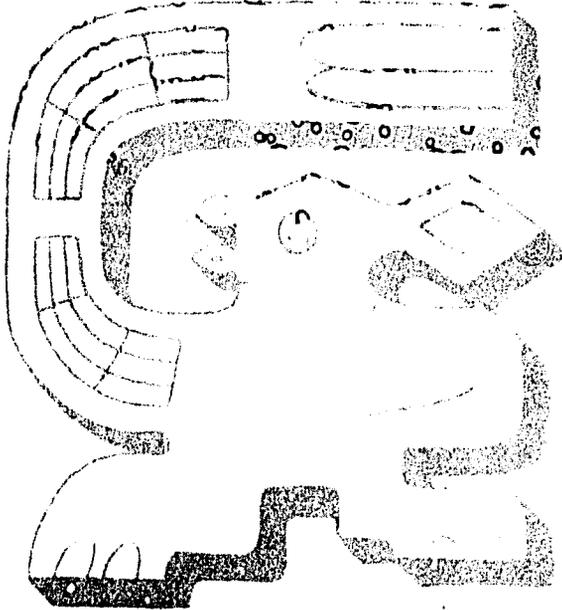
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The Process of Migration to a Shantytown in Bogota, Colombia

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The Process of Migration to a Shantytown in Bogota, Colombia

by WILLIAM L. FLINN *

Peripheral shantytowns have become as much a hallmark of most Latin American capitals and large industrial cities as central plazas. Estimates of the number of families who live in these shantytowns vary, but the figure was approximately 4.5 million in 1962.¹ Population growth and rural-to-urban migration have greatly swelled the number since. One analyst estimates that shantytowns are now growing at the staggering rate of 15 percent per year.²

It is widely assumed that this growth rate is a result of an influx of *campesinos* who move directly to shantytowns from farms. This is seen implicit in the terminology of Bogotá's City Planning Office which calls these marginal settlements *ciudades asilas* (cities

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¹ Richard Morse, "Latin American Cities: Aspects of Function and Structure," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47 (July 1962), p. 490.

² Arthur Domike, "Industrial and Agricultural Employment Prospects in Latin America," discussion paper for conference of directors of CIDA studies of Agrarian Reform, Tepoztlán, Mexico, dittoed. (November 1967), p. 6.

of asylum) or *ciudades de refugio* (cities of refuge).³ The general idea is that the city provides an escape from agriculture and violencia in the countryside.

This paper argues that however plausible, this implication is not always rooted in fact. It is not surprising that we have much to learn about how the Latin American shantytown is constituted, for there are no general works on this subject. Nevertheless a few specific studies such as those by Mangin, Manaster, and Patch⁴ produce conclusions for Peru that are similar to the findings of the present study which was carried out in El Carmen, a clandestine shantytown in Bogotá, Colombia. The following analysis traces a sample of residents of this *barrio* from its birthplace to its present location.

Locale of the Study. El Carmen, on the southwest edge of Bogotá, is *barrio clandestino*, an illegal subdivision in which small parcels of unimproved land are sold without official permit. This shantytown category should be distinguished from other major types in Colombia, *invasiones* or *tugurios*,⁵ which are squatter settlements on public and private lands; and *urbanizaciones*, which are legal subdivisions designed according to city specifications and provided with public services.

El Carmen was selected because of its similarity to numerous other clandestine *barrios* in and around Bogotá. It is characterized by incomplete, makeshift dwellings, inadequate water and sanitation facilities; ineffective police, fire, educational, and health services; and unimproved streets.⁶ The study was conducted from

³ Departamento Administrativo de Planificación Distrital Bogotá, *La Planificación en Bogotá* (Bogotá: Imprenta Distrital de Bogotá, 1964).

⁴ For example, see William Mangin, "Latin American Squatter Settlements: A Problem and a Solution," *Latin American Research Review*, 2 (Summer 1967), p. 65; Richard W. Patch, "Life in a Callejón," *American Universities Field Staff Report*, (June 1961); and Kenneth A. Manaster, "The Problem of Urban Squatters in Developing Countries: Peru," *Wisconsin Law Review*, 1968 (1968), pp. 23-61.

⁵ For an account of *invasiones* in Bogotá, see *El Espectador* (Bogotá), Nos. 20434 to 20438, (September 29 to October 3, 1964); *El Vespertino* (Bogotá), Nos. 540 to 546, (April 9 to 16, 1966); and *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), Nos. 18958 to 18960, (April 13 to 15, 1966).

⁶ For a complete description of the public services available in El Carmen, see Jorge Murcia Barrero, Emese Tjjasz, and Carlos Esmeral

July 1964 to July 1965 and all formal interviewing took place in February, 1965. Interviewers were sociology students from National University in Bogotá. A formal interview schedule was administered to 120 families, or about 6 percent of the approximately 2,230 families living in the barrio. Utilizing a grid superimposed on a map, a random sample of the dwelling units was drawn. After a census of these units was taken, families were randomly selected. Household heads were interviewed whenever possible.

Migration to Bogota. Studies of rural-urban migration in Colombia show that shantytown residents move in from surrounding states.⁷ Table I supports these findings but indicates that approximately 12 percent of the household heads in Barrio El Carmen are native Bogotanos.

The table also shows that most in-migrants (62.5 percent) come from Cundinamarca, the state in which Bogotá is located, and the adjacent state of Boyacá. This suggests that most of the in-migrant household heads move a short distance. Indeed, Table II indicates that approximately 68 percent of the in-migrant household heads were born within 100 miles of Bogotá. Fewer than 5 percent were born 200 miles or more from the city. This supports the classic work of Ravenstien and other studies since which have demonstrated that few migrants move long distances.⁸

Barros, "Evaluación del Barrio El Carmen," (Bogotá: Unpublished monograph, Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento, 1961).

⁷ See Instituto de Crédito Territorial, "Chambacu Regeneración de una Zona de Tugurios," *Serie: Estudio Socio-Económicos*, No. 1 (Bogotá, November 1955); Departamento Administrativo de Planificación Distrital, "Encuesta Socio-Económica Barrio Cordoba," (Bogotá: Unpublished monograph, 1963); Departamento Administrativo de Planificación Distrital, "Encuesta Socio-Económica, Barrio San Vicente," (Bogotá: Unpublished monograph, 1963); Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento, *Siloe*, (Bogotá: Impreso en el Multilith del SICD de Cinvia, 1958); Departamento Administrativo de Planificación Distrital, "Características Socio-Económicas de Cuatro Barrios Bogotanos," (Bogotá: Unpublished monograph, 1961); and Eduardo Ramos López, "Aspectos Sociales de la Inmigración, a un Barrio" (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Sociología, Unpublished thesis, 1965).

⁸ For Colombian studies which produce similar results, see Miguel Urrutia M. and Luis Castellano Ch., *Estudio Económico-Social de la Población de Bogotá* (Bogotá: Corporación Autónoma Regional, 1962); Marco F. Reyes C., "Estudio Socio-Económico del Fenómeno de la a

Table I
State of Origin of Household Heads of Barrio El Carmen, 1965

<u>State of Birth</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Boyacá	46	38.3
Cundinamarca	29	24.2
Federal District of Bogotá	14	11.7
Santander	5	4.1
Tolima	11	9.2
Other States	15	12.5
TOTAL	120	100.0

Table II
Distance of Birthplace from Bogota of the
In-migrant Household Heads of Barrio El Carmen, 1965

<u>Miles *</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>	
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0-50	31	29.3
51-100	41	38.7
101-150	17	16.0
151-200	12	11.3
201-250	2	1.9
250 or more	3	2.8
TOTAL **	106	100.0

* Direct map distance.

** Native Bogotanos were dropped from the analysis.

Table III indicates that more than 42 percent of the in-migrants were born in towns and cities of over 2,000 population. Thus migration is not simply a movement of the peasant from a completely rural environment to the city.

Bogotá," *Economía Colombiana*, 22 (October 1964), pp. 39-47; Miguel Urrutia M., *Estudio Económico Social de los Centros de la CAR* (Bogotá: Corporación Autónoma Regional, 1963); Rafael D. Prieto and William Hanneson, *Estudio Agro-Económico de la Hoya del Río Suárez* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 1965); and Facultad de Sociología, *Factores Sociales que Inciden en el Desarrollo Económico de la Hoya de Río Subochoque* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Sociología, 1963).

Table III
Population of Birthplace of In-migrant
Household Heads to Barrio El Carmen, 1965

Population	Birthplace	
	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2,000	61	57.5
2,000 to 20,000	32	30.2
20,000 plus	13	12.3
TOTAL	106	100.0

This point is underscored when one checks the size of the last place of residence of the in-migrants before arrival in Bogotá. (See Table 4). Over 54 percent migrated from towns and cities with populations greater than 2,000 inhabitants.

Table IV
Population of Last Place of Residence Before Moving to
Bogota of In-migrant Household Heads of Barrio El Carmen, 1965

Population	Last Place of Residence Before Arriving in Bogotá	
	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2,000	48	45.3
2,000 to 20,000	35	33.0
20,000 plus,	23	21.7
TOTAL	106	100.0

From a comparison of the data in Tables IV and V it is clear that some in-migrants made one or more moves before settling in Bogotá. Approximately 34 percent of the in-migrants change residences at least once before migrating to Bogotá. Thus not only does the study suggest that in-migrants are not all campesinos, but that a number made intermittent moves before migrating to Bogotá. Indeed, the data in Table VI shows that only 22 percent of the in-migrants moved directly from population centers of less than 2,000 to the shantytown fringe.

Intra-City Migration. Few Colombian studies attempt to identify the zones of initial settlement or to chart subsequent intra-city mi-

Table V
Receiving Area of In-migrants to Bogota by Population Size
of Their Birthplace and Direct-Indirect Migration to the City

	<u>Migration Flow to Bogotá</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I	Born in an area of less than 2,000 population and migrated directly to the shantytown	23	21.7
II	Born in an area of less than 2,000 population and migrated directly to the central city	18	17.0
III	Born in an area of more than 2,000 population and migrated directly to the shantytown	16	15.0
IV	Born in an area of more than 2,000 population and migrated directly to the central city	13	12.3
V	Born in an area of less than 2,000 population and migrated indirectly to the shantytown	13	12.3
VI	Born in an area of less than 2,000 population and migrated indirectly to the central city	8	7.5
VII	Born in an area of more than 2,000 population and migrated indirectly to the shantytown	9	8.5
VIII	Born in an area of more than 2,000 population and migrated indirectly to the central city	<u>6</u>	<u>5.7</u>
	TOTAL	106	100.0

gration.⁹ The usual supposition that recent in-migrants to the city settle in its shantytown fringe seemed a logical assumption. The ecology of the Latin American city is often visualized consisting of the plaza-centered commercial core, the adjacent upper-class residential zone, and the peripheral slums.¹⁰

⁹ For an exception see Elsa Usandizaga and A. Eugene Havens, *Tres Barrios de Invasión* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1966).

¹⁰ For example see Norman S. Hayner, "Mexico City: Its Growth and Configuration," *American Journal of Sociology*, 50 (1945), pp. 295-304;

Table VI
 First Place of Residence in Bogota of the Present
 In-migrant Household Heads of Barrio El Carmen, 1965

<u>Area of City</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I Shantytown fringe	61	57.5
a) El Carmen	33	31.1
b) other shantytowns	28	26.4
II Central city	45	42.5
a) transition zone	28	26.5
b) workingmen's barrios	17	16.0
TOTAL	106	100.0

However, evidence suggests that as a city grows and its business district expands along with accompanying improvements in transportation, this spatial structure begins to reverse.¹¹ This sets into motion a pattern first observed by Burgess in Chicago.¹² While the upper class shifts from central to peripheral residence, lower classes and factories begin to occupy central areas abandoned by the elite. This may be called a zone in transition consisting of two belts, an inner manufacturing district and an outer ring of low-class tenements. Eventually a larger number of new in-migrants and otherwise dispossessed and outcast become concentrated in this zone. Most live there not by preference, but because rents and costs of transportation to work are low. Thus as it develops, the city expands outward from its center in concentric circles: central

Olen E. Leonard, "La Paz, Bolivia: Its Population and Growth," *American Sociological Review* 13 (1948), pp. 448-454; Norman E. Hayner, "Oaxaca: City of Old Mexico," *Sociology and Social Research*, 29 (1944), pp. 87-95; Theodore Caplow, "The Social Ecology of Guatemala City," *Social Forces*, 28 (1949), pp. 113-133.

¹¹ See Leo F. Schnore, "On the Spatial Structure of Cities in the Two Americas," in *The Study of Urbanization*, eds. Philip M. Houser and Leo F. Schnore (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), pp. 347-399.

¹² See Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 18 (1924), pp. 85-97, reprinted in Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), pp. 47-62.

business district, zone in transition, zone of workingmen's homes, residential zone, and the commuter's zone.¹³

A study by Carlos Neissa suggests that Bogotá is now in this reversal stage.¹⁴ He notes that Bogotá has developed a central business district and transition zone. But instead of a pattern of concentric circles, the industrial districts and the residential zone have developed in odd-shaped sectors.¹⁵ The industrial zone extends westward from the central business district to the edge of the city; the remainder, which is the residential zone, is divided into working, middle, and upper class areas. Perhaps this pattern can be attributed to the mountains which block eastward expansion.¹⁶

Neissa indicates that upper-class residents have for the most part left their pretentious homes in the area immediately surrounding the central business district and have taken up residency in peripheral suburbs. As a consequence, the city has developed a transition zone which he calls a *zona negra* (black zone) which contains migrants from nearly every region of Colombia. If his observations are correct one would expect this transition zone to be a major receiving area for in-migrants.¹⁷

Table VI shows 26 percent of the in-migrant respondents in El Carmen lived in the *zona negra* before moving to the shantytown fringe. Sixteen percent settled first in the workingmen's barrios just beyond the transition zone. The remaining 58 percent settled immediately in the shantytown fringe.

¹³ Other major theories of urban growth have been advanced. For example, see Homer Hoyt, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1939) and Charency D. Harris and Edward L. Ullman, "The Nature of Cities," *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 242 (November, 1945), p. 7-17.

¹⁴ Carlos Neissa R., "Ecología General y Ecología Urbana," *Universidad Libre Revista de Cultura Moderna*, 19 (June and July 1965), pp. 37-65.

¹⁵ Neissa, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁶ For a somewhat different interpretation on the growth patterns of urban areas in newly developing countries see Gerald Breese, *Urbanization in Newly Developing Countries* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966) p. 106.

¹⁷ Other studies of in-migrants to Latin American cities have observed this general pattern. For an excellent summary of this literature, see Mangin, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

Why do some in-migrants settle immediately in the shantytown fringe while others go first to the central city? Table VII shows that those who migrated first to the central city had fewer cash resources—a median of only 210 pesos or the U.S. \$21—when compared with the 425 pesos U.S. \$42.50 held by those who migrated to the shantytown fringe. A similar relationship was observed when the value of personal possessions at the time of migration (such as household goods and tools of a trade) were compared for the two groups.

Table VII
The Median Amount of Pesos Brought to Bogota by the In-migrant Household Heads to the Shantytown Fringe and to the Central City
(10 Pesos = 1 Dollar)

Pesos	In-migrants to Shantytown Fringe		In-migrants to Central City	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
I 0 to 499	38	62.3	40	88.9
II 500 plus	23	37.7	5	11.1
a. 500 to 999	8	13.1	0	0.0
b. 1,000 to 4,999	8	13.1	3	6.7
c. 5,000 to 9,999	5	8.2	2	4.4
d. 10,000 to 15,000	2	3.3	0	0.0
TOTAL	61	100.0	45	100.0
MEDIAN	\$425		\$210	

$\chi^2 = 9.42, P = .01$

Thus, in general, the relatively more "affluent" settled immediately in the shantytown. However, this relationship seems to be moderated by kinship influence. As can be seen in Table VII, 38 in-migrants arrived with less than 500 pesos and still settled in the shantytown fringe. But 26 of these (68 percent) were influenced to do so by relatives who were already living in the same shantytown neighborhood. In-migrants with similar resources who settled first in the central city seldom listed influence from relatives as an important factor in selecting a residence.

It should be noted, however, that most in-migrants in the sample had friends and/or relatives in Bogotá. More specifically, 34

percent had both friends and relatives in Bogotá; 58 percent had either friends or relatives, and 8 percent had neither. Nearly one-third of those who moved immediately to the shantytown fringe and those who moved first to the central city both received some form of aid from either kin or friends during their move.

The occupational classification in Table VIII clearly indicates that the in-migrants to the shantytown possess more skills than

Table VIII
Previous Occupation of In-migrant Household Head to the
Shantytown Fringe and to the Central City of Bogotá, Colombia

	In-migrants to Shantytown		In-migrants to Central City		Total	
	Fre- quency	Per- centage	Fre- quency	Per- centage	Fre- quency	Per- centage
I Higher Status Occupational Category						
Clerical & sales	2	3.3	2	4.4	4	3.8
Farm owner-operator or manager	17	27.9	1	2.2	18	17.0
Professional per- sons	1	1.6	0	0.0	1	1.0
Proprietors, mana- gers & officials	11	18.0	4	8.9	15	14.1
Skilled & semi- skilled	6	9.8	8	17.8	14	13.3
Sub total	37	60.6	15	33.3	52	49.2
II Lower Status Occupational Category						
Farm renter or laborer	6	9.8	18	40.0	24	22.6
Personal services	4	6.6	1	2.2	5	4.7
Protective services	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	1.8
Public transport	1	1.6	2	4.5	3	2.8
Student or children	0	0.0	4	8.9	4	3.8
Unemployed or dis- abled	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unskilled	11	18.1	5	11.1	16	15.1
Sub total	24	39.4	30	66.7	54	50.8
GRAND TOTAL	61	100.0	45	100.0	106	100.0

Table IX
Occupation of In-migrant Household Heads in
Central City Prior to Moving to Shantytown Fringe

<u>Type of Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I Higher Status Occupational Category		
Clerical & sales	1	2.2
Farm owner-operator or manager	0	0.0
Professional persons	0	0.0
Proprietors, managers, and officials	6	13.3
Skilled & semi-skilled	20	44.4
Sub total	<u>27</u>	<u>59.9</u>
II Lower Status Occupational Category		
Farm renter or laborer	0	0.0
Personal services	4	8.9
Protective services	2	4.5
Public transport	2	4.5
Student or children	0	0.0
Unemployed or disabled	1	2.2
Unskilled	9	20.0
Sub total	<u>18</u>	<u>40.1</u>
GRAND TOTAL	45	100.0

those who migrated first to the central city. Sixty percent of the persons who moved to the shantytown fringe fell into the higher status occupational category: farm owner, clerical and sales, skilled and semi-skilled workers, managers, and officials. Only 33 percent of the respondents who moved first to the central city were in this occupational category.

Interestingly, 90 percent of the in-migrants to the shantytown but only 41 percent of those who migrated first to the central city had one or more of the following upon arrival in Bogotá: kin who urged them to live there, skilled occupation, financial resources (at least 500 pesos).

These relationships suggest another question: under what conditions do in-migrants to the central city subsequently move to the

shantytown fringe? Seventy percent of those who made this move said they were motivated by the desire to own a homesite and/or to improve their living conditions. This again implies that financial resources play a major role in determining place of residence. As in-migrants accumulate capital, they move from the crowded tenements of the central city to what they see as a relatively better situation at the edge of the town.

The intra-city migrants also appear to experience upward occupational mobility during their stay in the central city. A check of their occupations just prior to moving to the shantytown fringe shows that 60 percent were employed in the higher status occupational category. (See Table IX). This is nearly double the 33 percent who were in this category when they arrived in Bogotá. (See Table VIII).

Summary. The present study indicates that the migration process to shantytowns in Latin America may be more complex than ordinarily assumed. Some in-migrants to El Carmen are peasants but a significant number also come from towns, while others are native born residents of the city. Most of the migrants moved a short distance to Bogotá, but only 22 percent of the in-migrants were born in population centers of less than 2,000 and moved directly to the shantytown fringe. However, 58 percent of all in-migrants settle in the shantytown fringe. This study shows that the in-migrants to the shantytown fringe have more skills, money, and/or kinship influence than the migrants who settle first in the central city.

Given time for capital accumulation some in-migrants to the central city shift from the densely populated, central city slums to a peripheral clandestine barrio where they have better living conditions and a chance for home ownership. This intra-city movement is also related to occupational mobility. In-migrants who possess financial assets and skills tend to settle in the shantytown fringe. Thus, the clandestine barrio in this study appears to be a "shantytown suburb." Though definitely not a "middle class suburb," the barrio represents a higher socio-economic level than the transition zone and the workingmen's barrios of the central city.

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