

The displacement of the Brazilian population to the metropolitan areas

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Introduction

THE ACCELERATED PROCESS of urbanization in Brazil, as a result of the internal migrations, is a relatively recent phenomenon that is associated to a set of changes that have occurred in the Brazilian economics, society and politics along the last century, especially in its second half. That does not mean that the cities did not already belong to the country's social picture since the colonial period, in spite of their strict population dimension.

From the Second Empire to the end of the Old Republic, with the remarkable expansion of the coffee-based economics and with the first and expressive industrialization outbreak, the mercantile relationships increased among the different Brazilian regions, which so far were but mere regional archipelagoes. However, the internal migrations did not fit this integration process, due to the expressive flows of international immigrants. The international immigration was strongly subsidized by the State, and, in this way, established a limit to the internal population displacements. The European immigrants, who up to this time were oriented to the Southern Region in order to populate it, started to concentrate in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the same provinces, later states, which presented the greatest potential of attraction to the internal immigrants. It is estimated that, only between 1890 and 1899, 1.2 million immigrants arrived in Brazil, mainly in the aforementioned states (Bassanezi, 1995).

Those regional archipelagoes, essentially articulated on the agricultural activities, presented a system of cities polarized by the capitals, forming an embryonic urban network, basically inshore. The capitals centralized the major public services and the commercial and financial intermediation of the regional economical activities, particularly those associated to export and import. In the beginning of the 20th century, the most important cities were: Belém and Manaus, on the Northern Region of the country; Salvador, Recife and Fortaleza, on the Northeast; Porto Alegre and Curitiba, on the South.

Only Cuiabá, on the Central-Western Region, was an exception to the coastal trend. On the Southeastern Region, Rio de Janeiro, capital of the Republic, and São Paulo suffered the demographic impact of the coffee-based economics expansion and the incipient industrialization. In those two cities, over 50% of the population of all capitals of the federation states lived in those two cities.

In 1920, Brazil had a population of 27.5 million inhabitants and counted on only 74 cities with over twenty thousand inhabitants, in which 4.6 million people lived – that is, 17% of the total Brazilian population. More than a half of those that resided in the cities were concentrated on the Southeastern Region.

The great urban expansion in Brazil, as a fundamental component of the structural changes in the Brazilian society, occurred on the second half of the 20th century. Only on the sixties the urban population surpassed the rural one. Therefore, the fast urbanization process is a relatively recent structural phenomenon, whose peak can be measured by the speed of the urban population's growth between 1950 and 1970 (Charts 1 and 2).

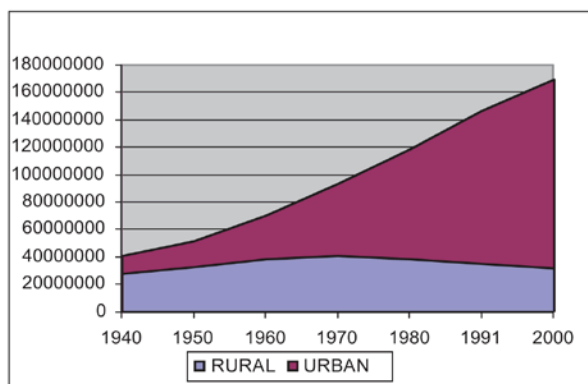
The swift urbanization of the Brazilian territory is not a strictly demographic process. It possesses much broader dimensions: it is the Brazilian society itself that is becoming increasingly urban. In addition to concentrating an increasing portion of the country's population, the cities become the privileged locus of the most relevant economical activities and diffusers of the new standards of social relationships – including the production ones – and of lifestyles (Brito & Souza, 2006).

The big news, when it comes to the Brazilian case, was the speed of the urbanization process, way higher than that of the most advanced capitalist countries. Only on the second half of the 20th century, the urban population increased from 19 million to 138 million inhabitants, growing on a 7.3-fold basis, with an average annual growth rate of 4.1%. In other words, at each year an average of over 2.3 million inhabitants were added to the urban population (ibidem).

Urbanization, concentration and internal migrations

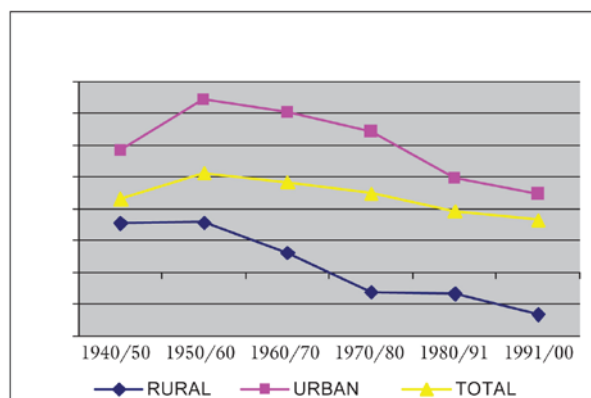
This huge transformation of the Brazilian society had as one of its major vectors the great expansion of the internal migrations. They constituted the biggest link between the structural changes that the society and economics were going through and the acceleration of the urbanization process. At the peak of the urban expansion, the high fertility rates still exerted a certain influence on the exceptional demographic growth, for only on the second half of the sixties the decline of the fertility rates started to accelerate and generalize. Nevertheless, most of the urban demographic growth, between 1960 and 1980, was due to the intense rural-urban migratory flow. Only between 1960 and the late eighties, it is estimated that nearly 43 million people left the countryside toward the cities, including the indirect effect of the migration, that is, the children born to the rural migrants in the cities (Chart 3).

Chart 1 – Brazil: Rural and urban population, 1940/2000.



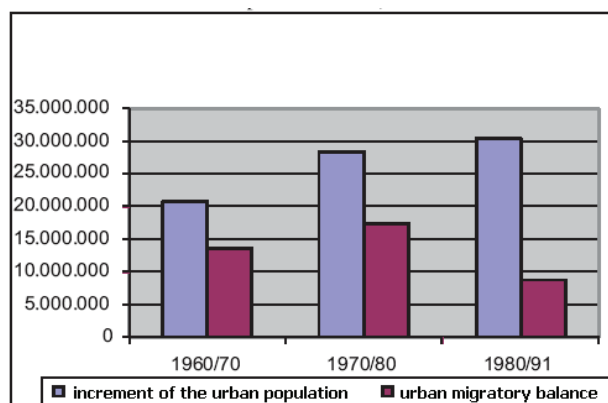
Source: IBGE, Demographic Censuses of 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

Chart 2 – Brazil: Annual rates of the population's growth, 1940/2000 (%)



Source: IBGE, Demographic Censuses of 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

Chart 3 – Brazil: absolute increment of the urban population and migratory balance over the 1960/1991 period



Source: IBGE, Demographic Censuses of 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980 and 1991 (Carvalho & Garcia, 2003)

It is a huge population displacement in a short period of time, which expresses quite well the dimension of the big transformations the Brazilian society was going through (cf. Brito & Carvalho, 2006).

The great spatial concentration of the Brazilian economic development, driven by the industrialization process in Rio de Janeiro and, mainly, in São Paulo, magnified the regional and social unbalances, stimulating the internal migrations, which transferred the countryside population to the cities, in addition to redistributing it among the states and the different regions in Brazil.

This massive redistribution of the population changed the profile of the urban population itself. In 1970, more than half of the urban population already lived in cities with over one hundred thousand inhabitants, and one third lived in cities with more than five hundred thousand people. In 2000, about 60% of the urban population lived in cities with over one hundred thousand inhabitants, showing that the urbanization and the concentration of the population in the big cities were simultaneous processes in Brazil (Table 1).

Table 1 – Brazil: relative distribution of the urban population (%), according to the cities' size. Total of the urban population in absolute numbers, 1970/2000

Cities' size	1970	1980	1991	2000
< 20,000 inhabitants	26.92	21.35	19.34	18.81
20,000 – 50,000	12.04	11.40	12.44	11.49
50,000 – 100,000	7.80	10.50	10.23	10.57
100,000 – 500,000	19.59	21.92	24.43	26.12
500,000 and more	33.65	34.83	33.56	33.01
Total of urban population	52,097,271	80,436,409	110,990,990	137,953,959

Source: IBGE, Demographic censuses of 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

It can be observed, however, that the population residing in the cities with less than fifty thousand inhabitants remains on a level close to one third of the total urban population. This fact cannot be overlooked, for it certainly is a consequence of an extremely irregular population occupation of the national territory, a result of its uneven and combined development and its great ecological diversity (cf. Carvalho & Garcia, 2003).

Urbanization and metropolitan agglomerates

The fast urban expansion in Brazil occurred within the process of formation of the great metropolitan regions as of the seventies. Those regions suffered countless transformations with the incorporation of new municipalities to the already existing ones in its initial formation, as well as with the less criterious increase of their number. Since the decisions about the creation or enlargement of the metropolitan regions are accountable to the State Parliaments, the adopted criteria may often comply more with the

political conveniences than with the actual needs of the metropolitan space management.

Aiming at analyzing in a more trustworthy way the Brazilian metropolises, Ipea, Nesur of the Institute of Economics of Unicamp and IBGE tried, in a recent study, to identify the characteristics of the real metropolitan spaces. According to this work, we opted, in this article, for selecting the ensembles of cities that had been regarded as global metropolitan agglomerates - São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro -, and national ones - Belém, Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, Campinas, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Goiânia and Brasília (Ipea, IBGE, Nesur, 1999).

Table 2 – Brazil: metropolitan agglomerates – total population, 1970/2000

Metropolitan agglomerates	Total population			
	1970	1980	1991	2000
Belém	669,768	1,021,486	1,401,305	1,795,536
Fortaleza	1,070,114	1,627,042	2,339,538	2,910,490
Recife	1,755,083	2,347,005	2,874,555	3,278,284
Salvador	1,135,818	1,752,839	2,474,385	2,991,822
Belo Horizonte	1,619,792	2,570,281	3,385,386	4,177,801
Rio de Janeiro	6,879,183	8,758,420	9,796,649	10,869,255
São Paulo	8,113,873	12,552,203	15,395,780	17,813,234
Campinas	644,490	1,221,104	1,778,821	2,219,611
Curitiba	809,305	1,427,782	1,984,349	2,635,436
Porto Alegre	1,590,798	2,307,586	3,029,073	3,498,322
Goiânia	424,588	807,626	1,204,565	1,609,335
Brasília	625,916	1,357,171	1,980,432	2,756,701
Agglomerate total (1)	25,338,728	37,750,545	47,644,838	56,555,827
Brazil population (2)	93,134,846	119,002,706	146,825,475	169,799,170
(1) / (2)	27.21	31.72	32.45	33.31
Urban population (3)	52,097,271	80,436,409	110,990,990	137,953,959
(1) / (3)	48.64	46.93	42.93	41.00

Source: IBGE, Demographic censuses of 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

The concentration of the Brazilian population in the metropolitan agglomerations is very clear from the seventies up to the year 2000, resulting from the intense migratory flow that had been increasing as of the seventies. Back in 1970, nearly half the Brazilian urban population already lived in the selected metropolitan agglomerates. Such a proportion tended to decline, but on the late 20th century it still remained above 40%. On what concerns to the total population of the country, it could be detected that, from 1980 on, approximately one third of it lived in the glomerates (Table 2).

The concentration of the urban population is even more remarkable if we take into consideration only the metropolitan agglomerates of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. In 1970, nearly 30% of the urban population lived in them, and, in 2000, the percentage still remained close to 20%. We can state that the accelerated urbanization in Brazil not only was coexistent with the process of concentration of the urban population, but with its metropolitanization as well.

The data suggest, since the seventies, a relative decentralization of the population from the metropolitan glomerates, although their demographic importance remained indisputable. The decrease in the fertility rate, greater in the big cities, and, basically, the decrease in the migrations – as we will see later -, have been greatly responsible for the decentralization in favor of median non-metropolitan cities. In 2000, the rate of the urban population living in cities with one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand inhabitants, not belonging to the metropolitan agglomerates – 17.3% -, was already slightly higher than that of the population that inhabited the agglomerates outskirts, that is, beyond the limits of the capitals or their nucleuses (Brito & Horta, 2002).

The economic and social crisis experienced by the Brazilian economics, along the last two decades of the 20th century, led to a great decrease in the population's ability of insertion into the work market in the metropolitan agglomerates, as well as increased the selectivity of the real estate market. Both changes worked as a “brake” to the trend that, in the seventies, started to develop as a “hyper-metropolitanization”.

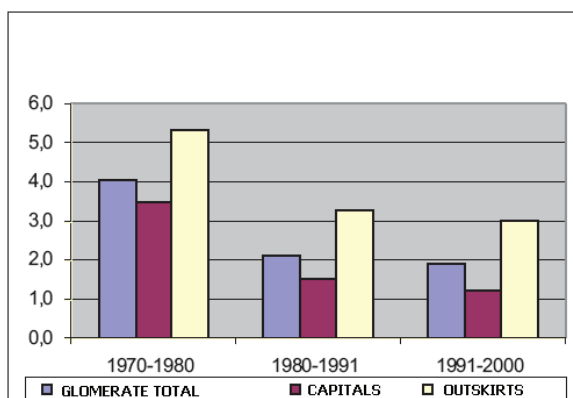
We cannot fail to emphasize, however, that, in the nineties, even with the increasing reduction in the rates of growth of the metropolitan glomerates ensemble, the average annual increment of its population went from 899 thousand inhabitants, in the eighties, to 985 thousand along the last decade. We should, furthermore, keep in mind that, in spite of the relative reversal of the trend to a hyper-metropolitanization, in the year 2000 over 40% of the Brazilian urban population lived only in the metropolitan areas selected in this article.

Analyzing, separately, the nucleuses – the capitals – and the outskirts – the other metropolitan municipalities –, we can detect an extremely important phenomenon: the spatial reversal of the command of the agglomerates demographic growth (Chart 4). Despite their evident decline, the growth rates show they are still high; in the ensemble of the metropolitan agglomerates they are still relatively high, close to 2% per year along the last two decades. Nevertheless, the decrease in the capitals growth speed has been way more accelerated than that of the outskirts – where, in the last decade, the population increased some 3% per year, compared to a little over 1% in the nucleuses ensemble.

Another indicator, the nucleuses' contribution for the increment of the glomerates' total population, in the eighties reveals more clearly still this spatial reversal of the demographic growth (Table 3).

In their ensemble, the capitals, along the nineties, were accountable for only 38% of the total population growth of the metropolitan agglomerates, in opposition to the two previous decades, when their participation had almost reached 60%. The only metropolitan agglomerations that still presented, in the last decade, a nucleus contribution bigger than the outskirts' were Fortaleza, Salvador and Brasília. However, in consonance with the others, they had, along the considered period, a decrease in the relative weight of their nuclei, which grew at a slower pace than that of their outskirts.

Chart 4 – Metropolitan glomerates and annual growth rates of the population, 1970/2000 (%)



Source: IBGE, Demographic censuses of 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

Table 3 – Nucleus' contribution for the increment of the metropolitan agglomerates population, 1970/2000 (%)

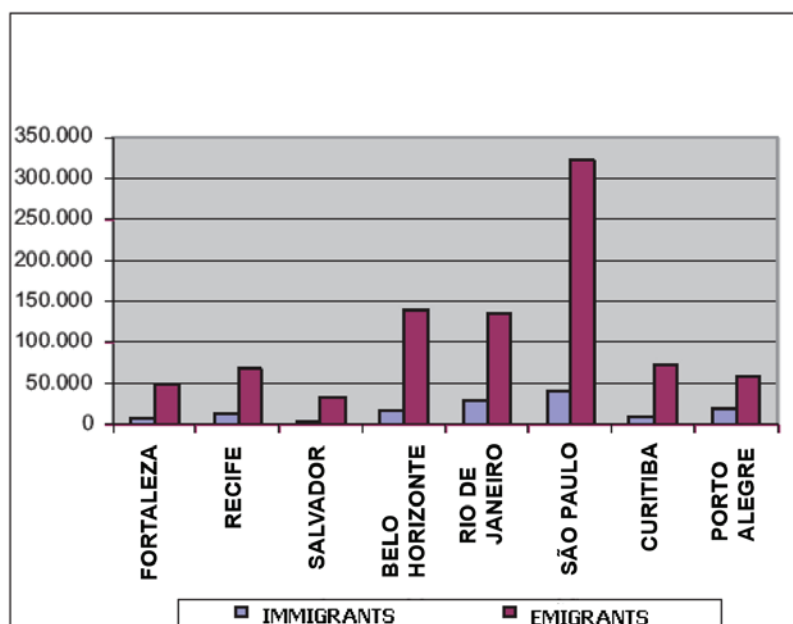
Metropolitan agglomerates	Nucleus' contribution (%)		
	1970/80	1980/91	1991/2000
Belém	85.27	81.99	9.11
Fortaleza	80.73	64.71	65.29
Recife	24.19	17.88	30.88
Salvador	80.19	79.45	71.09
Belo Horizonte	57.43	29.36	27.56
Rio de Janeiro	44.63	37.57	35.16
São Paulo	57.87	40.55	32.60
Campinas	50.07	32.82	27.63
Curitiba	67.25	52.12	41.82
Porto Alegre	33.47	19.12	20.71
Goiânia	87.92	51.57	42.19
Brasília	87.44	68.06	57.98
Agglomerates total	58.50	45.10	38.13

Source: IBGE, Demographic censuses of 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

“In other words, there has been a great population evasion from the capitals to the metropolitan outskirts, here revealed along the quinquennium 1995-2000, but which had started to show in the eighties.”

Three facts explain this reality: first, the significant decrease in the women’s fertility rates, certainly higher in the nucleuses than in the outskirts; second, but certainly more important, the intra-metropolitan migratory flows, with the migratory balance favorable to the outskirts (Chart 5); third, the migratory balance of each glomerate, with the remainder of the country, has been more favorable to the outskirts.

Chart 5 – Metropolitan agglomerates and intra-metropolitan migrants with origin and destination in the capitals, 2000



Source: Demographic census of 2000.

We can observe that, between 1995 and 2000, the intra-metropolitan emigrants of the capitals have always been way more numerous than the immigrants, that is, their intra-metropolitan migratory balances were negative. In other words, there has been a great population evasion from the capital to the metropolitan outskirts, here revealed along the quinquennium 1995-2000, but which had started to show in the eighties (Brito & Souza, 2006).

The internal migrations and the metropolitan glomerates

In order to better comply with one of the objectives of this article, in the analysis of the emigrations and immigrations of the metropolitan glomerates, we will not be taking into consideration the glomerates of Goiânia and Brasília, due to the complex definition of the Brasília one, whose territory extends over the Minas Gerais countryside, which is one of the analysis units, and to the interactions between them. Campinas will not be taken into consideration either, for it is a portion of the São Paulo countryside, which is another analysis unit.

We will analyze, mainly, the results of the Census of 2000. However, in this initial stage, we must make a comparison between the information on the migrations of the countryside of the State to which the Metropolitan Region belongs and the inter-state migrations, using the data on the migrants, fixed date, of the quinquennia 1986-1991 and 1995-2000.

Table 4 – Selected metropolitan agglomerates, migratory balance, fixed date, 1986/1991 and 1995/2000

Metropolitan Agglomerates	Migratory balance 1986/91			Migratory balance 1995/2000		
	State Countryside	Other States	Total balance	State Countryside	Other States	Total balance
Belém	34,660	-10,155	24,506	32,183	-16,296	15,888
Fortaleza	86,987	-5,370	81,617	38,138	17,877	56,015
Recife	43,730	-25,991	17,738	33,956	-22,613	11,344
Salvador	64,881	-18,261	46,620	45,041	-15,542	29,499
Belo Horizonte	90,038	17,190	107,228	90,440	25,844	116,283
Rio de Janeiro	-14,057	-41,817	-55,873	-29,734	40,310	10,576
São Paulo	-248,287	376,589	128,302	-296,162	158,692	-137,471
Curitiba	87,747	19,403	107,151	92,327	34,550	126,876
Porto Alegre	77,367	8,972	86,339	46,820	-2,351	44,469

Source: IBGE, Demographic censuses of 1991 and 2000.

In 1986-1991, with the exception of Rio de Janeiro, all other agglomerates had a positive total migratory balance. However, when we analyze the inter-state migratory balances in addition to the *carioca* metropolis, the agglomerates of the Northeastern Region presented negative migratory balances as well. On what concerns to the migratory balances with the countryside of the very State to which the glomerate belongs, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo had negative migratory balances, the latter with a net loss of nearly 250 thousand people. This relation of the flows with the State countryside is repeated in 1995-2000. In the case of São Paulo, it is so unfavorable that it cannot compensate the inter-state positive migratory

balance, generating a surprising negative total migratory balance. By the way, it was the only one to have presented, in 2000, a negative total migratory balance. With regard to inter-state migratory balances, the pattern of the 1986-1991 period is repeated, in a general way, in 1995-2000. There are the exceptions of Fortaleza and Rio de Janeiro, whose negative migratory balances became positive on the second quinquennium. We can observe that only Belo Horizonte and Curitiba had no decline in their migratory balance, between the two periods and, in both cases, mainly due to the increase in their inter-state migratory balances.

The migratory balance corresponds to the difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants. Obviously, small migratory balances may be the result of very big flows, both of immigrants and emigrants. This is the case of the metropolitan agglomerate of São Paulo, where the flows of the 1995-2000 period were big, both inwards and outwards, mainly in their inter-state exchanges (Table 5). The emigration from São Paulo was strongly influenced by the return migration, especially the natives of the Northeastern Region. We can also observe, still concerning to São Paulo, that its inter-state migratory flows indicate an unmistakable structural tension between the ongoing process of population decentralization in the Metropolitan Region and the inertia of the inter-state migratory trajectories, mainly from the Northeast to São Paulo, as we will see later, which continued to feed significantly the flow of their immigrants (Table 5).

Table 5 – Some selected metropolitan agglomerates, fixed date migrants, 1995/2000

Metropolitan regions	Immigrants			Emigrants		
	State Country-side	Other States	Total of immigrants	State Country-side	Other States	Total of emigrants
Belém	76,666	37,468	114,134	44,483	53,764	98,246
Fortaleza	92,393	70,078	162,471	54,255	52,201	106,456
Recife	67,730	59,238	126,969	33,774	81,851	115,625
Salvador	110,723	45,860	156,583	65,682	61,402	127,084
Belo Horizonte	177,013	79,615	256,627	86,573	53,771	140,344
Rio de Janeiro	67,901	254,677	322,578	97,635	214,367	312,002
São Paulo	172,134	703,118	875,251	468,296	544,426	1,012,722
Curitiba	144,808	95,571	240,379	52,481	61,021	113,503
Porto Alegre	138,032	44,607	182,639	91,212	46,958	138,170

Source: IBGE, Demographic census of 2000.

In all agglomerates, the immigrants from the countryside of their respective states were in bigger numbers than those from other states, except

in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where the inter-state immigrants were predominant. With regard to the emigration, the inter-state emigrants formed the majority in Belém, Recife, Curitiba, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In the two latter ones, the emigrants returning to their states of birth played a remarkable role.

The inter-state migrations lead to the need to specify their origin and destination, especially on what concerns to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where the inter-state migrations were widely predominant (Table 6).

The *paulista* metropolis had the Northeast as its major source of immigrants: approximately 73% of the total. That is, it nourished itself from the inertia of the migratory trajectory, which since the middle of last century had in that region its major source of manpower. Historically, Minas Gerais was an important source of immigrants to the São Paulo glomerate, but, during the quinquennium in question, its contribution was restricted to a mere 10% of the inter-state flow. The *fluminense* metropolis presented a similar situation: the Northeast was the origin of the great majority of its immigrants, and Minas, with a much lower percentage, occupied the second position.

Table 6 – Origin of the inter-state immigrants whose destinations were the selected metropolitan agglomerations, fixed date migrants, 1995/2000

Regions / States of origin	Metropolitan agglomerations of destination									
	Belém	Fortaleza	Recife	Salvador	Belo Horizonte	Rio de Janeiro	São Paulo	Curitiba	Porto Alegre	TOTAL
North	7,423	10,766	3,397	1,796	6,131	13,225	14,532	5,008	1,816	64,092
Northern NE *	12,007	12,634	1,836	1,301	2,114	16,923	56,592	992	633	105,032
Center NE	4,257	11,592	19,142	9,774	5,042	99,491	239,389	3,479	2,412	394,576
Southern NE	689	3,239	4,603	4,913	15,907	28,203	216,153	2,610	1,325	277,641
Minas Gerais	739	1,414	1,666	2,005	0	28,415	71,883	3,639	1,465	111,227
Espírito Santo	231	319	427	905	8,966	11,930	6,572	679	440	30,468
Rio de Janeiro	4,936	5,591	7,142	7,844	9,041	0	23,894	3,883	3,120	65,450
São Paulo	3,304	16,272	16,306	12,111	21,833	30,575	0	33,801	7,892	142,095
Paraná	878	1,143	740	1,027	2,087	4,482	31,612	0	8,536	50,505
Extreme South	1,054	1,864	1,466	1,889	1,788	9,024	18,181	31,817	14,281	81,365
Center West	1,951	5,244	2,513	2,295	6,707	12,409	24,312	9,662	2,689	67,781
Total	37,468	70,078	59,238	45,860	79,615	254,677	703,119	95,570	44,607	1,390,232

Source: IBGE, Demographic census of 2000.

* Northern Northeast: Maranhão and Piauí; Center Northeast: Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco and Alagoas; Southern Northeast: Sergipe and Bahia; Extreme South: Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.



The homeless Maria Vieira on the street with her family after being evicted from the Almeida building, in São Paulo.

Table 7 – Destination of the inter-state immigrants bound to the selected metropolitan agglomerations, fixed date migrants, 1995/2000

Regions / States of origin	Metropolitan agglomerations of destination									
	Belém	Fortaleza	Recife	Salvador	Belo Horizonte	Rio de Janeiro	São Paulo	Curitiba	Porto Alegre	TOTAL
North	17,073	6,986	3,658	1,611	3,762	13,910	14,988	3,497	1,789	67,277
Northern NE *	6,368	6,124	1,944	636	817	5,607	25,872	353	477	48,199
Center NE	6,943	7,816	21,200	8,247	3,166	51,292	139,686	2,094	2,514	242,960
Southern NE	1,186	2,465	6,294	5,468	4,377	16,375	88,833	1,110	1,572	127,680
Minas Gerais	1,684	1,278	1,753	3,397	0	36,835	113,578	2,752	978	162,256
Espírito Santo	409	348	715	1,785	7,548	20,757	8,185	460	190	40,397
Rio de Janeiro	5,992	6,131	9,647	8,797	6,909	0	27,137	2,686	3,114	70,413
São Paulo	5,898	12,809	29,566	24,553	16,201	33,381	0	15,980	6,947	145,334
Paraná	966	620	890	1,019	1,935	5,889	62,798	0	6,798	80,914
Extreme South	1,308	1,509	1,749	1,510	1,480	11,986	26,022	25,500	18,862	89,925
Center West	5,936	6,114	4,434	4,378	7,576	18,333	37,328	6,591	3,716	94,406
Total	53,764	52,200	81,851	61,401	53,772	214,365	544,426	61,022	46,958	1,169,761

Source: IBGE, Demographic census of 2000.

Considering the destination of the emigrants from the metropolitan agglomerates in the 1995-2000 period, taking, particularly, as a reference the metropolitan agglomerates of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, we can observe an extremely interesting situation. The destination of the emigrants from

those agglomerates, in its majority, gets mixed up with their immigrants' origin. The Northeast and Minas Gerais were the preferred destinations. Such phenomenon expresses, undoubtedly, a great rate of people returning to the states where they were born.

Table 8 – Metropolitan agglomerate of São Paulo, migrants, migratory balance and emigrants returned to their states or regions of birth, fixed date, 2000

Regions / States Origin / Destination	Metropolitan agglomerate of São Paulo				
	Immigrants	Emigrants (1)	Balance	Returned (2)	2/1 (%)
North	14,532	14,988	-456	2,498	16.67
Northern NE *	56,592	25,872	30,720	17,049	65.90
Center NE	239,389	139,686	99,703	87,539	62.67
Southern NE	216,153	88,833	127,320	54,691	61.57
Minas Gerais	71,883	113,578	-41,695	47,700	42.00
Espírito Santo	6,572	8,185	-1,613	1,960	23.95
Rio de Janeiro	23,894	27,137	-3,243	6,700	24.69
Paraná	31,612	62,798	-31,186	18,244	29.05
Extreme South	18,181	26,022	-7,841	6,539	25.13
Center West	24,312	37,328	-13,016	4,759	12.75
Total	703,119	544,426	158,693	247,679	45.49

Source: IBGE, Demographic census of 2000.

In order to make clearer the importance of this phenomenon, namely the return emigration, we should take into consideration the metropolitan agglomerate of São Paulo, where it is more relevant. Of the total of inter-state emigrants of the 1995-2000 quinquennium, 46% had been born in the states of destination. Among those bound to the Northeast, that percentage surpasses 60%; the second place belongs to those that moved to Minas Gerais. Those two regions, Northeast and Minas, were also the ones that received the greatest number of migrants from São Paulo. Such situation, analytically suggestive, is consistent with the migratory tradition of the metropolitan glomerate of São Paulo: the greatest number of returning migrants is bound to the very regions from where, in the past, the greatest number of immigrants had come (Table 8).

Conclusions

This return migration is the expression of the new reality of the metropolises and migrations. The Brazilian society, on the second half of the 20th century, was structurally marked by its accelerated process of urbanization. The irreversible construction of the urban hegemony does not depend on the



Maria Cândido waits to be moved after being dislodged from the Esqueleto shantytown, in São Paulo.

variation of the demographic stocks of its great agglomerates. The Brazilian society is already urban, as well as its big metropolises will continue playing their hegemonic role, despite the decline in their rates of population growth.

The decrease in the relative participation of the big metropolitan agglomerates in the total of the urban population, resulting from the redirection of a portion of the internal migrations, after 1980, to the non-metropolitan median cities, opens perspectives for new territorialities, social spaces that have been integrated to the new migratory pattern of the Brazilian society.

The great demographic deflation of the capitals, nucleuses of the major metropolitan glomerates, is partly due to the marked decline in the fertility rates, but, in a greater proportion, to the decrease in their migratory balances – which, by the way, tend to become negative. Even the outskirts, which presented a very significant growth on the seventies and eighties – a growth that still remains high, although in decline -, suffer the impact of the reduction in the fertility and the migratory balances.

There seems to be a paradox, as in São Paulo, between the ongoing process of population decentralization and the inertia of the migratory trajectories that continue to feed its significant number of immigrants. The big issue is that the flexibility of the migratory trajectories, especially those with their origin in the Northeast, complies with the strict limits determined by the regional and social disequilibriums of the present-day Brazilian society.



Photo Folha Imagem/Luiz Carlos Muratuskas - 9.5.1996

Removal of 1,800 families from the Jardim Alzira Franco shantytown, in Santo André (SP).

In spite of that, the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo stands out for its negative migratory balance, caused by the ongoing population decentralization towards the *paulista* countryside.

The inter-state immigration is nearly totally compensated by the emigration, mainly the return emigration. Thus, the inter-state migratory balance, although being fed by the inertia of the Northeastern migratory trajectory, is not enough to compensate the population loss to the State countryside any longer.

The great urban crisis, with its lack of economic and social opportunities, with the social conflicts that are inherent to the social and spatial segregation, eventually leads the emigrants, bound to the countryside or to other states, to leave more the capital than the metropolitan outskirts. The capitals' ability of migratory retention has been significantly decreasing and its recuperation is a distant possibility.

The present-day Brazil has made of the internal migration a risky activity. It used to be an alternative for the social mobility; now it is a mere alternative for survival. The potential emigrants exist in abundance; however, there are no social and economic alternatives that can make of their displacement a reason, at least, for hope.

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ABSTRACT– THE AIM of this article is the analysis of the Brazilian urbanization process during the second half of the 20th century. For this purpose it is important to take note that the 1970 Demographic Census indicated that the urban population had surpassed the rural population for the first time. The rapid contemporary urbanization due to intense internal migration concentrated the urban population in the larger Brazilian cities and metropolitan areas. During the last two decades, however, the growth rates of the larger cities declined due to lower fertility rates and, more importantly, the decreasing number of immigrants. Indeed, the metropolitan area of São Paulo, for example, presented a negative net migration for the 1995-2000 period. Although internal migration trends do not point to a process of “hyper-metropolitanization”, it must be taken into account that, as of 2000, 40% of the country’s urban population still inhabited the larger metropolitan areas.

KEYWORDS: Migration, Urbanization, Metropolises.

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