The Migration of U. S. Retirees to Guadalajara, Mexico: A Case for Environmental Preference Migration

Virgil Holder

"... Americans are always moving on. It's an old Spanish custom gone astray, a sort of English fever, I believe, Or just a desire to take French leave, I couldn't say, I couldn't really say."¹

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing amount of literature on environmental preference migration.² Edward Ullman, probably the first geographer to publish a comprehensive review on the subject of environmental preference migration, suggested that migration models must be revised to account for the effect of amenities, specifically physical attractions such as climate and landforms, in producing migration streams.³ Articles in Time⁴ and U.S. News and World Report⁵ indicate that the reasons for the dramatic shift of the American population is due largely to a preference for areas with environmental amenities.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the migration of retirees from the United States of America⁶ to Mexico. The particular elements described include: the magnitude of emigration; the regional distribution of migrants in Mexico; their reasons for selecting Guadalajara, Mexico, as a place of residence; and some specific social and economic characteristics of the migrants.

Retirees⁷ were selected for this study because other migrants would have very specific reasons for migrating to Mexico. For example, people working for corporations or students attending medical schools or other institutions have specific reasons for being in Mexico. Retir-
ees, on the other hand, would be free to choose Mexico for a variety of reasons. The group selected for this study was the American colony in Guadalajara because of the number and concentration of Americans in the area and the availability of membership lists and information from the American Society of Jalisco, the American Chamber of Commerce, the United States Consulate Office, and the Mexican Immigration Department.

Names were selected from the Membership Directory of the American Society of Jalisco and the Anglo-American Directory. Because the membership lists could not be considered unbiased, additional interviews were conducted in two subdivisions, three apartment complexes, in trailer parks, and in San Francisco Plaza, commonly known among Americans in Guadalajara as Gringo Park. Of the 164 Americans who completed a questionnaire, 104 came from the membership lists, 23 were from the three apartment complexes, 15 were from the Rancho Contento and Santa Anita subdivisions, 7 were from trailer parks, and 15 were with individuals at the San Francisco Plaza.

In The Ugly American, Lederer and Burdick termed the settlements of Americans in foreign countries the "Golden Ghettos"; and in Mexico, as in most foreign countries, these areas are popularly known as the "American Colony." While many Americans do not become involved in the social and political life in the foreign countries, others become very active in promoting social affairs, humanitarian services, and in many ways, participate as citizens in their adopted countries.

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICANS IN MEXICO AND GUADALAJARA

There is a Mexican proverb that says "Poor Mexico, so far from God, so close to the United States." Proximity to the United States is certainly a significant factor for the selection of Mexico as a destination by the American migrants. However, the flow of American migrants is vastly overshadowed by the counterflow of legal and illegal migrants to the United States from Mexico. This latter current of migration has received considerable attention by researchers while the American migration has been ignored as a major research topic. Both migration currents are of great importance to the United States and Mexico.

Americans account for approximately 51 percent of the foreign-born population in Mexico (Table 1). Spain and Guatemala account for 16 percent and 4 percent, respectively. The actual number of Americans is extremely difficult to verify. For example, the United States Census of 1970 indicates that 11,440 U.S. citizens were residing in Mexico, but the Mexican Census of 1970 lists the number at 97,246. Other sources place the number even higher. The United States Department of State in 1970 estimated that there were 98,000 Americans in Mexico, and according to Don and Betty Gilmore, there were one million Americans residing in Mexico in 1970.

Data from the 1970 Census of
TABLE 1

Foreign-Born Population in Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Accumulated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>97,246</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>31,038</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>6,969</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5,379</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>4,175</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>3,674</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3,495</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3,352</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of all foreign-born in Mexico: 191,184</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Countries with less than 2 percent are not included.


Mexico indicate that Americans are concentrated in the northern states of Mexico (Fig. 1). The six states (Baja California Norte, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas) bordering the United States account for 53 percent of all Americans in Mexico. Generally, the percentage of Americans in Mexico decreases as the distance from the border increases; therefore, the gravity model, or distance-decay model, is supported by the distribution.

In the border states of Mexico, the United States citizens tend to concentrate near the international border or in the cities. For example, in Baja California Norte, which has 12 percent of the Americans in Mexico, most are in the Tijuana-Ensenada area and along the coast near Ensenada. New developments near Ensenada offer oceanview homesites, underground utilities, pure water, and there are guard and maintenance services. Also, it is possible to view television broadcasts from San Diego, California.

Farther south, the state of Jalisco, with approximately 8 percent of the Americans in Mexico, and the Federal District, with 13 percent, are the exceptions to the rule of relative decrease as the distance from the border increases. South of the Federal District, each state has less than one percent of the Americans, and the total of all Americans residing south of the capital is only about 2 percent of the total number of United States citizens in Mexico.

Determining the actual number of Americans is difficult for smaller area units. The principal area of American settlement in Jalisco is the Guadalajara area, which has an estimated 17,000 United States citizens in residence. According to officials at the American consulate office in Guadalajara, there are approximately 10,000 citizens registered, but many do not register with the office. Also, the number of Americans increases dramatically during the November to March period with the arrival of the “Snowbird” population. In Guadalajara the population doubles or triples to between 20 and 30,000.

Other areas of concentration in the state of Jalisco are: Chapala, Chula Vista, and Ajijic in the Lake Chapala area; and Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific coast (Fig. 2). Chapala is the largest town on the lake and is known as the “Chapala Riviera.”
Figure 1. Distribution of American Born.
Chula Vista, a residential subdivision between Chapala and Ajijic, has a large American colony, many are retired military personnel. Russell Swenson's studies conducted in the Lake Chapala area reported that Americans feel as though they are in southern California when they visit Chula Vista. In Guadalajara, the colony of Chula Vista and Chapala is known as the "Cocktail Set." It is said that Americans in this area spend much of their time on the golf course and at parties given by Americans. Ajijic is a haven for artists and has a fairly large American colony as well. Puerto Vallarta, thirty minutes by air and five hours by car from Guadalajara, is a rapidly growing tourist area on the Pacific coast with approximately 500 Americans in residence. During the winter months, however, the American population increases to about 1,500.

Guadalajara, named after the old Moorish city located thirty miles northeast of Madrid, Spain, where Nuño Beltran de Guzmán was born, has many attractions for the tourist and prospective migrant. It is famous for its parks, fountains, monuments, and architecture. It is known as the birthplace of tequila, charros (Mexican horsemen), mariachis (strolling minstrels), and the Mexican hat dance. In Guadalajara, the stereotype of male gallantry toward beautiful women, the exuberance of local folk songs and dances, and the customs and charm of the colonial period are presented as if they were elements of everyone's daily life.
Guadalajara is Mexico's second largest city with a population of 1,199,391 inhabitants, according to the Census of Mexico of 1970. The city occupies an important place in western Mexico's transportation network and travel connections by road, rail, and air make the area relatively accessible. Although parts of the city have been experiencing extensive rebuilding, it has not lost its Spanish character. Some streets have been modernized, tall office and apartment buildings have been constructed, and there are modern supermarkets, restaurants, and theaters. With its many amenities, it is little wonder that Guadalajara can boast of having the largest single retirement colony of Americans in Mexico.

The distribution of Americans in Guadalajara reveals a concentration in the colonias on the west side of the city, in the suburbs of Zapopan and Tlaquepaque, and the subdivisions of Rancho Contento (Happy Ranch) and Santa Anita (Fig. 3). Because they are more isolated from the Mexican society, Americans in the subdivisions differ to some extent from those in the city and suburbs of Guadalajara. There is more security from noise, crime, and tension of the city. Both are built around a golf course, each has its own security force, and there is a single entrance into each development. Tlaquepaque, a late nineteenth century vacation suburb now at the southeastern edge of the city is well-known for its arts and crafts. Zapopan is contiguous on the northwest and is well known because of the seventeenth century cathedral which houses the arts and crafts of the Huichol Indians and the Virgin of Zapopan, who is credited with many miracles. Both suburbs have a sizeable American colony.

Americans living within a specific area of the city tend to belong to the same social stratum. For example, Americans with low incomes and are single are concentrated in the central part of the city where there are hotels, apartments, and houses with lower rents. One source estimated that there are between 700 and 1,000 retirees who live in cheap hotels or apartments in the downtown area. In the colonias west of the central business district (for example, Las Fuentes, Chapalita, Ciudad del Sol, Monraz, Providencia, Jardines del Country) there is a full range of housing from the very expensive condominiums and houses to relatively cheap apartments and hotels. Migrants with higher incomes generally are concentrated in the subdivisions and have purchased or rented homes in the suburbs or in the western section of the city. However, it should be pointed out that the American population in Guadalajara is more homogeneous in social and economic characteristics than the population of an American city of similar size. Factors that hinder the development of a heterogeneous population are the legal and financial requirements of the Mexican government, the problems of living in a foreign country where the language and customs are different, and the high cost of migration.

Living in a trailer park is one way some Americans have found to reduce the cost of living in Mexico.
Figure 3. Distribution of Americans in Guadalajara Area.
Some of the parks are very attractive with pools, landscaped parking spaces, clubhouse facilities, laundromats, and other facilities. Charges range in the 50 to 65 dollars per month category and most of them are located on the west side of the city where Americans are concentrated. There are several hundred Americans living in the various trailer parks on a permanent basis with concentrations in the San Jose de Tajo, Paradise, Yuca, and Guadalajara trailer parks. Some trailer owners with large trailer homes have managed to arrange bond-at-site, year-round parking, thus avoiding periodic trips with them to the border.

A unique quality of the colonia of Las Fuentes is the concentration of retired military personnel, including disabled and paralyzed veterans. There is an attractive American Legion Post in the colonia which serves as a monthly meeting place for veterans. Some of the other functions conducted at the Post are: a library facility; veterans information; and various community and social activities. Many people go to the Post on Sundays for dinner and fellowship at the very active bar which is open daily.

There are approximately 200 paralyzed veterans of American wars in Guadalajara and most stay in Las Fuentes until they are able to find a more desirable location. Some periodicals (for example, Paraplegia News) frequently have advertisements which describe Guadalajara as a haven for disabled veterans and paraplegics. Paraplegics are concentrated in two "gimp camps" in Las Fuentes which are not nursing homes but are organized to some extent to meet the special needs of handicapped people. Nearly all of the paraplegics are attracted to the area because of the availability of inexpensive services, the lower cost of living, and the fact that other paraplegics are there. A few individuals said that they wanted to be alone, to have the opportunity to do things for themselves, to escape the pity of family relatives, and friends, or to be less of a burden on their families. Because of the specific reasons these individuals had for migrating to Mexico they were not interviewed for completion of a questionnaire, but they are certainly worthy of research work.

Another distinctive group of Americans in Guadalajara are the medical students at the medical school of the University of Guadalajara. In the fall of 1974, about 1900 Americans were enrolled in the medical program at the university, nearly half of the school’s total enrollment. The principal reason for the American students in the Guadalajara medical school is that they were unable to enter medical school in the United States because of grades, their age, and quotas. Again because of the specific reasons for this group, they were not interviewed for completion of a questionnaire.

LEGAL STATUS OF AMERICANS IN GUADALAJARA

The three principal categories under which a U.S. citizen may enter Mexico are as a tourist, a visitor, or an immigrant. The tourist (turista) permit is easily obtained at the bor-
der or at any of the several Mexican consulate or tourist offices in the United States by showing proof of citizenship. Nearly all Americans going to Mexico for the first time use the tourist permit, which theoretically is valid for 180 days, and many Americans reside in Mexico for several years by using the permit, becoming “resident tourists” or “permanent tourists” of that country.

Individuals interested in Mexico for an extended period of time, or who are interested in becoming citizens of Mexico, may apply for the visitor (visitante rentista) or immigrant (inmigrante rentista) status. The differences between these categories are the length of time the individual is permitted to stay in Mexico, the amount of income needed, and the desire of the individual. The visitor (visitante rentista) category was introduced in 1962 as part of a plan to liberalize the requirements for entry by foreigners. It was designed to allow Americans to sample life in Mexico as permanent residents for a trial two-year period. The primary requirements are age 55 or over, a valid U.S. passport, and proof of a minimum fixed income of $160 per month, plus an additional $80 per month for spouse and each dependent over age 15.

The immigrant (inmigrante rentista) category is selected by most who have decided to live in Mexico on a permanent basis. The primary requirements are a valid U.S. passport, certificates of good health and conduct, proof of a minimum fixed income of $240 per month, plus an additional $80 per month for spouse and each dependent over 15. After completing the probationary period of five years, the applicant is eligible for the status of migrant (inmigrado). The migrant (inmigrado) does not lose U.S. citizenship and at the same time gains many of the advantages of Mexican citizenship, although they are not Mexican citizens. They can own land and operate a business but they are not allowed to participate in political activities.

By legal classification, 36 percent of the 164 individuals interviewed were tourists in Mexico. However, 80 percent stated that they resided in Mexico 11 to 12 months of the year and 95 percent said they lived in Mexico for more than 6 months of the year. When asked why they did not apply for immigrante or visitante status, individuals replied that the cost of the papers were too expensive, there was too much “red tape” (bureaucratic problems), or that they could manage just as well with tourist papers. Some said that they planned to remain in Mexico for a few years, but would return to the United States at a later date. Also, most made two trips to the United States each year and could, therefore, renew their papers at the border. However, in 1974, border officials began handling tourist permits differently. Some were given permits valid for 30 days, others for 60 days, and others were given the usual 180-day permits. In one family, the members obtained a variety of days on their permits. When the information about these changes became public, anxiety surfaced in the American colony in Guadalajara. This activity by the custom officials plus the increased charges for the
renewal of *inmigrante* papers, and the high rate of inflation, which caused the cost of living to skyrocket in Mexico, caused many of the Americans to decide either to leave Mexico or to apply for *inmigrante* papers.

The *inmigrante* and *inmigrado* (migrant) categories had 30 percent each (Table 2). The fact that many Americans had become *inmigrados* (migrants) may be, in part, why the Mexican government began to clamp down on the "resident tourists" in the country. The increased charges for the *inmigrante* papers that were initiated in 1974 were the first changes made in the cost of the papers in about 20 years. The government's official policy was that the charges had been far lower than they should have been; therefore, they needed to be increased. Before 1974, the initial fee for the *inmigrante rentista* status was $103, in actuality about $140 because of the extra charges necessary for certifying the various documents. This fee was increased to $160, in actuality about $200 because of the expenses for certification. The greatest change, however, occurred in the cost of the annual renewals and the cost of the final papers for the *inmigrado* status. The renewal rate was changed from $5 to $80 and the final paper charge was increased from $16 to $240.

**REASONS FOR SELECTION**

In order to determine the specific reasons migrants selected Mexico, the 164 Americans selected for interviews were asked to scale the factors of climate or environment, finance, culture, relatives or friends, recreation, and health categories as being very important, important, or not important (Table 3).

Popular literature dealing with tourism to Mexico is probably accurate in concluding that the primary reasons for the selection of Guadalajara and other sites in Mexico are due to environmental characteristics. Many individuals indicated that Guadalajara has one of the best year-round climates in the world and they cited articles about Mexico and Guadalajara in *The National Geographic Magazine*, tourist books, or other sources which stated that the climate of Guadalajara is nearly perfect. The climatic and environmental category was important or very important to 97 percent of the residents, and only 3 percent said they were of no importance in making the decision to live in Mexico.

According to the recommendations made in various sources, residents could live longer and better in the gentle climate of Mexico. Norman Ford stated it thusly:

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"... the ideal climate is one where you can spend every day
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TABLE 3
Reasons for Selection of Guadalajara

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climatic/Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Amenities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives or Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, migrants seem to be responding to the advice given by such authors as Berke and Wilson who advised the following in their book:

"... take the best that cold weather can give you till you reach middle age and then forsake it for the relaxation you can find farther south."31

Closely related to the environmental feature would be the health reasons for selection of Mexico. However, only 14 percent of the sample said that health factors were responsible for their selection of Guadalajara. Some felt that the lower relative humidity was important, others stated that the strain of northern winters had become too great or that pollution in the cities proved to be a hardship, and others said that their perception of climatic and environmental conditions in the United States was instrumental in influencing them to move. This seems very paradoxical when one considers the health problems residents may encounter in Mexico; for example, diseases, epidemics, problems with the food and water, and the fact that many cities in Mexico are plagued with smog, urban renewal, crime, and other negative environmental conditions.

The second most important category selected by the residents was the financial category. Approximately 84 percent said that financial factors were important in deciding to live in Mexico. Respondents felt that they could live a life of relative ease in Mexico on an income that would not be suitable for retirement outdoors, where sunshine is abundant but varied by occasional cloudiness and where weather changes are frequent but moderate. . . . The daytime temperatures seldom exceed 85°F., the nighttime temperatures do not fall below 55°F., and the relative humidity averages about 55-60%. The climate of central Mexico comes closer to meeting these conditions than any place in the continental United States.30
in the United States. Most of these residents stated that the availability of personal services was important to them and these services were either unavailable in the United States or were prohibitively expensive. Maids and gardeners could be employed in the Guadalajara area for approximately ten dollars per week in 1974, and nearly all the residents had a maid.

Another important reason for selecting Guadalajara was the cultural amenities offered by Mexico. These include such things as Mexico's history, the Indian cultures, the Mexican ambiente, and the cultural attractions of Guadalajara. Eighty-one percent of the sample said that the cultural amenities of Mexico were important in making their decisions to live there. Some of the respondents pointed out that the culture of Guadalajara was quite different than that of other areas of Mexico. It is more European (American) with most of the features one would expect to find in modern metropolitan areas: for example, a modern six-lane highway which covers a modern subway is being built through the city; many modernistic shopping malls; and the revamping of the downtown in eighteenth century style.

One resident summed up what he liked about Guadalajara in the following way:

"... friendly Mexican neighbors, an interesting passing scene of street vendors, the little corner groceries, the old-fashioned public markets, and the thoughtfulness of the Mexican people."

Twenty-four percent said that relatives and/or friends who lived in Mexico or had lived in Mexico were important in making the decision to go to Mexico. In a few cases the residents had married a Mexican national or had a parent who had been a Mexican national and had, as a result a strong tie to Mexico.

Only sixteen percent of the respondents indicated that recreational aspects were important to them for making the decision to migrate. Golfing on a year-round basis was a major incentive and many played golf on a daily basis on the golf courses at the Country Club, at Rancho Contento, at Santa Anita, at Bosques de San Isidro. Other forms of recreation included fishing, reading, writing, traveling, dining out in the city's restaurants, studying Spanish, or participating in various organizations.

CONCLUSION

The geographical setting of Mexico is a major factor for the selection of Mexico as a destination for tourists and retirees. According to Calvin Trillin, Guadalajara may have the largest single colony of Americans in the world, and the retirees exalt its climate above all else. Migrants usually agree that transportation costs and travel time have little negative influence and many travel to the United States regularly to visit their families, friends, and to renew their permits. There is less difficulty or cultural shock in adjusting to the Mexican setting if the prospective migrant selects a place where there is an American colony, which may be found in most of the major cities.
The migrant has only to select the most appealing site and, according to Norman Ford, the migrant soon settles down to a completely American way of life with Mexico as a backdrop.33

Tourism, called "the industry without chimneys" has been one of Mexico's most important industries; and tourism and migration of American retirees to Mexico are closely related. The places that attract tourists are organized to handle tourism and are also the places that attract Americans to become residents. Christaller, in examining the tourism phenomenon, postulated an evolution for places attractive to tourists from their discovery by artists and poets, through their advertisement by the "beautiful people," to their development by entrepreneurs, and finally to the massive influx of the general public.34 Williams and Zelinsky also stated that a relationship exists between tourist areas and permanent, low cost refuges for expatriates from inclement weather of the mid-latitudes. They coined the words "helio-tropic," meaning sun loving, and "boreaphobic," meaning winter hating, as reasons for the growth of subtropical and tropical tourist and permanent resident areas in Mexico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Spain, Greece, Italy, and other parts of the Mediterranean coast.35

Tourism and retirees in residence have a considerable impact on Mexico. The number of tourists to Mexico is approximately 3 million per year thus far in the 1970's. Increased medical services, paving highways and streets, buildings, parks, clearing slums, and the construction of hotels, apartments and houses, and restaurants are related to the expenditures of tourists and migrants; but they also benefit the local population. An editorial in El Occidental, a Guadalajara newspaper, claimed that more was accomplished in a few months to improve and beautify Puerto Vallarta for the arrival of President Nixon than had been done in the entire history of the city.36 The highway from Guadalajara to Puerto Vallarta was rushed to completion just before the Nixon-Ordaz meeting of 1970 in Puerto Vallarta. The Mexican government assumed that greater tourism would occur if a major highway linked the city. The News37 reported that major economic benefits for the farmers in the area would occur, and it was believed that future developments would be stimulated by the highway. It was estimated that the population of Puerto Vallarta, which was 3,000 in 1950 and 36,000 in 1970,38 would grow to 100,000 in 1976.39

The conspicuous consumption habits and patterns of foreigners, known as the demonstration effect, is one way fundamental values are altered. The native population of a country becomes aware of the way of life of migrants and they may alter their own consumption habits and patterns to conform with observed ones. Also, more emphasis may be placed on the development of historical sites, parks, monuments, archeological sites, and recreational and entertainment centers. This emphasis may cause a stronger spirit of nationalism as the native population comes into contact with a foreign group and interest in the coun-
try is stimulated by historical and cultural revival. Tourism or migration of foreigners into the country may be considered as a cultural and ideological invasion with the invaders destroying the things that they had found appealing. However, according to Agustin Olachea, head of the Mexican Tourist Department in 1973, tourism lowers the barriers of ignorance, prejudice, and suspicion between peoples and nations; therefore, the contact between tourists and native populations becomes a force for the improvement of relations among peoples and nations.40

Certainly the international migration of retirees has been greatly overlooked by researchers. The reasons for this are: researchers have been interested in specific cause and effect relationships in migration; the lack of data on age, specific migration; the lack of data on international migration; and the time and expense required to conduct field work on international migration. As a greater percentage and greater numbers of people approach retirement age, and with improvements in retirement programs, there will be increasing demands for desirable places to live. There is considerable evidence for this in the United States today with more retirement communities coming into existence, especially in the area known as the Sunbelt. As the retirees seek desirable areas where their incomes might go further, they may consider Mexico, particularly if they have some knowledge about Mexico.

The migration of American retirees to Mexico is an example of a particular type of migration that has resulted from a rather unique set of circumstances. The environmental assets of Mexico combined with the financial status of the retirees relative to the Mexican society are crucial to the future rate of retiree migration between the two nations. Future conditions in Mexico will be of great importance in determining the scale of this migration. Inflation in Mexico, problems of adjusting to the culture of Mexico, and the Mexican government's attitude toward the immigration of Americans will be decisive in promoting or retarding the flow. Mexico offers an exciting alternative to those who are looking for a change upon retirement, and many have responded.

FOOTNOTES
6. The terms "United States Citizens" and "Americans" are used interchangeably in this paper to indicate citizens of the United States of America. When references are made to individuals from other countries, their nationalities are used. For example, an individual from the United States of Mexico or the United Mexican States, is identified as a Mexican.
7. Retiree refers to an individual who has left an occupation or work force due to age or for personal reasons.


18. Interview with William McWood, United Service Bureau, Guadalajara, Mexico, June 26, 1974.


20. Ibid.


24. The Maxi supermarkets of Guadalajara resemble supermarkets in the United States and even take credit cards.

25. Ford, op. cit., p. 139.

26. Colonía is a Spanish word which refers to a section of the city. It is similar to a ward in the United States which may have developed similarly to a suburb which became enclosed by an expanding city.


33. Ford, op. cit.


36. El Occidental (Guadalajara), August 19, 1970.

37. The News (Mexico City), August 21, 1970.

