

# Hungarian Migration to Mexico between 1901 and 1950

## Summary

This thesis is written about Hungarian migration to Mexico: emigration for Hungary and immigration for Mexico. It studies the movement of people of Hungarian origin; its general characteristics and consequences, using the combination of quantitative methods together with the descriptive analysis of the existing documentation. It is based on a wide range of sources, both Mexican and Hungarian.

The first three chapters -Preface, Sources and Mexican Investigations over Immigration- form the introduction of the thesis. **Chapter 4** summarizes the history of immigration to Mexico in general, in the period from 1901 to 1950. It shows the dominant tendencies and the most frequent nationalities, relying on the documentation of the RNE and the national censuses.

**Chapter 5** analyses the driving forces behind these human movements. The dominant one was -undoubtedly- the great difficulty to enter the United States. The quota system introduced in 1921 and 1924 rechannelled part of the human waves towards Mexico, turning the country into

a kind of springboard. Although more in an opposite sense, a part was also played by the Mexican immigration policies on which this chapter offers a detailed study from the times of the *porfiriato* to the post-war years.

Altogether these last two chapters outline the framework that comprises the movement of Hungarian immigrants, with **Chapter 6** giving a statistical recounting, based on the registers of the RNE and the applications for Mexican citizenship. The aim of this analysis was to establish the general characteristics of the Hungarian case: the fluctuations of the arrivals, the religious, sex and age-group composition of the immigrants, to examine the means of transport and the points of entry as well as to provide the readers with an estimation about the size of the Hungarian colony in the first half of the twentieth century.

**Chapter 7** looks behind the statistical data, and similarly to Chapter 5, concentrates on the bottom of the migratory decisions, but exclusively with respect to Hungarians. Given that these motives were very complex, it is the longest and most heterogeneous chapter of the thesis. It starts with the description of the Hungarian political, economic and religious realities of the first half of the twentieth century -realities that involve the

most important reasons for leaving the country- and goes on to analyse the migratory policies of Hungary, Mexico and the United States, the latter two in connection with the Hungarians. A presentation of the Hungarian-Mexican consular and diplomatic relations of the period, facilitators of the migratory movement, could not be missed from this chapter, neither could a narration of the Hungarian image of Mexico -"a violent and unpredictable country"- . Other factors that hindered emigration were the paperwork that needed to be done in order to emigrate, and the general circumstances that those who decided to make the journey had to put up with.

**Chapter 8** examines the life of the immigrants after their arrival in Mexico. The economic part draws a general portrait and, beyond that, concentrates on two predominant segments of the Hungarian immigrants: the entrepreneurs and the professionals. This latter group was very much related to the health sector and played an undeniable role in the Mexican pharmaceutical industry: Sanyn, Laboratorios Hormona, Syntex, and the subsidiary companies of Chinoin and Richter, etc. The artistic part contains perhaps some of the most well-known names in today's Mexico, but not necessarily related to a Hungarian context. It summarizes the Hungarian contribution in the fields of decorative, cinematographic

arts and music, with special emphasis on the later, since it has been mostly neglected by investigators. The subchapter on sports focuses on football and examines the activities of various Hungarian sportsmen who worked in Mexico as trainers at different times during the analysed period, most of them rather successfully. The last part of Chapter 8 examines the social life of the Hungarian immigrants in Mexico, showing its development and the dynamics of group formations. The arrival of the first numerous groups in the 1920's was taken as a starting point, soon to be followed by mutual search and aid among the newly arrived, and the beginning of the formation of a colony. The 1930's can be characterized by a double attitude between divergent interests and common necessities, whereas the 1940's brought about a crisis of identity and intensified the already existing divisions among Hungarians in Mexico.

Finally, we observe the beginning of the disintegration of the Hungarian colony as such. The lack of cohesion and the significant fall in its size because of deceases, departures and lack of new arrivals brought about the subsequent insertion of its members in bigger entities such as the Jewish community or the Mexican society itself. This integration of the Hungarians in Mexico was the last phase of the migratory process.