**Population Geography - *Mexico: Motive to Migrate***
The first case study, ***Mexico: Motive to Migrate***, explores migration both within Mexico and to Mexico's northern neighbor, the United States. A pattern of departure from Mexico's Mesa del Norte is apparent from immigration records. This arid plateau has a poor, agricultural economic base and a depressed silver mining economy. Migration to the United States is common among the people of the rural town of Cedral, located in the heart of the Mesa del Norte, though many migrants return to their homelands after a season or a year in the U.S.

But not all migrants in Mexico are headed to the U.S. The city of Monterrey, the capital of the border state of Nuevo Leon, has recently experienced a large population influx, growing from 1.7 million to 2.8 million people in the past fifteen years. One of the reasons for this growth is the labor demand created by the expansion of Mexico's manufacturing industries, or maquiladoras.

Maquiladoras are the result of a government program to expand Mexico's role in international trade. Industries relocate to Mexico in exchange for tariffs on the value-added portion of products shipped out of the country. By shipping the parts of a product to Mexican maquiladoras that then complete the assembly of the product, foreign companies are helping to invigorate the economy of the border region.

With the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), migration patterns in Mexico will once again be altered. One result of NAFTA will be the end of governmental price supports for Mexico's agricultural sector. Even as this further impoverishes farmers in the Mesa del Norte, new opportunities will arise as the maquiladoras of northern Mexico begin to locate throughout the north central region, including the community of Cedral. This will help diversify the economy of that region, decrease the unemployment rate, and decrease migration out of the community.

* Population and Migration
* "The Hollow Core"
* Diffusion of Maquiladoras
* U.S. Border Policy

**"Push" Factors at Work in the Mesa del Norte**
Most migrants in and from Mexico are from the Mesa del Norte, a region of semi-arid and arid landscapes in north-central Mexico enclosed by two parallel mountain ranges, the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Sierra Madre Occidental. The region has a limited agricultural base due to its climate and elevation. The main industry within the Mesa del Norte is silver mining, which is depressed due to low international prices. The lack of work within the Mesa del Norte has caused many people to migrate to the United States or to northern Mexico, where jobs can be found in maquiladoras.

**Migration Route Leads to Monterrey's Maquiladoras**
Monterrey, a city in northern Mexico, is the capital of the state of Nuevo Leon. Rapid population growth within Monterrey has made it the third largest city in Mexico. One of the reasons for the growth of Monterrey lies in Mexico's economy. The rise of numerous manufacturing plants for foreign goods, called maquiladoras, has created a demand in Monterrey for large amounts of unskilled labor. People from the surrounding countryside are attracted to the city where they can earn wages more than double those offered in their home towns.

**The Future of the Mesa del Norte**
With the passage of NAFTA, the Mesa del Norte region has generally prospered. As wages in Monterrey rise, manufacturing plants are starting to decentralize to small towns on the Mesa del Norte. One town, Cedral, has seen the recent construction of two plants that manufacture women's' underwear. As new industry enters the region, the economy will diversify, giving the people of the region more employment opportunities and stabilizing incomes. But NAFTA also ends price supports for many of the Mesa's agricultural goods. Many farmers are worried that they cannot compete with agricultural products from the United States.

And a new trend based on new U.S. border policies may negate the positive gains that might keep Mexicans from migrating. A new "get tough" approach has made it so risky to cross the border into the U.S. that many Mexicans who might only cross seasonally are now crossing once and making the U.S. their permanent residence.

**AP Human Geo** Name: Per: Date:

Power of Place: **Latin America, Population Geography**

<http://www.learner.org/powerofplace/page21.html>

The video is at the top. Watch only the first part: ***Mexico: Motive to Migrate***

What are the Push and Pull factors that cause people to migrate from Latin America to the United States?

Who is more culpable, the illegal migrant or the person/company who hires him/her? Why?

Is the real issue illegal immigration or illegal employment? Explain.

Is it OK for Americans to purchase products made overseas with cheap labor? Why?

Is that different than allowing low-cost labor to immigrate to the U.S.? How?

What problems can arise from not properly regulating and protecting a country’s borders?