ABSTRACT

In the 1980s, an inflexion of tendencies was observed in the spatial redistribution of the Brazilian population, supposedly a delayed reflex of the productive restructuration and relative economic decentralization initiated in the 1970s. These changes in the national space economy led to dramatic changes in the composition, volumes and directions of migration flows and, from the 1980s onwards, many authors pointed out a process of “population deconcentration” in the country. In what regards the urban system, if a process of economic and population deconcentration is occurring, an increase of population flows from urban centres positioned in the higher hierarchical levels towards the lower levels should be expected. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to investigate the impact of the changing patterns of migration in the structure of the Brazilian urban system over the last three decades and check if a process of “decompression” is currently underway. To do so, the flows between different levels of the urban hierarchy were studied and visually represented in a series of graphs. These levels were established in the basis of the hierarchical classification of the research “Areas of Influence of Cities 2007” (IBGE, 2008) of the Brazilian National Institute of Geography and Statistics.

Keywords: Spatial (re)distribution of the population; population deconcentration; internal migrations.
INTRODUCTION

Migration is singular among demographic variables in its ability to redistribute populations within national settlement systems. The direction and impact of redistribution has been shown to vary across countries and over time (Rees et al., 2016), with migration impact being typically associated with increased population concentration from rural to urban areas in early stages of development. On the other hand, in a number of developed countries such as the United States (Berry, 1976), United Kingdom (Hall, 1983) and other Western European countries (Fieldings, 1982), a process of counterurbanisation or migration turnaround was observed from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. Nevertheless, this inflection in tendencies from concentration to deconcentration in national migration systems is not always clear cut. In Brazil, processes of concentration and deconcentration have been shown to occur simultaneously at different geographic scales and across different regions (Carvalho, 2017).

This study seeks to provide an empirical basis for the discussion of the processes of population concentration and dispersion in the Brazilian urban system, considering the impacts of the dramatic changes in the composition, volumes and directions of migration flows occurred in the last decades, as pointed out by several studies (IPEA-IBGE-UNICAMP, 2002; Matos e Baeninger, 2004; Brito, 2006; Baeninger, 2011; Braga, 2011; Rigotti e Cunha, 2012). Furthermore, from the 1980s onwards, many authors mentioned a process of “population deconcentration” in Brazil, supposedly a delayed reflex of the productive restructuration and relative economic decentralization initiated in the 1970s, especially of industrial activities (Martine and Camargo, 1984; Diniz, 1993; Matos e Baeninger, 2004). If a process of deconcentration is occurring, an increase in migratory volumes from urban centres positioned in the higher hierarchical levels towards lower levels should be expected.

By exploring migration patterns between different “functional spaces” - regarding the relative position of cities in the urban hierarchy - it is possible to shed some light in the impact of migrations in the structure of the Brazilian urban system and check the hypothesis of an ongoing process of “urban decompression”. As regions play different roles in the national economy, cities have different functions in the spatial-economic system. The use of city sizes is too simplistic to encompass the complexity
of existing relations in an urban network, which can be of complementarity (interdependence), dominance or subordination and are frequently detached of population volumes. In this study, the classification of centrality levels was established in the basis of the research “Areas of Influence of Cities 2007” (IBGE, 2008) of the Brazilian National Institute of Geography and Statistics, which has the advantage of considering the relative position of cities in the Brazilian territory. This means that centres located in less densely occupied areas, in demographic or economic terms, despite having weaker centrality indicators than centres located in other regions, may assume the same level in the hierarchy (IBGE, 2008, p.11).

Currently, internal migrations are the main mechanism of population redistribution in Brazil and it has been the main responsible for the growth of metropolises in the country since the onset of the process of urbanization in the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1970s, the majority of the Brazilian population was already living in cities and internal migrations had become predominantly between urban areas (Matos e Baeninger, 2004; Braga e Fazito, 2010), which reinforces the importance of studying the changing patterns of internal migration in parallel with the transformations of the urban system. To provide some context, the next section will briefly describe the main aspects in the processes of population redistribution in Brazil after the 1980s.

**CONTEXTUALIZATION: THE SPATIAL REDISTRIBUTION OF THE BRAZILIAN POPULATION FROM THE 1980s ONWARDS**

The 1980s, decade of the worst economic performance in modern Brazilian history, was a period of inflexion of tendencies in what regards population (re)distribution. By this period, the effects of the “productive restructuration” initiated in the 1970s started to impact more clearly migrations and human settlement patterns in the country. The emergence of new agglomeration economies outside the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis lead to a redirection of part of migration flows and induced the retention of a potentially migrant population in those areas (Rigotti, 2006). During this period, the states of Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and the Centre-West region, which became “channels” of the industrial deconcentration, presented an increased urbanization (Matos and Baeninger, 2004).
From the 1980s onwards, there was a weakening of the processes of frontiers\(^1\) expansion in the country (Martine e Diniz, 1997). This was to be expected, considering the occupation of new areas in previous decades, the lower availability of affordable land, the State’s lower capacity for technological support and investments on infra-structure (aggravated by the economic crisis). Moreover, the agricultural modernization and expansion of more capitalist fronts of exploration, less labour demanding (especially of unskilled labour), started to substitute traditional agricultural practices and reduce migratory flows towards these areas.

A process of massive expulsion of the rural population took place in the Centre-West region, similarly to what happened to the South region in the 1970s (but, less expressive nationally, in absolute terms), with nearly 70% of its rural population migrating to cities. Even the North region showed a loss of rural population in the 1990s after a period of twenty years of migration attraction to its cities and rural areas (Camarano and Beltrão, 2000). Although apparently contradictory movements, the expansion of agricultural frontiers is associated with urbanization, both in moments of expansion and retraction. Agro-industrial development generates a demand for urban supporting services and, even in the case of agricultural frontiers retraction, cities will serve as poles of migration attraction, absorbing the dislocated rural populations (Camarano and Beltrão, 2000).

With the end of a cycle of investments and weakening of macroeconomic and regional development policies made by the federal government, the processes of industrial deconcentration also lost intensity and dynamism from the 1980s onwards (Cano, 2011). However, urbanization and migrations do not linearly follow the installation of economic activities and important changes in the processes of population (re)distribution occurred after this period, with reflexes on the highly unbalanced pattern of the Brazilian urban network. Several studies pointed out a process of decompression of the urban system, a “deconcentrated urbanization”, particularly referring to the growing importance of intermediate cities. For Matos and Baeninger (2004), the spatial spreading of industrial activities in previous decades helped to consolidate the Brazilian urban network, increasing the bonds of

\(^1\) Traditionally, the term “frontiers” is employed in a metaphorical sense in the Brazilian literature to refer to pioneer and expansion fronts of occupation of the countryside.
interdependence and complementarity between different parts of the system. According to these authors, the relative deconcentration of the Brazilian urban system enabled the insertion of small and intermediate cities in the dynamics of the urban agglomerations, especially metropolises.

The participation of state capitals in relation to states populations provides further evidence of changes in the processes of population redistribution in Brazil and its regional heterogeneity, as shown in Carvalho (2017). In the Southeast, the proportion of the population in the state capitals of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro - the biggest municipalities in the country - decreased since the 1970s, suggesting a process of deconcentration within these states. On the other hand, in the Northeast, which possess the lowest urbanization rate in the country and is traditionally an area of migration loss, the general tendency of the last decades was the increase of state capitals participation in the total population (with the exception of Recife). This suggests a process of population concentration in the state and macroregional level, probably intensified by the increase of return migrations towards this macroregion, an important aspect of the new Brazilian migration patterns.

In what regards intrametropolitan spaces, there is evidence to support that a “concentrated deconcentration” also took place at this scale - that is, a limited spatial adaptation process in the most industrialized areas of the country. By the 1980s, metropolises all over the country started to lose population to the surrounding municipalities and lose its power of migration attraction. Figure 1 shows the changing population distribution within the main Metropolitan Regions 2 (MRs) of Brazil, according to the research “Areas of Influence of Cities 2007” (IBGE, 2008). From 1991 to 2010, there was a widespread decrease in the relative participation of the metropolitan cores populations all over the country (except for the municipality of Manaus, which participation on its correspondent MR remained stable).

2 The configuration of these MRs was standardized according to the municipalities belonging to them in the year of 2010 (so the graphic serves just as a reference of the overall changes in the aggregates).
In addition to changes in intrametropolitan spaces, between 1970 and 1980, the pace of growth of metropolises was already lower than the average growth of the urban population, a tendency that continued in the following decades (Matos e Baeninger, 2004). Because of the general decrease in fertility, a reduction in the growth rate of all spatial units was predictable, but the reduction observed in Metropolitan Regions was much stronger, marking a significant reversal of the previous predominant trend of concentration in few localities, particularly in the Southeast (Martine, 1994, p. 34).

The 1990s were marked by the consolidation of important changes. Fertility decline continued reducing the growth pace of potential migrants and of populations of consolidated urban areas (Rigotti, 2006). Brito (2009) suggests that the massive interregional transfers of population observed on previous decades were already no
longer viable, not only from a social and economic point of view, but also from a demographic point of view:

"The previous migratory pattern prevailing in Brazil was typical of the first phase of demographic transition, when high fertility and falling mortality made possible high rates of population growth in large labour supplying areas, such as the Northeast and Minas Gerais. (...) At the current stage of demographic transition, where fertility has already reached replacement level, there is no possibility of generating, in the traditional regions of migration origin, the same population surpluses of the past and, consequently, its huge interstate transfers. Demographic conditions associate with economic and social conditions to make migration less likely and necessary than it was in the old paradigm" (BRITO, 2009, p.15, own translation)

Therefore, it is highly unlikely that new big cycles of concentration (e.g., in the form of metropolization) will occur in other regions of Brazil. The formation of new agglomeration diseconomies in already consolidated areas of Minas Gerais and Northeast can be expected, but no big shifts in settlement patterns. In what concerns the current configuration of the Brazilian migration patterns, it is important to emphasize the presence of “overlapping temporalities” – past trends are not substituted but coexist with new ones (different regions can be at different stages of the Demographic, Migration or Urban Transition). There is an inertia in population movements, even with unfavourable conditions, partly an effect of the structural paths created by social networks formed between migrants in the places of origin and destination. As an example, the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Goiás3 and the Federal District remained as places of migration attraction to the states of the Northeast, even if with decreasing volumes (Brito, 2009; Baeninger, 2011).

In conclusion, the pace of redistribution of the Brazilian population is far from being intensive or have the same impact that the population concentration processes occurred between the 1940s and the 1970s. Besides that, it is important to reiterate that there are processes of population concentration and deconcentration occurring simultaneously in Brazil - that is why is so important to better qualify this discussion and make sense of the highly complex migration patterns that have been driving the processes of population (re)distribution in Brazil.

3 Goiás and Santa Catarina were the only two states that showed an increase in net migration between 1986-1991 and 2005-2010.
MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper, the relative position of cities in the urban system was established on the basis of the hierarchical classification of the study “Areas of Influence of Cities 2007” or “REGIC 2007” (IBGE, 2008), the last edition of a traditional line of research of the Brazilian National Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). It consists in a framework of the Brazilian urban system, considered simultaneously as a system of central localities in command of their hinterlands and as a system of articulated cities in a network (IBGE, 2008, p.18).

The hierarchy of urban centres and their areas of influence were defined through a number of criteria, related primarily to federal management (centrality of the Executive and Judiciary at the federal level), enterprise management (companies headquarters) and supply of equipment and services. The goal was to identify the points in the territory from which decisions are issued and the command over the urban network is taken (IBGE, 2008). As already mentioned, one important feature of this research is that the position of cities in the territory was taken into consideration for the classification of the administrative, juridical and economic centrality levels.

For the purposes of this research, REGIC’s classification was used to create an origin-destination migration matrix in order to explore the flows between urban hierarchical levels. First, each municipality was coded with its respective centrality level. Then, the aggregated inflows and outflows of each level were grouped and organized in a square matrix (N x N), with the hierarchical levels of migration origin in the rows and the hierarchical levels of migration destination in the columns.

It is important to note that the classification adopted for the whole period of analysis was standardized according to the last edition of REGIC. This means that the same urban hierarchy (referring to the year of 2007) was used in the five-year periods prior to the censuses of 1991, 2000 and 2010. This is a feasible approach, since a comparison with previous editions of REGIC showed a trend of structural stability in the urban hierarchy, especially in the upper hierarchical levels that, in general, remained the same. The main changes are a product of the process of territorial

4 For more details about the methodology, see the REGIC 2007 (IBGE, 2008).
occupation and usually refer to the lower strata of the urban hierarchy (IBGE, 2008, p.17). Although several emancipations occurred during the 1990s, municipalities were considered in large aggregates (hierarchical levels), in a way that properly captures the orders of magnitude of flows between categories. Despite that, some caution is required for the risk of overestimation of migration flows towards the lowest level of the urban hierarchy ("Local centres"), were normally new municipalities are situated.

Table 1 shows the five categories used to classify urban centres in REGIC 2007, the number of municipalities on each category and their absolute and relative populations. In the original document, each level was divided in two or three sublevels (with the exception of Local Centres), which were not considered in this study. For cities that constitute large urban agglomerations, the spatial unit of analysis was the *Population Concentration Areas* (ACP), defined as the following:

> "ACPs are defined as large urban areas of continuous occupation, characterized by the size and density of the population, the degree of urbanization and internal cohesion of the area, given by the population movements to work or study. ACPs develop around one or more urban centres, in the case of conurbated centres, assuming the name of the capital municipality of the municipality with the largest population" (IBGE, 2008, p.11, own translation).

### Table 1 – Population and number of municipalities in REGIC 2007 urban hierarchical levels

| Centrality Level | Frequency | Population | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|------------|---|---|---|
| 1) Metropolises  | 177       | 47,204,113 | 56,131,359 | 62,980,037 | 32.1 | 33.1 | 33.0 |
| 2) Regional Capitals | 189     | 25,884,789 | 31,420,281 | 36,732,148 | 17.6 | 18.5 | 19.3 |
| 3) Sub-regional Centres | 164     | 12,950,568 | 14,242,552 | 16,180,784 | 8.8 | 8.4 | 8.5 |
| 4) Zonal Centres  | 561       | 18,360,307 | 18,871,679 | 20,803,138 | 12.5 | 11.1 | 10.9 |
| **Total**        | 5,563     | 146,825,475 | 169,799,170 | 190,579,355 | 100 | 100 | 100 |


A total of 5563 municipalities were contemplated in REGIC 2007 and 335 of them were grouped in 40 ACPs. Each one of these 335 municipalities were assigned with
the centrality level of the ACPs to which they belong. Since they were grouped in large categories (hierarchical levels), it would not be possible to differentiate movements occurred between ACPs from movements occurred within ACPs. For this reason, the migratory exchanges occurred within the same levels - the diagonal of the origin-destination matrix – were not considered, to avoid overestimation of flows within the upper levels. Despite this limitation, it is worth reminding that the main focus of this investigation are the changes in migration patterns between levels, in order to study if a process of deconcentration is in progress in the urban system.

The data used in this paper was extracted from the 1991, 2000 and 2010 Brazilian demographic censuses. One of the most used type of data in migration studies is the “fixed interval” measure, which contains, by itself, a time and a spatial reference. According to this measure, the only one used in this study, migrant is every individual who resided in a different spatial unit of analysis (country, state, municipality or other) from that which he/she lived five years before the census reference date. By its very nature, only migrants with 5 or more years old, survivors and people who not remigrated are captured.

Despite the Brazilian demographic censuses wealth of information, it is important to highlight that migration questions are present only at the “sample questionnaire”, that is, they were not applied to all households. In the last three censuses, this questionnaire was applied approximately to 10% of the population, with varying sample sizes, according to municipalities populations. The sample expansion to the total population is performed by applying weight factors to the microdata, procedure performed by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics itself (IBGE, 2013). This requires some caution in analysis, especially in very spatially disaggregated areas (e.g., out-migrants of municipalities with very low populations cannot be appropriately captured in the census sample and tends to be underestimated).

RESULTS

5 For example, the 177 municipalities included in the first level (metropolises), are part of the ACPs corresponding to São Paulo (the “Great National Metropolis”), Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia (“National Metropolises”) and Manaus, Belém, Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Goiânia and Porto Alegre (simply “Metropolises”).

6 With the exception of a question related to international out-migration in the 2010 Census.
Figure 2 shows the migration flows through the urban hierarchy in the five-year periods prior to the censuses of 1991, 2000 and 2010. Since relative volumes are depicted, the total area of the arrows is the same in the three periods. The most noticeable feature of the figure is that, while migratory movements up the urban hierarchy decreased over time, the majority of downward flows increased. The changes are particularly significant in the extreme categories: while movements from Metropolises and Regional Capitals to Local Centres presented a sharp increase, the respective counter streams reduced over time.

While Figure 2 have the advantage of allowing the visualization of flows and counter flows simultaneously, Figure 3 shows the net result of these exchanges, that is, the net migration flows through the urban hierarchy. The arrows represent absolute values of net migration, which substantially reduced over time. Considering the migratory exchanges between all categories, the upper levels showed a positive net migration in relation to the ones below them (with the exception of the exchanges between Metropolises-Regional Capitals and Zonal Centres-Local Centres in the last two periods), what contradicts the “urban decompression” hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the biggest migratory gain was not in the highest level of the urban hierarchy, but in the level of Regional Capitals. Furthermore, the biggest migratory gain downwards the urban hierarchy in the three periods considered is the result of the exchanges between Metropolises (1st level) and Regional Capitals (2nd level).

The same figures showing population exchanges between urban hierarchical levels are presented for the subnational space corresponding to the “São Paulo-Rio de Janeiro axis”, which can be considered the “core region” of the national settlement system. These cities are the biggest municipalities in the country and its respective states constitute the most prominent region of the country in what regards processes of population (re)distribution. Thus, figures 4 and 5 represent only migrations occurred within the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively. In both, the most prominent migratory movements are from the highest level downward the urban hierarchy, showing a process of “intraregional deconcentration”.

7 These figures were inspired by Bell et al. (2018).
Figure 2 – Migration Flows through the Brazilian urban hierarchy, 1986-1991 to 2000-2010

1986-1991

1995-2000

2005-2010

Figure 3 – Net Migration flows through the Brazilian urban hierarchy, 1986-1991 to 2000-2010

The first level of Figure 4 – corresponding to the “São Paulo ACP” - lost significant amounts of migrants to all other levels in all periods considered, but especially between 1995 and 2000. In the following period, these losses were reduced, but the overall configuration of flows was maintained. Another feature of this graphic that stands out is the positive migration gain of the second level (“Regional Capitals”) in all periods. The third level (“Sub-regional Centres”) also showed a positive net migration but in a much lesser extent, suggesting the relative decompression of the urban network in the state of São Paulo. The overall pattern and directions were maintained through all periods, with two exceptions – the tendency of “Local Centres” to lose migrants to “Zonal Centres” and “Sub-regional Centres” was reversed (in the second and third period, respectively), reinforcing the idea of a decompression trend in the urban system.

Figure 5, which refers to migrations occurred within the state of Rio de Janeiro, shows an even stronger deconcentration trend (in relative terms, because the net migration flows are much smaller), but with some particularities in comparison with São Paulo. The first level, which corresponds to the ACP of Rio de Janeiro, showed increasingly migration losses in relation to all other levels, with the exception of the second. In the first two periods, the only migratory gain in the Metropolises level came from Regional Capitals and this tendency was reverted in the last period, reinforcing the tendency of deconcentration of the urban system of Rio de Janeiro. Between 2005-2010, the forth level of Zonal Centres was the only to show a migratory loss up the urban hierarchy (to the second and third levels). A highlight of this figure is the positive migratory gains of Local Centres (lowest level), which significantly increased overtime. Another stand out feature is the migratory gains of Sub-regional Centres (3rd level), mainly from the Rio de Janeiro ACP and even from Regional Capitals, the most prominent level in the case of the state of São Paulo.
Figure 4 – Net Migration flows through the urban hierarchy, São Paulo, 1986-1991 to 2000-2010

1986-1991

Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

1995-2000

Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

2005-2010

Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

Figure 5 – Net Migration flows through the urban hierarchy, RJ, 1986-1991 to 2000-2010

1986-1991
Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

1995-2000
Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

2005-2010
Level 1: Metropolises
Level 2: Regional Capitals
Level 3: Subregional Centre
Level 4: Zonal Centre
Level 5: Local Centre

DISCUSSION

It is significant that the largest population increase due to migrations since the 1980s was not in the highest level, but in the Regional Capitals, as seen in the previous section. Moreover, it is important to reiterate that the biggest migratory gain downwards the urban hierarchy in the three periods considered is the result of the exchanges between Metropolises (highest level) and Regional Capitals (second highest level), which suggests a relative deconcentration of the urban system. Although Regional Capitals can be under the influence of Metropolises, they have their own hinterlands and are positioned outside the boundaries of the first level, due to the way urban centres are classified in REGIC 2007. This means that important secondary centres are being strengthened in the urban network, which includes state capitals not included in the first level but also urban centres of regional relevance.

In REGICs classification, Regional Capitals is the level that most closely represents intermediate cities. From the 1970s onwards, this concept started to be associated with a functional notion of intermediation or connection within the urban system (Amorim Filho e Serra, 2001, p.19), overcoming the traditional definition based simply on population volumes (which has the problem of the arbitrariness in defining the lower and upper limits). Intermediate cities started to be characterized as dynamic and strategic centres with the power to promote the articulation between metropolises and smaller cities and rural areas. In what regards migrations, more specifically, Amorim Filho and Serra (2001) and Correa (2007) support that the accelerated growth of metropolises since the middle of the last century imposed an additional function to this category of cities: its capacity to absorb part of the flows from smaller cities or rural areas through the provision of job opportunities, which could help to avoid the strengthening of social problems on large cities. This attribute would be one of the reasons why the topic of intermediate cities received so much attention since the 1970s, given that the national urban system was marked by deficiencies and a poor spatial distribution of dynamic intermediate urban centres, an obstacle for an effective interiorization and diffusion of development (Amorim and Serra, 2001).

Since the 1970s, with the formation of agglomeration diseconomies (especially in the Southeast) and consequent slowdown of the process of metropolization, intermediate
cities started to grow in importance in the Brazilian urban network, as mentioned by several authors (Amorin Filho e Serra, 2001; Matos e Baeninge, 2004; Brito, 2006; Correa, 2007). The figures shown in the previous section clearly depict this tendency. By that time, some metropolitan regions consolidated as poles of attraction of migrants already showed signs of loss of attraction power in benefit of intermediate urban centres, as suggested by Figure 3.

By way of conclusion, the differences observed between internal migrations in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro shows that there is a regional heterogeneity in what regards processes of population (re)distribution even within the core region of the national settlement system. Considering the overall patterns of flows in the Brazilian urban system and the patterns shown by the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, it is possible to infer that a pattern of concentration in the superior levels of the urban hierarchy is predominant in the rest of the country. The prominence and high migratory gains of Regional Capitals is particularly relevant, because if new agglomeration economies are being formed outside the core region, it would indicate an ongoing process of interregional deconcentration. The fact that the most important metropolises are growing at a slower pace in comparison with the rest of the country and the tendency of reduction in the proportion of the population in metropolises cores also points out in this direction.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the functional hierarchy of the research REGIC 2007 was used to create origin-destination migration matrixes regarding urban levels with the purpose to address the processes of population concentration and dispersion in the national urban system. The growing importance of “Regional Capitals” at national level suggests a process of restructuration of the urban system, although the pace of these changes is clearly slowing down. This category regards intermediate cities and state capitals located outside the “core region” of the national settlement system, that is, the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The same method was applied for internal migrations occurred within the boundaries of these two states, which showed very distinct patterns of deconcentration, that is, movements downwards the urban hierarchy. So, despite the process of population concentration in cities of bigger
sizes, the inflexion of historical metropolization tendencies suggests a relative decompression of the urban system.

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