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ABSTRACT

This research examined the changing regional patterns of elderly migration, simultaneously examining both net migration and migration stream patterns. Four time periods were examined: 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1985. Migration is conventionally measured by recording the respondent's location of residence 5 years earlier. The 1985 data were obtained from the Current Population Survey. Results included: (1) the changing propensity of older residents to move and to make interstate and interregional moves in which, as the overall mobility rates of older people in the Northeast, Midwest, and West were declining, their rates of interstate and interregional migration were increasing; (2) in the period of 1980-1985 mobility rates continued to decline, and smaller percentages of residents living in the Northeast and Midwest were making interstate and interregional moves; (3) percentages of Northwest, Midwest, and West older residents who migrated to the South steadily increased over the first three decades; (4) interregional migrants from the Northeast and Midwest have found the South increasingly attractive; (5) the relative importance of the Northeast as a source of migrants declined while the relative importance of the West as a source of interregional migrants continued to increase; (6) after three decades of increasingly larger migration losses of older people, the Northeast and Midwest experienced smaller net migration losses in the 1980-85 period, and the South experienced smaller net migration gains in the 1980-85 period; and (7) in the 1980-85 period the West emerged as a notable source region for the South's net migration. (ABL)

POST-1980 REGIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS OF THE U.S. OLDER POPULATION

Paper presented at 1988 Gerontological Society of America Annual Meetings in San Francisco, November 19, 1988
PRELIMINARY DRAFT TO BE REVISED

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My presentation will examine the changing regional patterns of older people's (age 65 and older) migrations in the United States over the period 1955 through 1985. In particular, I will focus on the changing population movements of older people from the NORTHEAST, MIDWEST, and WEST regions to the SOUTH. As most of you know, there is a considerable literature on elderly regional migration.. At least two research groups have recently examined the changing regional patterns of elderly migration (C. Longino and colleagues; and Andrei Rogers and colleagues). Our chair, here, Bill Serow, has made important contributions regarding the antecedents of elderly migration. My research will build on and distinguish itself from these earlier studies by examining a longer time frame of change and by simultaneously examining both elderly net migration and migration stream patterns.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The regions referred to in this paper are those defined by the U.S. Census. They suffer from the obvious disadvantage of their large sizes and there is the danger that any generalizations will miss important internal differences. On the other hand, the relatively small elderly sample size of the 1980-85 data set restricts generalizations about the migration flows of older people occurring between the larger number of U.S. Census-designated smaller regions.

Four time periods are examined in this analysis: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1985. Migration is conventionally measured by recording the respondent's location of residence five years earlier. The 1960, 1970, and 1980 data are obtained from the published U.S. Decennial censuses. The 1985 data

are obtained from the U.S. Census, Current Population Survey published report. Importantly, the data collected from the Current Population Survey differs in two important ways from the decennial data. It is based, as noted, on a smaller sample, and it excludes the population in institutions or group quarters. Thus it does not measure the past mobility of older people in nursing homes and other long-term care group quarters. Excluding these residents from the elderly population universe will have certain likely effects. It will result in an understatement of the rate of overall residential mobility in the 1980-85 period, because of the exclusion of moves to institutions or group quarters. It will result in an understatement of the absolute number and relative importance of short-distance, intra-state and intra-county moves (that is, local moves from home to group quarters). And it will result in an overstatement of the relative importance of interstate or interregional moves.

When interpreting the findings of this paper, it is important to recognize that all movers (in each of the four time periods) have initially been re-allocated back to their residential origins of five years earlier. Thus, the at-risk population (of moving) of a region reasonably becomes the population who lived in the region (both movers and nonmovers) at the beginning of the five-year period. All rates and flows reported in this paper therefore relate to the size of the at-risk populations in 1955, 1965, 1975, and 1980.

FINDINGS

I will first summarize the most important findings of my analysis and then examine their implications at the end of the paper.

I draw your attention first to Table 2, which shows the changing propensity of older residents to move and to make interstate and interregional moves. On examining the changing rates in the first

three periods, 1955-60, 1965-70 and 1975-80, it is notable that even as the overall mobility rates of older people in the NORTHEAST, MIDWEST and WEST were declining, their rates of interstate and interregional migration were increasing. If one focuses only on the moving population and on the percentage of this group who make interstate and interregional moves, the increases are even more impressive. The apparent paradox of declining mobility rates but increasing interstate and interregional migration rates is accounted for by the declining percentages of older people in these three regions who made shorter distance intra-county moves.

The migration patterns of the 1980-85 period reveal some distinguishable and important contrasts. In this period, mobility rates have continued to decline, but whereas interstate and interregional rates were previously increasing, now smaller percentages of residents originally living in the NORTHEAST and MIDWEST were making interstate and interregional moves. Between 1975-80 and 1980-85 the percentage of residents in the NORTHEAST who made interstate moves declined from 5.7% to 3.3% and in the MIDWEST from 4.6% to 3.2%. The WEST diverges somewhat from this pattern; here the interstate migration rates of its elderly residents remained about constant (compared with the earlier 1975-80 period) and elderly interregional rates actually increased.

Table 3 reveals the regional destinations of those older people who made interstate moves. It shows the percentage of residents living in each of the four origin regions who (as a result of their residential relocations) end up in either the same or a different region. Focusing first on the first three time periods, it is clear that the percentages of NORTHEAST, MIDWEST and WEST older residents who migrated to the SOUTH steadily increased over these three decades. In contrast, the 1980-85 period witnessed a decline in the percentages of NORTHEAST and MIDWEST older

residents who migrated to the SOUTH. Bucking this trend, the WEST's elderly residents actually were more likely to migrate to the SOUTH in 1980-85.

Table 4 offers additional information about these changing elderly migration patterns. The population universe in these tables include only older people who have made interregional moves. These data provide a rough indicator of the changing competitiveness of regions as migrant destinations. What they convincingly show is that interregional migrants from both the NORTHEAST and MIDWEST have found the SOUTH increasingly attractive. And importantly, this also holds true for the 1980-85 period. Whereas 72% of the NORTHEAST's interregional migrants moved to the SOUTH in 1955-60, 83% moved there in 1980-85. The comparable and even more striking patterns for MIDWEST migrants are 53% and 77%. Thus, even as the likelihood of older NORTHEAST and MIDWEST residents making interstate or interregional moves declined in 1980-85, compared with the other two regions, the attractiveness of the SOUTH increased for those elderly who actually made the interregional moves. I also draw your attention to the impressive increase in the percentage of the WEST's interregional migrants who moved to the SOUTH between 1955-60 and 1975-80.

Table 5 also focuses only on interregional migrants, but shows for each region the source of their in-migrants. Whereas from 1955-60 through 1975-80 an increasing percentage of the SOUTH's in-migrants were from the NORTHEAST and WEST, for the first time in 1980-85 the relative importance of the NORTHEAST as a source of migrants declined while the relative importance of the WEST as a source of interregional migrants continued to increase.

These changing migration stream patterns are reflected in the changing regional net migration patterns of older people (Table 6). After three decades of experiencing increasingly larger net

migration losses of older people, the NORTHEAST AND MIDWEST experienced smaller net migration losses (and net rates) in the 1980-85 period. In turn, after three decades of experiencing increasingly larger net gains of elderly migrants, the SOUTH experienced smaller net migration gains (and net rates) in the 1980-85 period. The net migration patterns of the NORTHEAST AND MIDWEST primarily reflected the sharp drops in their number of elderly out-migrants (while the number of their in-migrants remained about the same, or increased somewhat). The smaller net gains of the SOUTH in turn primarily reflected the drop in their in-migrants--even as the number of their out-migrants decreased.

Table 7 reveals that in the 1980-85 period the WEST emerged for the first time in over three decades as a notable source region for the SOUTH's net migration gains. This was due to a combination of declining SOUTH to WEST flows and increasing WEST to SOUTH flows. And after three decades of experiencing net migration gains of older people, the WEST for the first time in 1980-85 experienced net migration losses.

The migration efficiency indexes of Table 8 confirm the patterns reviewed. Migration Efficiency expresses the net gains or losses experienced by any pair of regions--an origin and destination--as a percentage of the total flow of migrants between the two regions. The index can range from 0% to 100%. Thus, in the skewed flow patterns usually existing between the NORTHEAST and SOUTH, the effectiveness indexes have been high. Table 8 shows that the efficiency of flows between the NORTHEAST and the SOUTH and between the MIDWEST and the SOUTH declined for the first time in the 1980-85 period.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The elderly interregional migration trends that have become so much a part of our common knowledge have clearly taken on a new appearance in the 1980s. Although the possibility exists that these new patterns reflect methodological influences or merely a short-term transitory state, I believe that they effectively mirror the future. That is, echoing these early 1980s trends, the 1990s decade will be distinguished by smaller-sized elderly out-migration streams from the MIDWEST and NORTHEAST to the SOUTH, which in turn will result in much smaller elderly net migration gains of the SOUTH from these traditional source regions. These net migration losses of elderly by the SOUTH will be replaced to a greater extent by in-migrants from the WEST.

Some basic demographic and environmental processes portend these future patterns. First, the growth rates of the 65-74 age group in the NORTHEAST and MIDWEST which began declining in the 1980s will continue to decline substantially throughout the 1990s and into the first part of the 21st century. Negative growth rates as high as 8.4% (middle-range estimates) of the age 65-74 population in the NORTHEAST and MIDWEST have been projected. This will reduce the pool of potential interregional migrants from these traditional source regions that would potentially relocate to the SOUTH. While the growth of the age 75 plus populations in these regions will grow at a faster rate than these young-old, these rates will still be lower than in the 1970s and early 1980s. More importantly, while the overall mobility rate of the age 75 plus population is equal to or higher than that of the age 65-74 group, the age 75 plus group has consistently been less likely to engage in interstate and interregional moves. Thus, the disproportionately slow growth of the young-old will depress the number of elderly out-migrants from the NORTHEAST AND MIDWEST.

While return moves of older people from the SOUTH back to the NORTH AND MIDWEST have constituted a relatively small percentage of interregional moves, these are likely to become more important in the 1990s. Population projections for the SOUTH along with our own migration expectations indicate an aging older population (faster growth rate of the age 75 plus group) in the SOUTH. This trend will increase the probability of the more dependent and frail elderly population in the SOUTH returning to their original destinations or their home states in the NORTH AND MIDWEST to live in greater proximity to their family or service opportunities.

Third, we will continue to see the ramifications of housing policies in the United States that are primarily geared toward encouraging immobility and aging-in-place, especially among older homeowners. These policies are likely to reduce rather than increase mobility rates. And when the middle-income and upper-income older populations do move, they will increasingly find that retirement housing options previously concentrated in the Sunbelt regions are now proliferating in the NORTHEAST and MIDWEST. Because this higher income elderly group is also disproportionately represented in the interstate elderly migrant population, it seems reasonable to expect that their participation in interregional out-migration flows will also be reduced.

TABLES ACCOMPANYING 1988 GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS PAPER PRESENTATION:
"POST-1980 MIGRATION PATTERNS OF THE U.S. OLDER POPULATION"
BY STEPHEN M. GOLANT, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, DEPT. OF GEOGRAPHY, GAINESVILLE, FL. 32611

REGIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS OF U.S. ELDERLY (AGE 65+): 1955 TO 1985

Table 1. Regional Location Patterns (at-risk population excluding migrants from abroad)

Number (in thousands)

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1960 (D)	4401	4971	4295	2235	15901
1970 (D)	5082	5604	5611	2864	19161
1980 (D)	6302	6910	8259	4220	25691
1985 (C)	6344	6723	9078	4587	26732

Percentage distribution

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1960 (D)	27.7	31.3	27.0	14.1	100.0
1970 (D)	26.5	29.2	29.3	14.9	100.0
1980 (D)	24.5	26.9	32.1	16.4	100.0
1985 (C)	23.7	25.1	34.0	17.2	100.0

Table 2. Migration Rates

Percentage of residents moving to different house

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	26.1	28.1	28.2	35.3	28.6
1965-70 (D)	22.4	24.7	23.3	30.4	24.5
1975-80 (D)	21.9	23.3	20.4	27.1	22.6
1980-85 (C)	14.2	15.7	16.0	19.9	16.2

Percentage of residents moving within same county

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	17.4	19.3	20.4	24.4	19.7
1965-70 (D)	13.6	16.1	15.6	19.7	15.8
1975-80 (D)	12.3	14.4	12.6	16.1	13.6
1980-85 (C)	7.9	9.4	9.5	10.3	9.2

Percentage of residents moving to different state

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	4.2	4.4	3.4	4.0	4.0
1965-70 (D)	4.5	4.3	3.1	4.0	4.0
1975-80 (D)	5.7	4.6	3.3	4.6	4.4
1980-85 (C)	3.3	3.2	2.8	4.5	3.3

Percentage of residents moving to different region

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	2.7	3.1	1.5	1.6	2.4
1965-70 (D)	3.1	3.1	1.4	1.8	2.4
1975-80 (D)	4.2	3.5	1.4	1.9	2.7
1980-85 (C)	2.9	2.2	1.2	2.1	2.0

Percentage of moving population making interstate moves

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	16.3	15.8	12.1	11.3	14.2
1965-70 (D)	20.1	17.4	13.5	13.3	16.2
1975-80 (D)	25.9	19.6	16.1	17.1	19.6
1980-85 (C)	23.4	20.1	17.3	22.4	20.4

Percentage of moving population making interregional moves

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	10.5	11.1	5.3	4.7	8.3
1965-70 (D)	13.3	12.6	5.9	5.8	9.7
1975-80 (D)	19.1	15.0	7.0	7.0	12.1
1980-85 (C)	20.1	13.8	7.3	10.4	12.2

Census Region Definitions: NE-Northeast, MW-Midwest, S-South, W-West
Sources: (D) Decennial Census (C) Current Population Survey

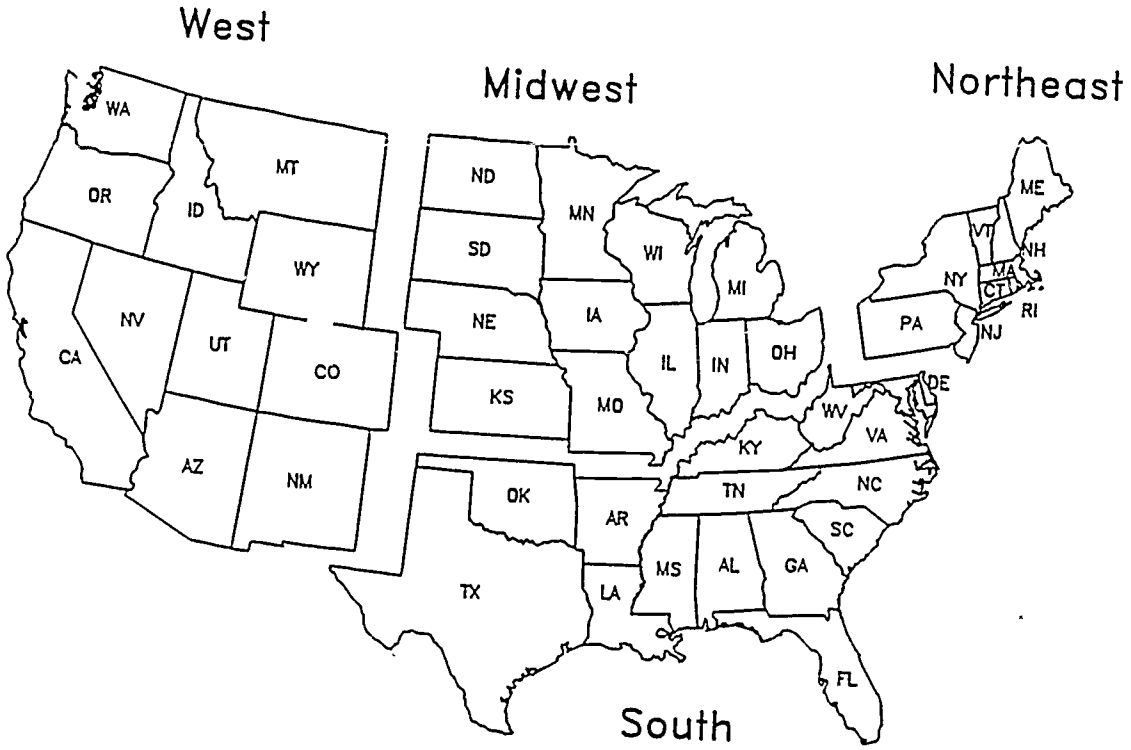

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Table 3. Regional Destinations of Interstate Migrants

Percentage of residents in Northeast moving to:

Period	NE	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	1.5	0.3	2.0	0.5	4.3
1965-70 (D)	1.4	0.3	2.3	0.5	4.5
1975-80 (D)	1.5	0.2	3.3	0.7	5.7
1980-85 (C)	0.5	0.1	2.4	0.4	3.4

Percentage of residents in South moving to:

Period	NE	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	0.4	0.6	1.9	0.5	3.4
1965-70 (D)	0.4	0.6	1.8	0.4	3.2
1975-80 (D)	0.4	0.6	1.9	0.5	3.4
1980-85 (C)	0.3	0.5	1.6	0.3	2.7

Percentage of residents in Midwest moving to:

Period	NE	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	0.2	1.3	1.7	1.3	4.5
1965-70 (D)	0.2	1.2	1.8	1.1	4.3
1975-80 (D)	0.2	1.1	2.1	1.2	4.6
1980-85 (C)	0.1	1.0	1.7	0.4	3.2

Percentage of residents in West moving to:

Period	NE	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	0.2	0.8	0.7	2.3	4.0
1965-70 (D)	0.2	0.7	0.8	2.3	4.0
1975-80 (D)	0.2	0.7	1.0	2.7	4.6
1980-85 (C)	0.2	0.8	1.1	2.4	4.5

Table 4. Regional Destinations of Interregional Migrants (percentage distributions)

From the Northeast to:

Period	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	10.0	71.8	18.2	100.0
1965-70 (D)	8.7	75.4	16.0	100.1
1975-80 (D)	5.9	78.0	16.1	100.0
1980-85 (C)	3.3	83.4	13.3	100.0

From the South to:

Period	NE	MW	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	26.8	41.3	31.8	99.9
1965-70 (D)	27.7	43.2	29.1	100.0
1975-80 (D)	27.7	39.0	33.3	100.0
1980-85 (C)	28.0	43.0	29.0	100.0

From the Midwest to:

Period	NE	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	6.7	52.9	40.3	99.9
1965-70 (D)	6.1	59.1	34.8	100.0
1975-80 (D)	4.3	61.5	34.2	100.0
1980-85 (C)	6.2	76.7	17.1	100.0

From the West to:

Period	NE	MW	S	Total
1955-60 (D)	11.8	46.3	41.9	100.0
1965-70 (D)	11.2	42.5	46.3	100.0
1975-80 (D)	9.7	36.1	54.2	100.0
1980-85 (C)	10.5	37.9	51.6	100.0

Table 5. Regional Origins of Interregional Migrants (percentage distributions)

To the Northeast from:

Period	MW	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	32.8	53.6	13.7	100.1
1965-70 (D)	28.5	56.5	15.1	100.1
1975-80 (D)	20.7	64.0	15.4	100.1
1980-85 (C)	18.4	61.2	20.4	100.0

To the South from:

Period	NE	MW	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	47.0	44.6	8.4	100.0
1965-70 (D)	48.2	42.2	9.6	100.0
1975-80 (D)	51.8	37.2	11.0	100.0
1980-85 (C)	48.4	35.9	15.7	100.0

To the Midwest from:

Period	NE	S	W	Total
1955-60 (D)	21.8	47.4	30.8	100.0
1965-70 (D)	19.8	48.6	31.6	100.0
1975-80 (D)	17.3	50.6	32.1	100.0
1980-85 (C)	6.8	52.3	40.9	100.0

To the West from:

Period	NE	MW	S	Total
1955-60 (D)	20.9	59.8	19.3	100.0
1965-70 (D)	23.1	56.2	20.7	100.0
1975-80 (D)	25.9	50.3	23.8	100.0
1980-85 (C)	30.0	31.3	38.8	100.1

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Table 6. In-, Out-, and Net Migration Patterns (numbers in thousands; rates per 1000 population)

1955-60 (D)	NE	MW	S	W
Inmigrants	32	55	185	105
In-rate	7.2	11.2	43.0	47.0
Outmigrants	121	156	64	37
Out-rate	27.5	31.3	14.8	16.5
Net Migrants	-89	-100	121	68
Net Rate	-20.2	-20.1	28.2	30.5

1965-70(D)	NE	MW	S	W
Inmigrants	38	68	243	108
In-rate	7.4	12.1	43.4	37.5
Outmigrants	155	174	76	50
Out-rate	30.6	31.0	13.6	17.6
Net Migrants	-118	-106	167	57
Net Rate	-23.2	-18.9	29.8	19.9

1975-80 (D)	NE	MW	S	W
Inmigrants	51	90	398	164
In-rate	8.0	13.1	48.1	38.8
Outmigrants	264	241	117	80
Out-rate	41.9	34.9	14.2	19.1
Net Migrants	-213	-150	280	83
Net Rate	-33.8	-21.8	33.9	19.8

1980-85(C)	NE	MW	S	W
Inmigrants	49	88	312	80
In-rate	7.7	13.1	34.4	17.4
Outmigrants	181	146	107	95
Out-rate	28.5	21.7	11.8	20.7
Net Migrants	-132	-58	205	-15
Net Rate	-20.8	-8.6	22.6	-3.3

Table 7.Interregional Exchanges Contributing to Regional Net Migration Gains and Losses (in thousands)

Northeast's net gains or losses with:

Period	MW	S	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	-2	-70	-18	-89
1965-70 (D)	-3	-96	-19	-118
1975-80 (D)	-5	-173	-35	-213
1980-85 (C)	3	-121	-14	-132

South's net gains or losses with:

Period	NE	MW	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	70	56	-5	121
1965-70 (D)	96	70	1	167
1975-80 (D)	173	102	4	280
1980-85 (C)	121	66	18	205

Midwest's net gains or losses with:

Period	NE	S	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	2	-56	-46	-100
1965-70 (D)	3	-70	-39	-106
1975-80 (D)	5	-102	-53	-150
1980-85 (C)	-3	-66	11	-58

West's net gains or losses with:

Period	NE	MW	S	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	18	46	5	68
1965-70 (D)	19	39	-1	57
1975-80 (D)	35	53	-4	83
1980-85 (C)	14	-11	-18	-15

Table 8. Migration Efficiency Indexes of Interregional Flows

Efficiency of migration flows between Northeast and:

Period	MW	S	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	-7	-67	-67	-58
1965-70 (D)	-12	-69	-63	-61
1975-80 (D)	-20	-73	-69	-68
1980-85 (C)	20	-67	-41	-57

Efficiency of migration flows between South and:

Period	NE	MW	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	67	52	-14	49
1965-70 (D)	69	51	2	52
1975-80 (D)	73	53	5	54
1980-85 (C)	67	42	23	49

Efficiency of migration flows between Midwest and:

Period	NE	S	W	All Regions
1955-60 (D)	7	-52	-57	-47
1965-70 (D)	12	-51	-48	-44
1975-80 (D)	20	-53	-48	-45
1980-85 (C)	-20	-42	18	-25

Efficiency of migration flows between West and:

Period	NE	MW	S	All Regions	System
1955-60 (D)	67	57	14	48	50
1965-70 (D)	63	48	-2	36	49
1975-80 (D)	69	48	-5	34	52
1980-85 (C)	41	-18	-23	-9	39

Table 9. Relative Size and Destinations of Migrants From Abroad

Foreign migrants as percent of regional population:

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2
1965-70 (D)	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.3
1975-80 (D)	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.4
1980-85 (C)	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.3

Regional destinations of foreign movers (percentage distributions)

Period	NE	MW	S	W	U.S.
1955-60 (D)	38.7	16.2	16.9	28.2	100.0
1965-70 (D)	32.7	11.0	32.9	23.4	100.0
1975-80 (D)	28.6	10.7	24.1	36.5	99.9
1980-85 (C)	18.6	8.1	39.5	33.7	99.9