

Migrants from California to Other States, 1995 to 2000

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(This is an extended abstract with major portions of the text missing and without supporting references, tables and color maps. If accepted, this presentation will make use of PowerPoint.)

What were the destinations of Californians who moved to other states between 1995 and 2000 and how did these migrants compare to people who remained in California and to the residents of the destination states? Our purpose is to see where the migrants fit into certain dimensions of the social and economic structures of both California and the migrants' destination states. Although we look first at the importance of various counties as destinations, most of this research focuses on migrants in their leading state destinations. We examine separately the four largest ethnic/racial groups: Whites (Non-Hispanic), Blacks, Asians, and Latinos (or Hispanics).

With respect to characteristics of out-migrants, we measured the percent in the retirement ages, the percent of adults with bachelor's degrees (college graduates), the percent returning to their state of birth, the percent born in leading countries of birth, and the percent employed in leading industries. This research is exploratory, inductive, and descriptive because little previous research has investigated migrants in these ethnic groups with respect to these variables.

Methodology

We identified migrants by means of the Census 2000 question that asks where individuals lived five years before. A special county-to-county migration file from the Census Bureau made it possible to determine the pattern of migrant destinations at the county level. After that initial phase of this research, we made use of the Public-Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) file.

The components of population change from 1995 to 2000 for the state shows that all four groups had net domestic out-migration during the last half of the 1990s (Table 1). Group differences in relative sizes of in- and out- domestic flows are evident. Whereas the number of Latino migrants leaving California (506,000) was three times the number moving in from other states (160,000), the other groups were more balanced in that their in-migrations were at least 60 percent of out-migration. Regarding international migration, all the groups except Whites had net in-flows, and for Asians these international arrivals accounted for 68 percent of Asian population growth. The third column shows the domestic out-migrants we studied. About 1.3 million Whites moved to other states, as did over a half a million Latinos. Black and Asian out-migrants each numbered over 150,000, making clear that these flows out of California were also significant in size.

Findings

County destinations. Fig. 1 makes clear not only that the importance of adjacent states as destinations but also that Californians prefer to settle especially in the counties adjacent in those states. In the counties in the darkest blue people who lived in California in 1995 comprised over six percent of the total population in 2000. Because most of these flows into counties closes to California have been occurring for two or three decades or longer, the importance of Californians in populating these counties is evident.

To complement the foregoing map, we present the absolute number of out-migrants (Fig. 2). This shows that most migrants were moving to metropolitan areas, particularly those in the Western states. Most counties named on the map are the location of a major city and metropolitan area, such as Las Vegas in Clark County, Phoenix in Maricopa County, Seattle in King County, and Houston in Harris County. In some cases, clusters of California migrants in several unnamed counties represent additional metropolitan areas, such as Atlanta, Denver, Minneapolis, and Miami.

Net migration patterns. The last map shows the direction and size of net migration between California and counties in the other states (Fig. 3). The pattern of net migration from California to other states in the West reflects in large part a long-term flow in which many individuals and families who arrived in Southern California decades ago decided later to leave for other states. This population redistribution function of Southern California may also have characterized the San Francisco Bay area to a lesser extent. In contrast, net migration to California was most pronounced from metropolitan areas in the Northeast and to some extent the Midwest.

State preferences. The next table shows the eight leading state destinations of out-migrants in each group (Table 2). Although we analyzed the PUMS data for all eight leading states for each group, we simplify from now on by presenting results for only the five leading destination states.

Retirement migrations. Our purpose in this analysis was to determine the extent to which migrations from California were selective of people in the retirement ages. Because of recent trends toward earlier retirement, we considered the people between the ages of 60 and 80 as those whose migration was likely connected with retirement.

We were interested in the migration flows in which the 60-80 year olds constituted a higher proportion among out-migrants than they did among all Californians. The greater the percent figure for out-migrants is above the percentage for California as a whole, the more selective that migration was for the retirement ages. To illustrate, 12.6 percent of White California out-migrants to Nevada were between the ages of 60 and 80, but only 8.6 percent of Whites in California were in that age. This indicates that White migration to Nevada was selective of this age group.

Certain migrations were selective of those in the retirement ages, but many migrations were not. For all ethnic groups except Latinos, migrants to Nevada tended to be disproportionately in the retirement ages. For Blacks, migrants to Texas and Nevada were particularly in the retirement ages, but Blacks moving to the South tended not to be in the retirement ages. However, for Whites,

Washington and Texas did not represent retirement destinations. In half of the twenty migration flows shown in the five migrant columns, migrants from California reduced elderly proportions in destination states.

Educational attainment. To measure the educational selectivity of migrants from California we compared the percent of all Californian adults (age 25 and older) who had bachelors degrees or higher with the percent of migrants with the same educational attainment (Table 4). A striking consistency was that migrants in all four groups who moved to Nevada were less educated than members of the same ethnic groups who remained in California. Among Whites, only the migrants to Washington and Texas were somewhat selected on the basis of their educational attainment, but migrants to Arizona and Oregon were more typically less educated. For Blacks, all the southern state destinations were selective of the more educated Blacks, also documented by Frey (2004). The Asian migration to New York state was highly selective of the more educated, with two-thirds of Asian adult migrants having at least a BA degree. Minnesota was just the opposite. This was because ethnic Hmong comprised a large proportion of the Asian migration to Minnesota, as will be indicated in a later table, and because the Hmong in the United States have had generally had low educational attainment.

Another way to assess the educational attainment of migrants is to compare the migrants to the populations of the destination states (Table 5). California migrants raised the educational attainment in all leading destination states for all groups except for Latinos. In some cases the differences are pronounced. To illustrate, Whites moving from California to Oregon and Washington were much more likely to have four-year college educations than were adults resident in Oregon and Washington in both 1995 and 2000.

California Blacks moving to Georgia, Florida, and Virginia were far more educated than the adult Black population of those states, as were Asians moving to Washington, and particularly, to

New York state. These destination states would appear to benefit from the educational selectivity of migrants from California.

Return migration. The percentage of migrants moving to states of birth is a good indicator of the relative importance of return migration. In earlier decades, states that attracted higher percentages of return migrants among their in-migrants tended to be states that attracted fewer in-migrants in general, such as West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Alabama in the 1970s (Long 1988, 111-112).

Among Whites, most migrations did not represent return migrations. However, 17 percent of Whites migrating to Texas were returning to the state of their birth. In the 1970s this migration from California to Texas had been the largest single returning migrant stream in the country (Long 1988, 110). The size of both these return migrations reflects the fact that from the 1930s through the 1960s the flow from Texas to California was one of the five largest state-level streams in the country. Return migration was very strong among Black migrants to the South, as demonstrated earlier by Frey (2004).

For Latinos, return migration was especially important among migrants to Texas, which was for many Mexican families the first home after migrating from Mexico. Almost half of Latino migrants out of California were born in Mexico, with only a very small percentage born in El Salvador. Many Mexican-born migrants probably moved with their U.S.-born children. This suggests an important redistribution of immigrant Mexican families, an important secondary migration. Anecdotal evidence supports the notion that many Mexican immigrants tried life in California but found it wanting, probably because of the high housing prices and low wages resulting partly from a labor surplus among less skilled workers.

Industry of employment. To what extent do the employment characteristics of migrants from California mirror those of the total work force in the destination states? Industry seemed an

appropriate measure of employment structure, permitting us to see, for example, if newcomers more likely to work in the restaurant business or less likely to work in construction jobs than long-time residents.

In most industries migrants were found in slightly lower proportions than the total resident population. This should be expected, a reflection of the difficulties of adjusting to work in a new place. Additional data (not shown here) indicates slightly higher unemployment among migrants than in the total population, as could be expected as part of the adjustment to new areas. However, in no cases were the difference in unemployment rates between recent migrants and the total population in destination states greater than 2 percent. The net effect is that California migrants seem not to be at a major disadvantage in becoming employed in most leading industries in their destination states.

Key exceptions to the general pattern of lower representation in industries by migrants compared to the longer-resident population are migrants in the armed forces. This is illustrated by Black migrants in the Army who moved to Texas and Asian migrants to Washington who were in the Navy. Similarly, Asians migrants were employed in colleges and universities at a higher rate than all Asians. Such exceptions may relate to characteristically high rates of migration among military personnel and the nationwide labor markets for university professors and administrators.

Conclusion

We summarize the major specific findings comparing the characteristics of California out-migrants of different groups to members of those groups remaining in California and to longer-term, residents of leading destination states. This research has demonstrated the need to be cautious in making generalizations about migrant characteristics without considering the ethnic identities of migrants and different states of destination.