

REASONS FOR INTERSTATE MIGRATION

**Jobs, Retirement, Climate, and
Other Influences**

by
Larry H. Long and Kristin A. Hansen

**CURRENT POPULATION
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Special Studies
Series P-23, No. 81

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of Commerce

BUREAU
OF THE CENSUS

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PREFACE

This is another in a series of analytical studies undertaken by demographers in the Population Division, Bureau of the Census. A distinguishing feature of these occasional publications is that they include broad speculative analysis and illustrative hypotheses by the authors as an aid in understanding the statistics and in assessing their potential impact on public policy. The scope of these studies is usually broader than that of annual census reports on population subjects but less complete than book-length monographs.

Previous publications in the Bureau's analytical series include: **Some Recent Changes in American Families**, by Paul C. Glick (1975); **The Geographical Mobility of Americans: An International Comparison**, by Larry H. Long and Celia G. Boertlein (1976); **Marrying, Divorcing, and Living Together in the U.S. Today**, by Paul C. Glick and Arthur J. Norton (1977, published by the Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.); **Racial Succession in Individual Housing Units**, by Larry H. Long and Daphne Spain (1978), and **Interregional Migration of the Poor: Some Recent Changes**, by Larry H. Long (1978). Additional studies are in preparation.

The authors are both members of the Population Analysis Staff of the Bureau's Population Division. Larry Long received the Ph.D. degree in sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1969. He joined the Census Bureau in 1970, after spending 1969-70 at the Population Studies Center, the University of Pennsylvania. Kristin Hansen received a B.S. degree in political science from Arizona State University in 1968 and has been with the Census Bureau since then. They have collaborated on earlier studies of interregional migration, including "Trends in Return Migration to the South" (**Demography**, Vol. 12, November 1975), "Interdivisional Primary, Return, and Repeat Migration" (**Review of Public Data Use**, Vol. 5, March 1977), and "Selectivity of Black Return Migration to the South," (**Rural Sociology**, Vol. 42, Fall 1977).

Rudolph Florjancic did the computer programming. The authors would also like to express appreciation to John Long, Diana DeAre, and Arnie Goldstein for their useful comments on earlier versions of this and other manuscripts in the Demographic Analysis series.

REASONS FOR INTERSTATE MIGRATION JOBS, RETIREMENT, CLIMATE, AND OTHER INFLUENCES

Why people move is a recurring question that has become of special interest in the United States as a result of some unexpected changes in major migration patterns in this decade. In particular, the strong net immigration being experienced by the southern region and the surge in population growth in nonmetropolitan areas in every major region of the country have raised questions about whether the motivations for migration have been changing in recent years. Clearly, large numbers of persons are currently moving to areas where per capita income is relatively low by national standards, where the climate is mild, or where recreational or retirement facilities are present.

These movements seem not to be fully explained by previous theories of the determinants of migration. In the past, migration was often looked upon as the product of alternative economic "pushes" at places of origin and "pulls" at places of destination. Low income or high unemployment at places of origin were thought to be the major determinants of outmigration, with high income or low unemployment being major attracting forces for migrants or potential migrants. But these and related economic indicators have become somewhat less reliable guides to population growth (see especially Beale, 1975). In this context, there is renewed interest in the reasons—especially the noneconomic reasons—for migration. The changed migration patterns could be resulting partly from different values that economically active migrants place on alternative locations and individuals trading income-earning opportunities for amenities in choosing places to live. Changes in migration patterns may also be significantly influenced by retirees and persons with pension income who have considerable freedom of choice in residential location.

One way of identifying the economic and noneconomic reasons for moving is simply to ask people why they moved. This approach was adopted in nationwide surveys conducted by the Census Bureau in 1946 and 1963 (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1947; 1966). More recently, questions included as part of the Annual Housing Surveys, conducted by the Census Bureau, have sought to ascertain the main reason for moving for household heads who changed residence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Using this data source, the present study provides an initial analysis of the reported reasons underlying interstate and interregional migration that took place between August 1973 and December 1976.

Analysis of these data is subject to the usual limitations survey research, especially the ability of individuals to articulate the reasons for their behavior. Some other limitations are also present; for instance, only the "main" reason for migrating was recorded. But for studying reasons for moving, the recent

Annual Housing Surveys offer many unique opportunities not present in any other data source. For one thing, the Annual Housing Surveys identified some reasons for moving—notably, “retirement” and “wanted change of climate”—not reported separately in the earlier Census Bureau surveys. Secondly, the large size of the Annual Housing Surveys and the ability to augment their size by cumulating successive annual samples allow more extensive investigation of how reasons for moving vary according to individual characteristics (especially, migrants’ educational level and earnings). Finally, the data allow the first opportunity to disaggregate migrants to and from individual major regions of the country according to reasons for moving.

Limited to the “main” reason for moving and focusing on interstate and interregional migrants, the remainder of this study addresses five related sets of questions.

- Can most interstate moves be attributed to economic considerations, like job transfers and the search for employment? Or do noneconomic motives now rival the search for economic opportunity in accounting for interstate migration?
- How important is climate as a reason for moving? Is it more important for young persons than for older persons? Do the college educated give greater significance to climate than other persons making interstate moves?
- How many interstate migrants are persons moving as result of retirement? What are the age, household type, and income of the typical retiree who relocates to another State?
- In view of the accelerated net immigration to the South in the 1970’s, would the region still have net immigration if we examined only persons moving for strictly job-related reasons? Or, perhaps more simply, how many persons are moving to the South because of climate, in order to retire, or for some other reason that is not directly job-related?
- Are people now more willing to move because of personal preferences (for climate, amenities, etc.)? If so, what are some of the possible implications for public policies aimed at guiding or re-directing economic growth and population distribution?

Source of Data

Data on reasons for moving can be notoriously subjective, so it is important to specify the circumstances under which the data were collected and processed. We used data from the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys conducted by the Census Bureau under an agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each of these three national

surveys was based on interviews of occupants of 62,000 to 64,000 housing units throughout the country. Each of the surveys had the same question on reasons for moving, and the three surveys were pooled in order to increase the number of interstate migrants available for analysis. The surveys were taken in the fall of each year (August through October in 1974 and October through December in 1975 and 1976).

For household heads who moved in the 12 months preceding each of the surveys, information was obtained on the location of the previous residence and the reason for the move. The questions on place of previous residence and the reason for the move are reproduced as figure 1.

Without being given a flashcard, the respondent was asked to state the reason for the move. The interviewer was instructed to write each reason on lines provided on the questionnaire, and then to ascertain from the respondent the "main" reason for the move. The "main" reason was indicated by checking one of 30 predetermined reasons (in addition to "other") printed on the questionnaire (see figure 1).

The 30 reasons are not mutually exclusive, and many persons could be expected to cite more than one in answering the question. For example, a person who, when asked the reason for having moved, answered, "When I retired from the Air Force, I moved to Arizona because the weather was warm" would be citing three of the 30 reasons: retirement (reason number 3), leaving the Armed Forces (reason number 2), and desire for a better climate (reason number 30). Or consider a person who said, "When I graduated from college, I moved back to my parents' home while looking for a job." Such a person could be considered as having given two of the 30 reasons: namely, reason number 12 ("Moved to be closer to relatives") and reason number 4 ("new job or looking for work"). Interviewers were instructed to accept whatever the respondent said was the main reason for having moved.

At the present time, there is no way of tabulating how many respondents gave more than one reason or how respondents chose among the reasons given in deciding upon the "main" reason. The 1963 survey of reasons for moving did accept multiple reasons, and of male intercounty movers 18 to 64 years of age, about 15 percent cited more than one reason (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1966, p. 5). Hence, a sizeable minority of intercounty movers in the earlier survey cited more than one reason for moving, but of those who cited more than one reason, most gave only two reasons. It is important to note, however, that in the 1963 survey multiple reasons were more likely to be given by intercounty movers than by intracounty movers, suggesting that long distance migration is a more complex process that can involve a balancing of competing concerns.

Note also that data on migration and reasons for migration in the Annual Housing Surveys are for the household "head," as defined in the traditional manner employed by the Census Bureau (see, for example, U.S. Bureau of the

Figure 1. Facsimile of Question on Reason for Moving: Annual Housing Surveys of 1974, 1975, and 1976

Section IIIC - OCCUPIED UNITS (Include URE) - Continued	
CHECK ITEM Q	<input type="checkbox"/> URE household (See item 7, page 1) - Skip to 105, page 31 (See Check Item A(3), page 14) <input type="checkbox"/> Head moved here during the last 12 months - Ask 83 <input type="checkbox"/> Head has lived here 12 months or longer - Skip to 102a, page 30
83. What was the address of . . . 's (head) previous residence?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Address (Number and street)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 2px;">City or town</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 2px;"> County State ZIP code </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">OR</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin: 2px 0;"> 177 <input type="checkbox"/> Outside the United States - Skip to 102a, page 30 </div>
84. What is the main reason . . . (head) moved from his previous residence? (Write all reasons mentioned below, and then mark the main reason.)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin: 2px 0;"> 178 EMPLOYMENT 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Job transfer 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Entered or left U.S. Armed Forces 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement 4 <input type="checkbox"/> New job or looking for work 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Commuting reasons 6 <input type="checkbox"/> To attend school 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin: 2px 0;"> 178 FAMILY 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Needed larger house or apartment 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Separated 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Moved to be closer to relatives 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Newly married 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Family increased 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Family decreased 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to establish own household 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Other </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin: 2px 0;"> 178 OTHER 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood overcrowded 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Change in racial or ethnic composition of neighborhood 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted better neighborhood 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to own residence 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Lower rent or less expensive house 23 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted better house 24 <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced by urban renewal, highway construction, or other public activity 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced by private action 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Schools 27 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to rent residence 28 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted residence with more conveniences 29 <input type="checkbox"/> Natural disaster 30 <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted change of climate 31 <input type="checkbox"/> Other </div>

Census, 1978b, Appendix page 19). In husband-wife couples, the husband was considered the "head" of the family for purposes of data collection and tabulation, but automatic designation of the husband as the household head is being discontinued, and in the future the expression "household head" will appear neither on questionnaires nor in publications. We use the word "head" only because the data were collected in terms of the individual designated as the "head" (see figure 1).

Detailed Reasons for Migrating

Counterbalancing some of the shortcomings identified above, an outstanding feature of the new surveys is the detailed list of reasons for moving. The 30 reasons are much more extensive than has been available in the past. Table 1 gives the percent of household heads and the number of persons in those households moving for each of the 30 reasons.

The data confirm previous conclusions (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1966) that most commonly expressed reasons for interstate migration are job transfers and the taking of a new job or looking for work. As a reason for moving, job transfers accounted for 23.8 percent of interstate migration of household heads and 27.6 percent of total interstate migrants. This reason appears to be somewhat more important for total interstate migrants than for household heads, because the data for total interstate migrants were obtained by applying the reason for moving given by the household head to all persons in that household. Household heads giving "job transfer" as the reason for moving have slightly larger households on the average than all interstate migrants, so "job transfers" account for a slightly larger proportion of persons than of households moving between States. More will be said later about other characteristics of households moving for the various reasons.

Among household heads, the taking of new jobs or looking for work (reason number 4) is about as important as job transfers, accounting for 23.6 percent of interstate moves. Together these two strictly job-related reasons account for slightly more than 47 percent of the interstate migration of households and 51 percent of interstate migration of total persons. In interpreting these results, one can either stress that these two job-related reasons strongly predominate over other reasons for interstate migration, or, alternatively, one can emphasize that they account for less than a majority of households moving between States and barely a majority (51 percent) of total interstate migrants.

We are inclined to emphasize the latter aspect, pointing out that many factors other than employment considerations influence the decision to move or stay. Even taking a more liberal definition of what is an employment-related reason for moving by including reasons 1 (job transfer), 2 (entered or left U.S. Armed Forces), 4 (new job or looking for work), and 7 (other employment reason), one still can account for just under 55 percent of the interstate migration of households and 59 percent of interstate migration of persons. Hence, attempts to explain or predict interstate migration solely on the basis of

Table 1. Detailed Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads Moving Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Number of Households and Total Persons

Detailed reason for move	Percent distribution	
	Households	Persons
EMPLOYMENT		
Job transfer	23.8	27.6
Entered or left U.S. Armed Forces	4.8	4.9
Retirement	3.4	3.0
New job or looking for work	23.6	23.4
Commuting reasons	1.0	0.9
To attend school	5.4	3.9
Other	2.4	2.6
FAMILY		
Needed larger house or apartment	0.8	1.1
Widowed	0.7	0.3
Separated	1.2	1.2
Divorced	1.0	0.8
Moved to be closer to relatives	7.5	7.1
Newly married	1.6	1.4
Family increased	0.1	0.1
Family decreased	0.1	0.1
Wanted to establish own household	1.6	1.2
Other	2.7	2.8
OTHER		
Neighborhood overcrowded	0.4	0.4
Change in racial or ethnic composition of neighborhood	0.2	0.1
Wanted better neighborhood	1.1	1.2
Wanted to own residence	0.9	1.0
Lower rent or less expensive house	0.8	0.8
Wanted a better house	0.3	0.4
Displaced by urban renewal, highway construction, or other public activity	0.1	0.1
Displaced by private action	0.3	0.4
Schools	1.0	0.9
Wanted to rent residence	0.2	0.1
Wanted residence with more conveniences	0.2	0.1
Natural disaster	0.1	0.1
Wanted change of climate	5.1	4.8
Other	5.5	5.4
Not reported	2.1	1.7
Interstate migrants (thousands)	5,843	16,332

economic variables may fail to account for the movements of a sizeable proportion of the population. Furthermore, as discussed in a later section, an important minority of both workers and nonworkers moving between States receive income from transfer payments (notably retirement benefits) which may considerably enhance their locational freedom and reduce the necessity to choose jobs entirely on the basis of wage rates.

Besides job transfers (reason number 1) and taking a new job or looking for work (reason number 4), what other factors help account for interstate migration? According to table 1, the third most important reason for interstate migration of household heads is "moved to be closer to relatives" (reason number 12). Seven and one-half percent of all household heads moving between States in the study period cited this factor as the main reason for their move. This reason probably reflects a great heterogeneity of motivations, for it could include recent college graduates who move back to their parents' home town, recently divorced or separated persons who move to be near relatives, and elderly persons who move in order to live near their grown children. Note, however, that the amount of interstate migration for such reasons is understated in the survey because only household heads were asked about migration and reasons for moving. For example, a widow who moves in with her grown daughter would ordinarily not be considered a household head and therefore would not be asked about mobility status in the Annual Housing Surveys; only if the hypothetical widow maintained a household independent of that of her daughter would she be asked the questions on mobility status. As shown in later sections, the reason "moved to be closer to relatives" is especially important among households headed by women, heads over 55, and heads with less than a high school education.

Aside from the most frequently cited reasons for moving—job transfers, new jobs or looking for work, and moves to be closer to relatives—three reasons each account for about five percent of household heads moving between States. These are "entered or left U.S. Armed Forces" (4.8 percent), "to attend school" (5.4 percent), and "wanted change of climate" (5.1 percent). The role of the military and student migration is understated in these statistics because persons in group quarters, like military barracks and college dormitories, are not covered in the survey. Still, private households headed by military personnel or college students represented about 1 out of every 10 households moving between States during the study period.

In about 1 out of every 20 households moving between States, the desire for a change of climate was the main reason for moving. The desire for a climate change is somewhat more commonly expressed as the main reason for interstate migration than retirement; climate was cited by 5.1 percent of all households moving between States, compared with the 3.4 percent of households moving as a result of retirement. Of the 30 reasons for interstate migration of household heads, climate is certainly among the six most important. This seems like a rather prominent role for a reason that was not recorded (at least not tabulated) in the earlier Census Bureau survey of reasons for moving (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1966).

This somewhat unanticipated role played by climate as a "main" reason for interstate migration certainly merits fuller investigation, and the next two sections examine the role of climate and the other reasons for moving in accounting for the migration of persons of different ages, different earnings levels, and different educational attainments.

Variability by Age

Many of the reasons for moving examined in the preceding section are probably highly related to a person's age, so in order to get a better picture of why people move, it is important to give the question greater focus by asking, "Why do young persons move?" and "Why do older persons move?"

How some reasons for moving vary with age is obvious: retirement is a phenomenon of older persons (even though the average age of retirement has been falling), and moves to look for work or to change jobs tend to be characteristic of persons just entering the labor force. But the variability of other reasons for moving with age is less obvious. Especially intriguing is the question of whether climate currently plays a more important role in the migration of the young than the old.

On the one hand, one might expect climate to play a more prominent role in the locational decisions of young persons than of older persons. If there have been changes in personal values—less emphasis on the work ethic and more emphasis on life styles and "doing one's own thing" where the weather is nice—one might expect such value shifts to be more characteristic of the young than the old. Furthermore, fewer family obligations may give the young more freedom to move wherever they please, without worrying about finding a job that can support dependent family members as well as themselves.

On the other hand, if financial sacrifices are required in order to give priority to considerations of climate in migration decisions, then middle-aged persons may be in a better position than the young to make a trade-off between income and amenities. Middle-aged household heads typically have been in the labor force for a number of years and have had more opportunity than younger persons to accumulate assets (savings accounts, stocks, etc.) that can provide supplementary income to wages. Hence, middle-aged persons seeking a career change may be more able than the young to accept wage cuts in order to live where the weather is nice.

Table 2 provides a perspective on these competing hypotheses by disaggregating reasons for moving according to broad age groups, sex, and employment status of household heads. In this and subsequent tables, the most commonly cited reasons for moving are shown separately, as in table 1, but we grouped reasons 9, 10, 11, and 13 through 17 into a category labeled "other family reason." Reasons 5, 8, 18 through 29, and 31 were grouped as "all other reasons."

Table 2. Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads Who Moved Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, by Age, Sex, and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey

Reasons for moving — total heads and workers	(Numbers in thousands)														
	Both sexes					Male					Female				
	20-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 and over	20-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 and over	20-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 and over	20-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 and over	20-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 and over
ALL HEADS	3,371	1,557	733	2,797	1,339	502	574	218	231						
Percent moving because of:															
Job transfer	25.4	30.9	6.0	28.9	34.0	8.2	8.2	11.9	1.3						
New job or looking for work	28.3	23.2	4.9	29.5	25.0	6.4	22.6	11.9	1.7						
Other employment reason	2.0	3.1	2.6	2.1	3.4	3.2	1.4	1.4	0.9						
Enter or leave Armed Forces	6.3	2.6	—	7.4	2.9	—	1.0	0.5	—						
Attend school	7.5	1.2	0.4	7.1	1.0	0.6	9.6	2.3	—						
Wanted change of climate	3.2	5.8	12.1	2.9	6.0	14.1	4.5	4.6	7.8						
Retirement	—	3.3	19.8	—	3.2	25.7	—	3.7	6.9						
To be closer to relatives	5.2	5.8	22.2	3.9	5.2	12.7	11.1	9.6	42.9						
Other family reason	8.2	9.4	11.2	6.1	6.6	8.0	24.0	29.4	19.0						
All other reasons	11.2	11.6	17.3	10.3	10.5	17.3	16.0	17.4	16.9						
Not reported	1.7	2.6	3.3	1.8	2.0	3.6	1.2	6.0	2.6						

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads Who Moved Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and-1976 Annual Housing Surveys, by Age, Sex, and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey - Continued

(Numbers in thousands)

Reasons for moving - total heads and workers	Both sexes						Male			Female	
	20-34 years old		35-54 years old		55 and over		20-34 years old		35-54 years old		55 and over
	2,833	1,233	173	2,444	1,120	139	389	113	34		
HEADS WHO WORKED LAST WEEK											
Percent moving because of:											
Job transfer	29.7	38.3	24.3	32.8	40.4	28.1	10.3	17.7	(B)		
New job or looking for work	30.8	26.2	17.9	30.9	27.1	21.6	30.1	16.8	(B)		
Other employment reason	1.9	3.4	5.2	1.9	3.7	4.3	1.8	0.9	(B)		
Enter or leave Armed Forces	6.8	1.9	-	7.8	2.1	-	1.0	0.9	(B)		
Attend school	4.0	0.7	-	3.5	0.5	-	7.5	2.7	(B)		
Wanted change of climate	2.6	4.3	5.8	2.4	4.3	5.8	4.1	4.4	(B)		
Retirement	-	1.3	4.0	-	1.4	5.0	-	-	(B)		
To be closer to relatives	4.3	4.2	12.1	3.6	3.8	7.9	8.7	8.0	(B)		
Other family reason	7.9	8.1	7.5	5.9	6.3	5.0	19.0	25.7	(B)		
All other reasons	10.2	9.3	19.1	9.5	8.8	18.7	14.9	14.2	(B)		
Not reported	1.6	2.3	4.0	1.6	1.7	2.9	1.3	8.0	(B)		

- No sample cases fell in the category or percentage rounds to zero.

B Base is too small to show percentage distributions.

As the table shows, climate is less often cited by the young as the main reason for interstate migration. The percent of interstate migrant household heads citing climate as the main reason for moving rises from 3.2 percent of ages 20 to 34, to 5.8 percent of ages 35 to 54, and then to 12.1 percent at ages 55 and over. The same progression with age is evident when considering only household heads who were employed in the week preceding the survey. As shown in the bottom part of the table, the percent of workers who cited climate as the main reason for moving rises from 2.6 percent at ages 20 to 34 to 5.8 percent at ages 55 and over.

In making these comparisons across age groups, one should bear in mind that interstate migration is most common among the young, with the peak rate among all persons occurring at age 23 (see Long, 1973b). Since interstate migration is concentrated among the young, the number of young interstate migrants moving because of climate exceeds the number of older interstate migrants seeking a climate change. The 3.2 percent of household heads 20 to 34 years old moving between States because of climate represented 107,000 interstate migrants, whereas the 12.1 percent of interstate migrants over 55 moving for this reason represented only 89,000 interstate migrants. Thus, the number of young persons migrating because of climate is greater than the number of old persons migrating for this reason, even though older migrants are more likely to cite climate as the reason for moving.

To get a complete perspective on the relationship between age and migration to seek a climate change, one needs to relate the number of climate-seeking interstate migrants not only to the total number of interstate migrants (as is done in table 2), but also to the total population in the respective age groups. In creating the latter measure, one is asking, "What is the probability that an individual picked at random from the total household heads of a given age group will move to seek a change of climate?" The results indicate that in a year's time about 5 in 1,000 household heads 20 to 34 years old will move between States and report the desire for a change of climate as the main reason for moving; at ages 35 to 54, about 4 in 1,000 will do so; and at ages 55 and over the ratio is about 3 in 1,000. Differences among age groups in this respect are small and difficult to measure precisely even by cumulating samples as we have done, but the results unmistakably show that older persons are not more likely than the young to undertake an interstate move in order to seek a climate change, even though older persons who have moved between States are more likely than the young to report climate as the reason for having moved. This seeming paradox is explained by the fact that for almost all of the specified potential reasons for moving, older persons are less likely to undertake interstate migration than the young.

The importance of climate as the "main" reason for moving is clearly overshadowed by economic reasons for moving, at least at ages under 55. The three economic reasons shown in the table account for 50 to 60 percent of interstate moves of household heads under 55 years old. As expected, "new job or looking for work" appears to be more common at ages under 35 than at ages

35 to 54. Job transfers are the most common reason for interstate migration among household heads 35 to 54 years old. In a general way, the data lend support to the notion, expressed by Lansing and Mueller (1966) and others, that the migration of the young is governed to a considerable extent by the search for employment, whereas the migration of middle-aged workers often represents a search for better employment.

Among heads over 55, moves to be closer to relatives or to retire are the most commonly cited "main" reasons for moving between States. Even among employed persons in this age category, the employment-related reasons for moving play a less prominent role than among younger interstate migrants. About 47 percent of employed household heads 55 years and over moving between States gave one of the three employment-related reasons, compared with 62 percent of employed heads 20 to 34 years old, and 68 percent at ages 35 to 54. The decline in the significance of employment-related reasons at the oldest age group is evident even when we limit consideration to employed male household heads. Clearly, older workers who move between States assign greater significance to various noneconomic considerations than do younger workers.

Especially interesting is the fact that 5 percent of interstate migrant household heads who were 55 or over and employed gave "retirement" as the reason for the move. This seeming anomaly of being both retired and working suggests to us an important mixing of the two activities. Apparently many persons retire from one job (and draw retirement benefits) only to enter a new line of work. In the survey, many of these persons seem to have reported an employment reason rather than retirement as the "main" reason for their move, and indeed, either answer would have been correct. By supplementing retirement benefits with earnings from paid employment, such individuals may have considerable freedom as to where to live, and we will have more to say later about implications for population redistribution.

A final point to note from table 2 is that at every age female household heads—even employed female household heads—are less likely than male heads to cite an employment reason for moving. Among employed household heads between 20 and 34 years of age, the three economic reasons were cited by 66 percent of men and 42 percent of women; somewhat larger differences exist at ages 35 to 54. In general, women workers who head households are less likely than men to report job transfers and more likely to report various family reasons for moving.

Education and Earnings

In investigating why people move, we first refined the question by asking whether young persons (who predominate among interstate migrants) move for different reasons than older persons. An additional refinement of the question can be obtained by asking whether the college-educated move for different reasons than persons with limited educational attainments, or whether the economically well-off move for different reasons than the poor.

Some differences between persons at the educational and economic extremes as to reasons for moving are obvious. But others are less clear, especially as regards various noneconomic reasons for moving. As before, climate--though not dominating among the "main" reasons for moving--may indicate the importance assigned to various amenities, like recreational facilities and the use of leisure time, by persons of different social statuses. Being able to say that climate was the main reason for moving may even indicate the range of choices available to persons who move between States. For example, the well-educated may have more employment opportunities than persons with less education, and as a result the well-educated may be in a better position to pick jobs that fit in with climatic preferences. Hence, the well-educated may be more likely than persons with less formal education to report that climate was the reason for accepting one job rather than another.

To examine these possibilities, we tabulated reasons for moving according to educational level of interstate migrants in table 3, and according to annual earnings in table 4. Both tables incorporate controls for sex and are restricted to persons 20 to 54 years old--ages where labor force participation rates are typically high (although the tables show data separately for all household heads as well as those who worked in the week preceding the survey).

The expectation that well-educated interstate migrants would be more likely to cite climate than the poorly-educated is not supported. Among male interstate migrants, the percent citing climate as the reason for moving fell from 5.7 percent of those with less than a high school education (i.e., less than 12 years of school completed) to 1.9 percent of those with 16 or more years of school (usually implying the completion of a college degree). Even when we limit consideration to employed male interstate migrants, the percent reporting climate as the reason for moving is much lower among those with a college education than among those with less education. Among women the relationship between educational level and likelihood of citing climate as the reason for interstate migration is erratic, but there is no evidence to support the idea that the percent citing climate is highest among those with the highest educational level.

Before dismissing the scenario sketched above, however, one should bear in mind that the likelihood of moving between States is directly related to educational level (Long, 1973a). As a result, the college-educated are greatly overrepresented among interstate migrants. At the 20-to-54 age range, the 2.1 percent of total college graduates (both sexes) who cited climate as the reason for moving represents 38,000 households moving between States for this reason--nearly equal to the number (40,000) of households with heads of less than a high school education moving between States to seek a climate change.

Perhaps the best way to visualize these relationships is to inquire about the possibility that a household will move between States for a given reason (climate, in this case). Among all household heads 20 to 54 years old with less than a high school education (data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977), about 4 in 1,000 will move between States in a year's time and cite climate as

Table 3. Educational Level and Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads 20 to 54 Years Old Moving Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Sex and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey

Reasons for moving — totals heads and workers	(Numbers in thousands)							
	Male				Female			
	Less than 12 years of school	12 years of school	13-15 years of school	16 or more years of school	Less than 12 years of school	12 years of school	13-15 years of school	16 or more years of school
ALL HEADS	558	1,177	834	1,567	143	258	151	241
Percent moving because of:								
Job transfer	12.0	31.5	30.3	36.6	4.2	9.3	7.9	12.9
New job or looking for work	32.4	21.0	23.4	34.3	5.6	11.6	15.2	39.0
Other employment reason	3.8	2.5	1.9	2.6	0.7	—	4.0	1.7
Enter or leave Armed Forces	3.6	9.5	7.8	3.2	—	2.3	0.7	—
Attend school	1.1	1.1	7.9	8.0	—	3.5	16.6	10.8
Wanted change of climate	5.7	5.2	4.7	1.9	5.6	5.8	2.0	4.1
Retirement	0.7	1.6	0.8	0.9	1.4	0.8	2.6	—
To be closer to relatives	11.8	5.4	2.9	1.7	20.3	14.3	7.3	3.7
Other family reason	10.4	7.8	6.7	3.6	31.5	33.3	31.1	10.4
All other reasons	15.8	12.0	11.5	6.4	26.6	15.5	9.9	15.8
Not reported	2.5	2.5	1.8	1.2	4.2	2.7	2.0	1.7

Table 3. Educational Level and Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads 20 to 54 Years Old Moving Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Sex and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey — Continued

Reasons for moving — totals heads and workers	(Numbers in thousands)							
	Male			Female				
	Less than 12 years of school	12 years of school	13-15 years of school	16 or more years of school	Less than 12 years of school	12 years of school	13-15 years of school	16 or more years of school
HEADS WHO WORKED LAST WEEK	428	1,052	717	1,366	43	150	104	206
Percent moving because of:								
Job transfer	15.2	35.0	34.9	41.7	(B)	12.7	9.6	14.1
New job or looking for work	36.2	20.9	24.8	37.1	(B)	16.0	19.2	44.2
Other employment reason	4.7	2.0	1.4	2.6	(B)	—	4.8	1.9
Enter or leave Armed Forces	4.0	9.5	7.9	2.9	(B)	2.7	1.0	—
Attend school	0.5	0.9	4.7	3.4	(B)	1.3	15.4	6.8
Wanted change of climate	3.7	5.0	3.3	1.0	(B)	4.7	1.9	4.9
Retirement	—	1.0	0.7	0.1	(B)	—	—	—
To be closer to relatives	9.6	5.0	2.6	1.3	(B)	14.7	5.8	1.9
Other family reason	10.3	7.3	6.8	3.2	(B)	31.3	29.8	9.7
All other reasons	13.6	11.4	11.2	5.3	(B)	13.3	10.6	15.0
Not reported	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2	(B)	2.7	2.9	1.5

— No sample cases fell in the category or percentage rounds to zero.

B Base is too small to show percentage distributions.

Table 4. Earnings in Last 12 Months and Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads 20 to 54 Years Old Moving Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Sex and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey

Reasons for moving — total heads and workers	(Numbers in thousands. Earnings data have been adjusted to reflect 1976 dollars)									
	Male					Female				
	Under \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 and over	Under \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 and over
ALL HEADS	924	1,128	964	838	282	440	222	95	31	4
Percent moving because of:										
Job transfer	8.2	23.2	35.5	48.0	64.2	4.3	10.4	13.7	(B)	(B)
New job or looking for work	31.4	31.1	26.2	24.1	22.0	14.8	27.0	21.1	(B)	(B)
Other employment reason	4.0	2.5	1.9	2.0	1.8	0.9	1.8	3.2	(B)	(B)
Enter or leave Armed Forces	6.0	11.9	3.3	2.3	2.1	7.1	0.5	1.1	(B)	(B)
Attend school	13.7	3.8	2.6	1.9	0.7	9.5	6.3	3.2	(B)	(B)
Wanted change of climate	6.8	3.6	2.9	3.2	0.7	4.8	3.6	7.4	(B)	(B)
Retirement	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.7	0.7	1.8	—	—	(B)	(B)
To be closer to relatives	5.6	5.1	4.7	2.7	0.7	13.2	9.5	6.3	(B)	(B)
Other family reason	7.4	5.9	7.8	5.1	2.5	28.4	24.8	20.0	(B)	(B)
All other reasons	13.3	10.7	10.9	8.4	3.5	18.4	11.7	20.0	(B)	(B)
Not reported	2.6	1.3	3.1	0.6	0.7	2.7	3.2	1.1	(B)	(B)

Table 4. Earnings in Last 12 Months and Reasons for Moving Given by Household Heads 20 to 54 Years Old Moving Between States in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Sex and Whether the Head Worked in the Week Preceding the Survey — Continued

Reasons for moving — total heads and workers	(Numbers in thousands. Earnings data have been adjusted to reflect 1976 dollars)									
	Male			Female						
	Under \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 and over	Under \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 and over
HEADS WHO WORKED LAST WEEK	595	996	908	792	272	198	185	85	29	4
Percent moving because of:										
Job transfer	12.1	26.2	37.6	50.4	66.5	4.0	11.4	15.1	(B)	(B)
New job or looking for work	40.2	32.3	26.9	24.4	22.1	24.7	30.8	23.3	(B)	(B)
Other employment reason	4.4	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.8	1.0	2.2	3.5	(B)	(B)
Enter or leave Armed Forces	8.1	11.8	3.1	2.0	1.5	2.0	—	1.2	(B)	(B)
Attend school	8.1	2.1	1.3	1.3	—	11.1	4.9	—	(B)	(B)
Wanted change of climate	3.9	3.2	2.8	3.0	0.7	3.5	4.3	7.0	(B)	(B)
Retirement	—	0.4	0.7	0.6	—	—	—	—	(B)	(B)
To be closer to relatives	4.0	4.6	4.4	2.4	0.7	9.1	9.7	7.0	(B)	(B)
Other family reason	6.6	6.2	7.4	5.2	2.6	25.8	21.1	15.1	(B)	(B)
All other reasons	11.1	10.0	10.7	8.0	2.9	14.6	11.9	20.9	(B)	(B)
Not reported	1.5	1.2	3.3	0.6	0.7	3.0	3.8	1.2	(B)	(B)

— No sample cases fell in the category or percentage rounds to zero.

B Base is too small to show percentage distributions

the main reason for the move. Nearly the same proportion—3 in 1,000—of household heads who are college graduates will move between States in a year and cite climate as the main reason for moving. These two proportions are not measurably different, and we conclude that the desire for a change of climate is about as likely to induce interstate migration among high school dropouts as among college graduates in the 20-to-54 age range.

To summarize: the probability of undertaking interstate migration in order to obtain a better climate does not appear to be strongly related to an individual's educational level, but interstate migrants with low levels of educational attainment are more likely than the highly educated to report climate as the reason for having moved. This seeming paradox simply reflects the fact that the highly educated are much more likely to move between States, usually for some economic reason. From table 3, observe that job transfers were cited by nearly 37 percent of male college graduates moving between States, compared with only 12 percent for men with less than a high school education. Rather clearly, their employment in jobs that permit (or require) job transfers is a major factor accounting for the higher interstate migration rates of college graduates.

But the interplay between educational level and the role of noneconomic factors like climate can be very complex. Many college graduates may reject job transfers to places where the weather is bad or where their favorite leisure activity cannot easily be pursued, only to accept a later transfer to a place where the climate is mild and then to report "job transfer" as the reason for moving. Furthermore, because they move between States more frequently, college graduates may sometimes be willing to accept a job in a place they do not like, with the expectation that a better (or equally good) job will shortly come along in a location offering a better climate. Persons with only a high school education expect far fewer lifetime moves (see Long, 1973a) and may not have such options.

Of course, there is always the possibility that high incomes among the highly-educated may reduce the need to migrate in order to enjoy the attractions of particular locations. For example, high-income persons who like to ski may be able to afford week-end airplane trips to Colorado without having to live in Colorado. And being able to afford a condominium in Florida may reduce the need to migrate to Florida in order to enjoy warm weather. Second homes in other locations—along rivers, at the beach, in the mountains—may allow part-year residences where recreational facilities are present and may reduce the need to migrate to such places on a permanent basis. Extensive recreational developments built around second homes owned by the well-to-do probably tend to generate employment opportunities in construction and service industries, and these jobs—many of which are not high-paying—may facilitate the movement of lower-income persons to such developments. Hence, some recreational developments could conceivably reduce the need of the well-to-do to migrate to amenity-rich locations while encouraging the migration of persons of more modest economic means to such areas.

This general perspective is perhaps supported by noting the infrequency with which persons of high earnings cite noneconomic reasons for moving (see table 4). Only 0.7 percent of men with annual earnings in excess of \$25,000 cited climate as the reason for moving between States. Family reasons were also cited infrequently among persons at this earnings level. Fully 64 percent of men who had earnings over \$25,000 and who moved between States reported that a job transfer was the reason for moving.

The resulting sketch of who moves and why is one that emphasizes the overall higher migration rates of well-educated persons. Such individuals overwhelmingly report job-related reasons (especially job transfers) as the main reason for moving, although for many, noneconomic factors may play an important but unmeasured role in influencing the timing of the move and the choice of destination. Persons with low levels of education or earnings are more likely to report noneconomic reasons, especially family considerations but also climate, in explaining why they moved.

Retirees

In order to statistically portray the different types of interstate migrants, we decided to present summary characteristics of households moving for each of the major reasons. This approach can be a graphic way of contrasting the age, income, and composition of the typical household moving to seek a change of climate, because job transfer, etc. The last change we made in designing the tabulation for this purpose was to add a line to show the proportion of interstate migrant households receiving pension income. This last-minute change produced what turned out to be the most interesting aspect of the tabulation shown as table 5.

Fully 20 percent of households moving between States were found to be receiving pension income. In this case, "pension income" means that at least one person in the household reported income in the preceding 12 months from at least one of three sources indicated on the questionnaire: social security or Railroad Retirement payments, government employee pensions, or private pensions or annuities. The questionnaire had separate lines for 9 other types of income for each household member (for a facsimile of the 1976 questionnaire, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978b, Appendix pages 38 and 39).

Of course, not all persons receiving such income are retirees, because social security sometimes goes to the children of decedents. But most persons with these types of income are retirees, and almost all have enhanced freedom of choice as to where to live. The 20 percent of households with income of this type represents in excess of 3,000,000 interstate migrants during the 3-year period of study. Clearly, the migration of so many persons can have a substantial impact on population redistribution.

The 20 percent of households moving between States that have pension income contrasts sharply with the 3.0 percent of households reporting

Table 5. Summary Characteristics of Households Moving Between States for Specified Reasons in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys

Summary characteristics	All reasons	Job transfer	New job or looking for work	Other employment reason	Wanted change of climate	Moved to be closer to relatives	Other family reason	Retirement
Total migrant households (thousands)	5,843	1,392	1,378	140	296	437	532	197
Mean household size	2.8	3.2	2.8	3.1	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.5
Median age of head	31	32	29	33	42	40	31	61
Percent of heads with college, 4 years or more	33.0	44.5	46.6	32.6	18.5	10.5	13.6	25.9
Percent of households with children under 6	28.1	36.8	30.5	29.7	15.9	25.3	21.5	2.6
Percent of households headed by women	18.2	5.6	12.1	9.7	20.4	42.6	47.0	12.1
Husband-wife couples as a percent of all households	64.4	82.3	66.0	73.1	56.0	49.6	38.5	82.7
Percent going to a nonmetro-politan destination	33.3	28.9	34.2	35.6	31.2	40.4	33.0	54.2
Percent of heads with a job last week	75.0	98.1	90.7	77.8	49.3	45.9	60.7	11.8
Percent of households with more than one earner	34.3	39.8	39.0	31.6	33.5	23.2	25.1	23.7
Median income of household in last 12 months (1976 dollars)	11,460	16,527	11,520	13,650	9,767	7,576	7,738	11,899
Median earnings of head in last 12 months (1976 dollars)	7,954	13,654	8,415	7,891	3,765	2,529	4,685	983
Percent of households with income from pensions or annuities	20.4	7.9	10.8	13.1	39.0	43.0	26.6	82.8

“retirement” as the reason for moving (refer back to table 1). Thus, the data on reasons for moving substantially understate the number of retirees among interstate migrants. Among interstate migrants, the number of households with retirement income may be six times as large as the number of households that reported retirement as the reason for moving.

One reason for the “understatement” of retirement as a reason for moving can be found by looking at the employment status of household heads for whom retirement was cited as the reason for moving. In table 5 observe that nearly 12 percent of “retired” household heads who moved between States were working in the week preceding the survey. More of the non-working retirees are likely to become employed at a later date, after they have had more time to look for work in the area of destination.

Another indicator of the mixing of retirement and working can be found by noting that pension income was reported by nearly 8 percent of household heads giving “job transfer” as the reason for moving, and nearly 11 percent of heads who moved to take a new job or look for work reported pension income. These data suggest to us that many persons who leave a job and draw retirement benefits use the occasion to enter a new line of work. Such persons may look upon the transition not as retirement, but as an opportunity for a career change, and when they move, many report an employment reason rather than retirement.

Because they do not need to rely on a job for complete economic support, retirees who want to supplement their pension benefits by working have more options as to where to live than other workers. Many persons with pension income may be willing to work part-time or to rely on seasonal employment, and many are willing to forego various fringe benefits (like generous retirement plans) that would be an important consideration for younger workers. In general, persons with pension income do not have to look for jobs that pay enough to support a family because they do not need to support a family through current earnings. The potential impact of households with what we defined as pension income can be gauged by recalling that more than 3,000,000 of the 16,332,000 interstate migrants during the study period belonged to households that had some income from pensions.

Many of these persons can give a high priority to climate or amenities in choosing where to move. From table 5, observe that fully 39 percent of persons citing climate as the main reason for their move also reported income from pensions. About 9 percent of persons moving for one of the three employment reasons reported income from pensions and, presumably, were in a better position than others moving for employment reasons to emphasize noneconomic considerations in making their migration decision.

Most of those who said that retirement was the reason for moving had pension income. It is a little surprising to find that because of pensions and sources of income other than earnings, persons reporting retirement as the

main reason for moving have a total household income equal to (or slightly greater than) the average for all households moving between States. Note from table 5 that of all households moving between States the median annual household income (in 1976 dollars) was \$11,460, compared with \$11,899 for retirees. But the median annual earnings of heads reporting retirement as the reason for moving was only \$983, suggesting that most of the difference was due to pension income. This total income level is not very much different from that for all families and unrelated individuals in 1976 (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978, p. 2). Thus, households reporting retirement as the reason for interstate migration are by no means a low-income group, on the average, even though many undoubtedly are moving to areas where living costs are low and where a fixed income can be stretched.

The "typical" household reporting retirement as the reason for moving between States seems to consist of a husband-wife couple in which the husband is around 61 years old, and more often than not, the interstate move is to a nonmetropolitan destination. Over 54 percent of all interstate migrant households moving to retire went to a nonmetropolitan location, possibly because of lower living costs or the presence of recreation or other amenities. Among all interstate migrant households, only 33 percent went to a nonmetropolitan destination, and even among persons reporting climate as the reason for moving, only 31 percent went to a nonmetropolitan location. Clearly, retirement households moving between States have a strong preference for nonmetropolitan residence.

Table 5 is also useful for sketching "profiles" of other groups of interstate migrants. For example, household heads who said climate was the main reason for having moved tend to be older than average (42 years old versus 33 for all household heads moving between States), to have low levels of education and earnings, and to report not having had a job in the week before the survey. This picture generally corresponds with the conclusion from tables 3 and 4 that persons of low socioeconomic status were more likely than high-status migrants to report climate as the main reason for moving.

Of the major migrant groups, households reporting job transfers tend to be of the highest socioeconomic status. Their high median household income (\$16,527 versus \$11,460 for all households moving between States) results largely from the head's high earnings. Most transferees are married and living with their spouse, as evidenced by the fact that 82 percent of transferred households were husband-wife couples. Transferees have a high level of educational attainment and usually move to or between metropolitan areas.

Regional Flows

The surveys also permit investigation of why people report moving to or from the major regions of the country. Interest in this type of question has been growing considerably as the volume of net immigration to the southern region has increased greatly in the 1970's, while the northern regions have

registered decreased attractiveness both to residents and to migrants. Data on reasons for moving allow one way of identifying the types of migrants going to and leaving the various regions of the country. Why people said they moved to or from each of the four major regions during the study period is reported in table 6. The four regions are defined according to common practice used by the Census Bureau, with the South extending roughly from Delaware to Texas. Many Bureau publications include maps of the four major regions (e.g., U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978b, p. vii).

Some of the most striking regional migration changes have involved the South—historically a low-income region—shifting from net outmigration in the 1950's to moderate net immigration in the 1960's and then to substantial net immigration in the 1970's (for a chart of the South's net migration from 1880 to 1975, see Long, 1978). The growing volume of net immigration to the South has gradually encompassed more and more population groups, and the region now has net immigration of young and old persons (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978a), of Blacks and Whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978d), and of poor as well as nonpoor persons (Long, 1978).

Many unanswered questions have revolved around speculation concerning the number of persons moving to the region to retire or because of climate. Many retirees may move to the South to established retirement communities in Florida or simply to nonmetropolitan areas where low living costs can help stretch a pension. Also, because of heavy outmigration in earlier decades, there are many southern-born persons living in other regions and nearing retirement age. Many may want to go home and return to communities left long ago. The representation of retirees and climate-seekers among migrants to the South has not been previously established.

During the 1973-76 study period, both groups contributed to the South's net immigration. During the period, about 134,000 persons moving to the South were in households where the head reported retirement as the reason for moving, and another 275,000 immigrants were in households where the head said that the main reason for moving was to seek a better climate. These two groups represented 4.1 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively, of all migrants to the South during the study period. Of course, the South had net immigration of both groups, but what is more interesting is that the number of retirees and climate-seekers going to the South appears to exceed the number moving to the West for these reasons. In other words, for these two groups of migrants, the South appears to be more attractive than the West.

For the Northeast and North Central regions, climate and retirement help account for outmigration. For about 11 percent of the persons leaving the Northeast and nearly 10 percent of the persons leaving the North Central region, the desire for a change of climate was the main reason for moving. For both regions, an additional 4 percent of outmigrants were retirees.

Table 6. Persons Moving to and from Each Region in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Reason for Moving Given by the Household Head

Reasons for moving	(Numbers in thousands)							
	To Northeast	From Northeast	To North Central	From North Central	To South	From South	To West	From West
Number of migrants	1,058	1,829	1,935	2,400	3,254	2,407	2,106	1,718
Job transfer	328	468	510	571	832	728	587	490
New job or looking for work	251	365	513	585	678	532	428	388
Other employment reason	22	34	58	74	125	63	43	78
Enter or leave Armed Forces	82	80	141	111	165	165	109	141
Attend school	40	86	108	51	68	118	92	54
Wanted change of climate	28	201	26	238	275	81	223	32
Retirement	26	71	37	106	134	74	93	39
To be closer to relatives	72	113	159	226	304	212	153	137
Other family reason	77	127	154	144	256	167	103	152
All other reasons	95	250	197	265	373	225	244	169
Not reported	37	34	32	29	44	42	31	38

Table 6. Persons Moving to and from Each Region in the 12 Months Preceding the 1974, 1975, and 1976 Annual Housing Surveys, According to Reason for Moving Given by the Household Head — Continued

(Numbers in thousands)

Reasons for moving	To Northeast	From Northeast	To North Central	From North Central	To South	From South	To West	From West
Percent distribution	100.1	100.2	100.1	99.9	100.1	99.9	100.1	99.9
Job transfer	31.0	25.6	26.4	23.8	25.6	30.2	27.9	28.5
New job or looking for work	23.7	20.0	26.5	24.4	20.8	22.1	20.3	22.6
Other employment reason	2.1	1.9	3.0	3.1	3.8	2.6	2.0	4.5
Enter or leave Armed Forces	7.8	4.4	7.3	4.6	5.1	6.9	5.2	8.2
Attend school	3.8	4.7	5.6	2.1	2.1	4.9	4.4	3.1
Wanted change of climate	2.6	11.0	1.3	9.9	8.5	3.4	10.6	1.9
Retirement	2.5	3.9	1.9	4.4	4.1	3.1	4.4	2.3
To be closer to relatives	6.8	6.2	8.2	9.4	9.3	8.8	7.3	8.0
Other family reason	7.3	6.9	8.0	6.0	7.9	6.9	4.9	8.8
All other reasons	9.0	13.7	10.2	11.0	11.5	9.3	11.6	9.8
Not reported	3.5	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.5	2.2

But for every region, the most commonly cited reasons for moving were either (1) a job transfer or (2) a new job or the search for employment. Together, these two reasons accounted for 46 to 55 percent of in- or outmigrants for the four regions. These two reasons were least commonly cited by migrants from the Northeast or North Central regions or to the South or West, reflecting the fact that in these migration streams various noneconomic factors (climate, retirement, etc.) assumed a more important role than in other regional streams.

It is interesting to note that the South and West have net immigration and the Northeast and North Central regions have net outmigration for most of the reasons for moving shown in the table. Some exceptions exist, but, generally, the South and West have net immigration of persons moving for economic reasons, in addition to having net immigration among persons moving in order to retire, to seek a climate change, or to be closer to relatives. In contrast, the Northeast and North Central regions have net outmigration of persons moving for each of these reasons. These data underscore the broad base of migration gains being experienced by the South and West and the losses being experienced by the northern regions.

Have Reasons for Moving Changed?

As mentioned earlier, the Census Bureau on three occasions has asked national samples of the population to report the reason or reasons for having changed residence in the preceeding 12 months. Such inquiries were included in Current Population Surveys in 1946 and 1963 and in Annual Housing Surveys taken since 1973. With one or two exceptions, the data from these sources constitute the only nationwide statistics on self-reported reasons for moving.

On all three occasions, the tabulated results of the surveys revealed that job transfers and moves to look for work or to take a new job were the most commonly cited reasons for long-distance migration, although moves to be near relatives were also frequently mentioned. Apart from this rather vague generalization, we do not think that the three data sources provide a basis for inferring either change or stability in self-reported reasons for moving. This frustrating lack of comparability derives primarily from the fact that the 1946 and 1963 surveys used open-ended questions and accepted more than one reason for moving, whereas the 1973-76 surveys used 30 pre-listed reasons and recorded only the respondent's identification of the "main" reason. Shryock (1969) gives some examples of diverse practices that have prevented other comparisons of studies of reasons for moving.

The prevailing opinion seems to be that the reasons or motivations for migration have been changing, with greater emphasis nowadays being given to noneconomic factors and quality-of-life considerations (for some examples, see Zelinsky, 1974; Beale, 1975; and Svart, 1976). Some demographic trends in the general population—like the aging of the baby boom children into the

young-adult ages where migration propensity is greatest, the growing proportion of families supported by women, and a rising level of education—would be expected to affect the composition of interstate migrants and, by inference, the reasons for moving. For example, a rising level of education and a growing concentration of population at the 20 to 30 year old age group (the baby boom cohorts) would tend, other things being equal, to raise the number of job-related reasons for long-distance migration, because being young and having a high level of education were found in previous sections to be positively associated with the likelihood of citing a job-related reason as the main reason for moving between States. A growing proportion of interstate migrant households supported solely by women would tend to offset this effect to some extent.

But apart from these broad demographic trends, there are other changes which, although they may not be changing the “main” or “primary” reason for moving, probably allow individuals to give greater weight to secondary (mostly noneconomic) factors in the decision to move or the choice of destination. One such group is retirees, for those with pensions large enough to provide complete economic support can live almost anywhere they want to. Even more numerous may be individuals who draw retirement benefits at an early age but because of preference or necessity mix retirement with paid employment (whether full-time, part-time, or part-year). Such individuals are typically not well identified in surveys, but their number is surely growing, and they show a pronounced preference for Southern and nonmetropolitan destinations.

Their numbers are likely to increase simply because the ratio of retirement benefits to pre-retirement income is rising in the United States (see Hannes-Olsen, 1978), meaning that the financial sacrifice associated with retirement is falling, and implying that more persons will choose some form of retirement or semi-retirement over full-time employment. One implication is that econometric models of migration may have less and less success in forecasting population flows on the basis of economic variables. Retirees and part-time workers probably constitute a rising proportion of migrants who are not looking for a full-time job that maximizes earnings (an important focus of many past attempts to model migration flows).

Their effect on population distribution and redistribution may be greater than their numbers alone would imply, for the movements of retirees, semi-retirees, and part-time workers create employment for others who are seeking to maximize earnings. Taking into account these multiplier effects in making regional population projections will require further research and evaluation of alternative simulation models.

Some Policy Considerations

As to the last of the five major questions posed at the beginning of this study, we have already suggested that a rising proportion of movers and potential movers are freer to give enhanced importance to personal preferences

in choosing where to live. Retirees, whose numbers have been increasing as the average age at retirement has fallen, certainly are included in this group, and their migration patterns currently show a pronounced preference for non-metropolitan locations or areas with scenic or recreational attributes.

But others, too, may be more able now than in the past to assign high priority to environmental qualities in deciding where to live. For example, smaller families (the product of falling fertility) and the rise of single-person and non-family households may allow greater freedom of movement, because large family size and the presence of school-age children impeded migration in the past (Long, 1972). Furthermore, although working wives may sometimes reduce the readiness of their husbands to accept job transfers (Long, 1973), in other cases working wives may give their husbands greater opportunities to choose jobs according to criteria other than earnings maximization, as was often the case in the past when the husband's job had to support a dependent wife and children. Some two-earner households may choose to live in the most attractive location where at least one acceptable job can be found, with the working spouse's earnings used to support the job search of the other spouse.

Enhanced locational freedom implies a rise in the degree to which jobs follow people, as opposed to the somewhat more traditional process whereby the creation of jobs more clearly preceded the movements of individuals. But beyond this implication, which is reflected in the growing service sector, there are two other implications which may be especially relevant to policy making:

- Jobs alone may not be enough to attract immigrants and insure growth. A location that is environmentally unattractive may have difficulty attracting new residents in spite of job-creation programs.
- The preservation of amenities in the process of economic growth may become more important in sustaining economic growth in individual localities. That is, a meshing of economic growth and the goals of environmental preservation may become not only useful but necessary in retaining population and attracting new residents to an area.

Regarding the first point, growth-center strategies may have to take into account many more factors than in the past, including opportunities for recreation and individuals' locational preferences. Past growth-center strategies have stressed the role of economic factors in accounting for growth and reasons for moving, and they have generally sought to direct migration away from the largest metropolitan centers and toward medium-sized places. Future growth-center policies might increase their effectiveness by combining job-creation programs with programs that develop or enhance recreational opportunities. The most successful programs may be those that can mix moderate industrial growth with employment spin-offs from nearby recreational areas.

If environmental amenities have become more important in influencing where people live, then preservation of locational attractiveness may be of

greater significance in retaining population and even preserving growth. Unregulated strip mining or overdevelopment of land in scenic areas are two obvious examples of projects that might create jobs in the short run but impair the long-term attractiveness of an area as a growth center. The prospect of continued growth in leisure time, greater locational freedom for larger numbers of persons, and a preference for dispersed living patterns suggests greater emphasis on quality-of-life concerns in reasons for staying as well as reasons for moving. In this context, the preservation of environmental qualities that initially attract new residents may become part of a strategy to sustain moderate growth.

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