

IMMIGRATION, DOMESTIC MIGRATION AND US METROPOLITAN AREA CHANGE: CONTRASTING THE 1990s WITH THE 1980s

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An important new demographic dynamic affecting metropolitan populations was identified after the 1990 US Census based on analyses of the "residence 5 years ago" question. This was the tendency for immigrant flows and domestic migration flows to dominate growth in different metropolitan areas, nonmetropolitan areas and regions (Frey, 1994; Frey and Johnson, 1998; Frey and Liaw, 1998). As in other developed countries, the United States began to experience a significant immigration, largely from Latin American and Asian origins. The destinations of these immigrants were unevenly distributed within the U.S. and concentrated primarily in selected large "port of entry" metropolitan areas. Many of these same areas were losing domestic migrants who were prone to relocate in other fast-growing large metro areas, and smaller metropolitan areas, as well as non-metropolitan territories. Moreover the domestic migration from these "high immigration" metropolitan areas was unique in the sense that it selected residents with less than college educations, in contrast to more conventional migration patterns which are upwardly selective on education (Long, 1988). Because these areas tended to be highly dense, costly metropolises, the "downwardly" selective out movement resembled the classic suburbanization or city-to-suburb flight migration of earlier decades but, now, at a regional level. Indeed, most of these areas continued to exhibit net migration gains in their college graduate and high income populations, raising concerns that these areas would evolve into "two tiered" economies.

At the same time, metropolitan areas that gained the most domestic migrants attracted relatively few immigrants, and the domestic migrants they selected were more prone to be well educated and had origins in all parts of the country. Finally, a third group of metropolitan areas received negative or modest net gains from both types of migration and their domestic out-migration tended to be selective on the most educated, causing fears that they would sustain further "brain drains"

The 2000 Census migration data released at the time of this writing (eg. the author's tabulations from the one percent PUMS and total migration components for the 1995-2000 period) suggest important shifts have altered these tendencies (Frey, 2003). One of these is the more broad based out-migration of domestic migrants from "high immigration" metropolitan areas which includes greater out migration of the less skilled populations among most race and ethnic groups, both foreign and native born. The second is an increased dispersal of Asians and especially Hispanics away from traditional immigrant magnet areas toward many areas which were previously considered to be "domestic migrant" migrants, as well as small and nonmetropolitan areas in all regions of the country. This movement incorporates both domestic migration away from these established magnets as well as a more dispersed set of destinations for recent immigrant Asians and Hispanics. Finally, the metropolitan areas which continue to lose domestic migrants are now attracting larger numbers of immigrants; and preliminary analyses suggest the immigrants to areas in the Midwest and Northeast are more positively selective on skill levels than those entering other parts of the country. As such, they hold the potential for stemming the "brain drain" of domestic migrants from these areas.

This paper will investigate these emerging changes in immigration and domestic migration dynamics by race and skill level and assess their impact on metropolitan areas that were classed as "high immigration" " high domestic migration" and "high out-migration" in previous work (1994). It will also assess the changing roles of these migration processes for the US settlement system comprised of large metropolitan areas, small metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan areas located in each region of the country. From these results the paper will explore which economic and noneconomic "push:" and "pull" factors are operating differently in the late 1990s compared with the late 1980s, as well as new linkages and complementarities that exist between these immigration and domestic migration processes. It will employ the "residence 5 years ago" data from the 1990 and 2000 US Census county to county files as well as the 5% PUMs data.

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