

# Migration Slowdown in America: Trends and Impacts\*

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*While much attention has been given to the overall decline of migration in the United States, its impact was strongest on particular regions, states, metropolitan areas, cities and suburbs. Shedding further light on the nature of the recent migration slowdown, this report details how different types of households and parts of the country have been affected and provides some insights on what may happen if and when migration again heats up.*

## Introduction

America has always been known as one of the most mobile countries in the world. Historically, Americans' pioneering spirit has led their migration westward; from the rural South to the industrial North; into the suburbs; to the Sun Belt; and most recently to interior frontiers in the Intermountain West and Southeast. Today, Americans' migration rates remain higher than those of most developed countries.<sup>1</sup>

But recent events have challenged that narrative, as migration in America slowed considerably. The trend relates to several factors. First, in many parts of the country, including large parts of Florida, Nevada and Arizona, a housing "bubble" arose during the middle part of the decade due to overbuilding and easy mortgage credit. Second, the financial market crisis that began in September 2008 led to sharp reductions in credit. As a result, potential buyers had difficulty obtaining mortgages and potential sellers saw reductions in the values of their homes. Third, the financial crisis greatly exacerbated the national recession that had begun in December 2007, reducing job availability in most regions of the country. This triple whammy of forces made it riskier for would-be homebuyers to find financing, would-be sellers to receive good value for their home and potential long-distance movers to find employment in areas where jobs were previously plentiful.

## Methodology

### Data and Measures

This report utilizes the most recent government statistics on domestic and international migration. Three of the data sources used are produced by the U.S. Census Bureau: the Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement to the Current Population Survey; the American Community Survey; and the Population Estimates Program. A further source is the annual state-to-state migration flow data provided by the Internal Revenue Service.<sup>2</sup>

Each covers moves over one-year periods, with end points ranging from 2008 to early 2009.

- *Current Population Survey (CPS).* The migration data for this report uses the "residence one year ago" question from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the CPS, drawn from approximately 100,000 households representing the civilian non-institutionalized population of the United States in March of each year. The most recent data in this report pertains to the period between March 2008 and March 2009.
- *American Community Survey (ACS).* The American Community Survey provides information on migration for a sample large enough to examine social and demographic attributes for migrants into and out of states and other large geographic areas. This report uses ACS data to compare the social and demographic attributes of net migration for 2004–05 with 2007–08.
- *Population Estimates.* The Census Bureau's Population Estimates program provides information on net domestic migration and net international migration for lower levels of geography (states, metropolitan areas and counties) than are available with either the CPS or single-year ACS data. The estimates are not based directly on surveys but on models and administrative data.
- *IRS State-to-State Migration.* Annual state-to-state domestic migration flows are available from the Internal Revenue Service Statistics of Income Division, based on a comparison of tax filer addresses in consecutive years. Estimates of migration flows are based on the number of exemptions claimed by tax filers, which provide a proxy for persons in their families. The data include only those who filed taxes in successive years, and therefore omit some elderly individuals who do not file tax returns and new filers who did not file in the previous year.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Geography

This report presents migration statistics for states, the four Census regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West), large metropolitan areas, and selected urban counties. (See Tables B and C for 2000–01 to 2007–08 net migration statistics for all U.S. states and the 25 largest metropolitan areas.) Metropolitan areas are defined according to Office of Management and Budget guidance issued in November 2008.

### Findings

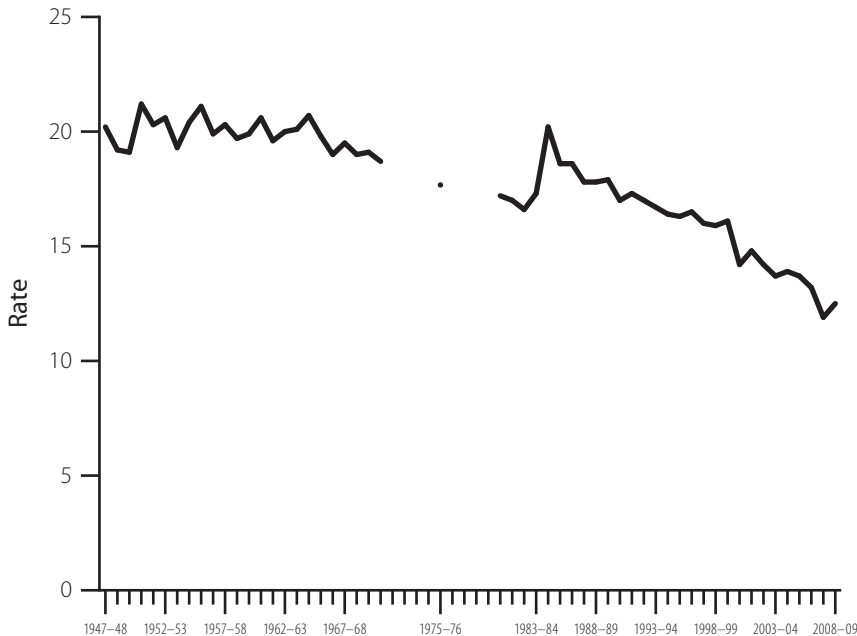
#### A. In 2007–2008, the overall U.S. migration rate reached its lowest point since World War II.

The past two years marked the least mobile period in postwar American society. In 2007–08, only 11.9 percent of Americans changed residences, and this rose to just 12.5 percent in 2008–09. Together,

these are the lowest rates of annual mobility since migration statistics were collected in 1947–48 (Figure A). The rates are down from 13 to 14 percent earlier this decade, and even more so from the 16 to 17 percent rates that prevailed in the 1990s. Back in the 1950s, almost one-fifth of all Americans changed residences annually. Since then, the American public has become somewhat more rooted due to higher rates of homeownership and the aging of the baby boom generation.

Declines in both long-distance and short-distance migration contributed to this historic U.S. migration slowdown. Long-distance migrants move among broader geographies, such as metropolitan areas or states. For people of working age, these moves tend to be associated with changes in employment. In contrast, local or short-distance migration, sometimes called residential mobility, often accompanies a change in housing needs. This might include a move from renting to owning a

**Figure A: Annual Domestic Migration Rate, United States, 1947–48 to 2008–09**



Note: Annual data not collected from 1971–75 and 1976–80.  
Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data.

home, to a different kind of house or neighborhood, or changes in family status such as getting married or having children.<sup>3</sup> Roughly three in five moves are short-distance moves; one in five is a long-distance move; and the remaining one in five is an inter-county, within-state move.

The rate at which people move within a county, a proxy for short-distance migration, reached 7.8 percent of the population in 2007–08, the lowest rate since the end of World War II. It ticked up in 2008–09 to 8.4 percent, though it remains low by historical standards (Figure B). In much of the 1990s, greater than 10 percent of the population moved within county lines, as did well over 13 percent of Americans for much of the 1950s and 1960s. Residential mobility has declined gradually as homeownership rates have risen and the population has aged, but the sharp downturn in the past two years relates very much to the housing market meltdown.

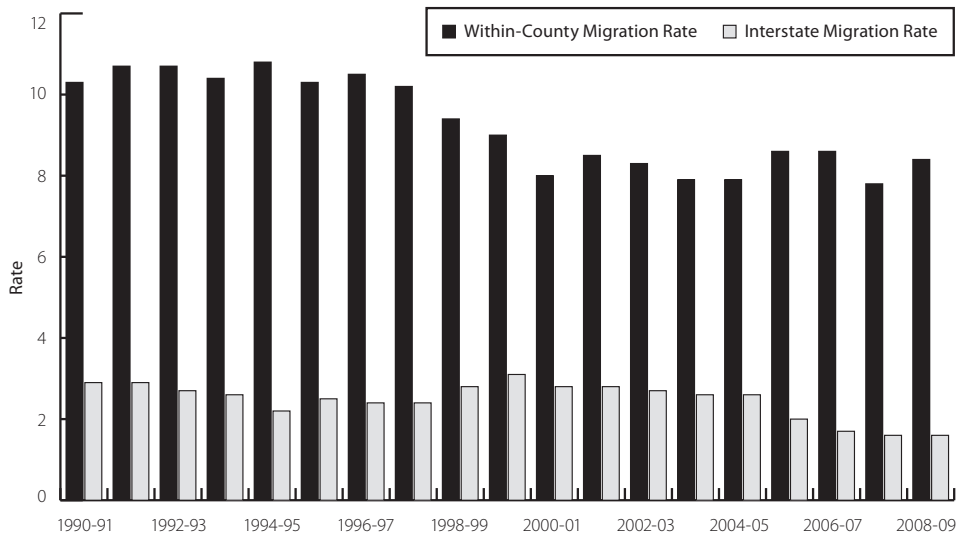
At the other end of the spectrum, the rate at which people move across state lines can serve as a proxy for long-distance migration. In both 2007–08 and 2008–09, annual interstate migration reached its lowest rates since the end of

World War II (Figure B). The recent decline in between-state migration is far more dramatic than that for within-county residential mobility. In fact, the 1.6 percent interstate migration rate for the past two years was half the value exhibited in 1999–2000, and far lower than the rate in the 1950s, when between 3 and 4 percent of the population moved across state lines annually.

As migration declined, housing became a notably less important driver for relocation. In 2004–05, amid the housing bubble period, 62 percent of within-county movers and 22 percent of interstate movers cited housing-related reasons as most important in explaining their move. By 2008–09, those shares had declined to 57 and 14 percent, respectively. Job-related reasons explained fully 46 percent of the fewer interstate moves undertaken in the latter period (see Table A for details).

Although short-distance moves are more frequent, long-distance migration acts as an engine of growth in many metropolitan areas. It affects not only the sizes of their overall populations but also those of key social and demographic segments that impact the economic vitality of these areas.

**Figure B: Within-County and Interstate Migration Rates, United States, 1990–91 to 2008–09**



Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic attribute most related to migration is age; younger adults are far more likely to move than older individuals. Figure C indicates that in 2000–01, as in most years, individuals in their 20s showed the highest rate of interstate migration, a rate which tapered dramatically as individuals age into their late 30s and thereafter, with a small peak in the early 60s related to retirement moves. It was young adults—those with the highest rates of mobility—who showed the steepest declines in interstate migration by 2008–09, with rates almost halving for 20 to 29 year-olds. Youth migration rates appear to have fallen in response to both a weakened job market and reduced home buying activity. Even the small bump in migration for seniors at retirement age disappeared in 2008–09.

Other demographic and economic attributes are associated with migration as well (Figure D). For instance, the most educated segments of the

population are more likely to make long-distance moves, largely because college graduates and professionals operate in more of a national labor market, attuned to opportunities in different regions of the country. Less-educated workers are more likely to change jobs within a labor market and thus make shorter-distance moves.<sup>4</sup> These differences have persisted during the migration slowdown, though all groups have been affected. Those with at least a college degree had higher rates of interstate mobility than other groups in 2008–09. Yet each educational group experienced at least a 1 percentage point decline in its rates over the course of the decade.

Married couples, (generally older) widows, and widowers generally exhibit lower levels of interstate migration than single and divorced persons, and this remained true in 2008–09. Single individuals by virtue of their relative youth and lack of dependents may be the most “footloose” of

**Table A: Reasons for Moving: Total, Within County, and Between States, 2004–05 and 2008–09**

| Reasons                      | Total moves* |         | Within county |         | Between states |         |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|---------|----------------|---------|
|                              | 2004–05      | 2008–09 | 2004–05       | 2008–09 | 2004–05        | 2008–09 |
| <b>Housing related</b>       | 47.1         | 45.8    | 61.8          | 57.2    | 22.4           | 13.7    |
| Wanted to own home, not rent | 9.3          | 5.5     | 12.2          | 6.6     | 4.0            | 1.5     |
| Wanted new or better housing | 17.8         | 14.5    | 24.4          | 18.6    | 7.3            | 2.5     |
| Wanted better neighborhood   | 4.0          | 5.0     | 4.8           | 6.2     | 2.0            | 1.6     |
| For cheaper housing          | 6.6          | 11.1    | 8.7           | 13.9    | 3.5            | 3.9     |
| Other housing reason         | 9.4          | 9.7     | 11.7          | 11.9    | 5.6            | 4.2     |
| <b>Job related</b>           | 17.6         | 17.8    | 6.7           | 8.9     | 34.0           | 46.1    |
| New job or job transfer      | 10.4         | 8.7     | 2.3           | 2.1     | 25.5           | 33.2    |
| To look for work or lost job | 1.9          | 2.7     | 0.5           | 1.0     | 3.0            | 7.3     |
| For easier commute           | 3.4          | 5.0     | 3.3           | 5.0     | 1.6            | 1.9     |
| Retired                      | 0.5          | 0.4     | 0.2           | 0.2     | 1.4            | 1.2     |
| Other job-related reason     | 1.4          | 1.0     | 0.4           | 0.6     | 2.5            | 2.5     |
| <b>Family related</b>        | 27.1         | 26.4    | 26.3          | 26.6    | 30.4           | 25.4    |
| Change in marital status     | 7.1          | 5.4     | 7.0           | 5.5     | 6.7            | 3.7     |
| To establish own household   | 7.8          | 9.5     | 9.5           | 11.6    | 5.0            | 2.7     |
| Other family reason          | 12.2         | 11.5    | 9.8           | 9.5     | 18.7           | 19.0    |
| <b>Other</b>                 | 8.2          | 10.0    | 5.2           | 7.3     | 13.2           | 14.8    |
| Attend/leave college         | 3.2          | 2.6     | 1.8           | 1.5     | 5.3            | 3.6     |
| Change of climate            | 0.6          | 0.5     | 0.2           | 0.1     | 2.3            | 2.6     |
| Health reasons               | 1.6          | 1.6     | 1.4           | 1.4     | 2.4            | 1.8     |
| Other reasons                | 2.8          | 4.9     | 1.8           | 3.8     | 3.2            | 6.8     |
| Natural disaster             | 0.0          | 0.4     | 0.0           | 0.5     | 0.0            | 0.0     |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 100.0        | 100.0   | 100.0         | 100.0   | 100.0          | 100.0   |

Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data.

\*Includes movement within county, between counties but within state, between states, and from abroad.

marital status groups. However, those individuals experienced the most substantial decline in long-distance migration, perhaps deciding to live with parents or other friends and relatives as a result of the economic downturn and not making as many long-distance labor-market-related moves.

Finally, economic attributes such as employment status and homeownership also relate to migration, with the unemployed and renters typically undertaking long-distance moves more frequently. Both employed and unemployed interstate migration rates dropped significantly during the decade. Renters, meanwhile, showed a much more substantial fall-off in long-distance migration than their homeowner counterparts, perhaps reflecting their own worsened economic prospects, but also the reluctance of owners to sell their homes and move during a period of nationwide home price declines.<sup>5</sup>

Overall, the last few years brought a sharp decline in migration, particularly over long distances. A freeze in the housing market coupled with a fairly pervasive nationwide recession led to a sharp and historic decline in long-distance migration that has deeply affected more economically vulnerable members of society.

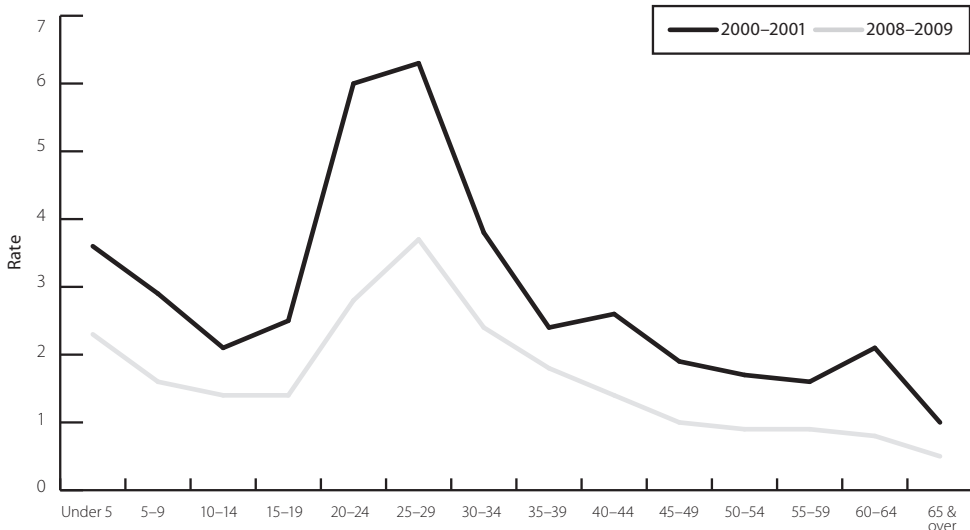
**B. From 2007 to 2008, 23 states, mostly in the Intermountain West and Southeast, showed reduced in-migration or a switch from in- to out-migration.**

The recent downturn in interstate migration has had variable impacts on different parts of the country. States that grew fastest during the mid-decade “bubble” years have experienced the greatest downturns in recent in-migration. By the same token, several states that were considered unaffordable and exported migrants during those bubble years have seen out-migration decline considerably.

State-level migration patterns between 2006–07 and 2007–08 demonstrate the impacts of the downturn on different types of states (Map A). The greatest shifts occurred in states that had benefitted most from the mid-decade housing boom, especially the southern state of Florida and the Intermountain West states of Arizona and Nevada. Among the 28 states that gained migrants in 2006–07, 19 gained fewer in 2007–08, and an additional four, including Florida, flipped from gaining to losing domestic migrants.

Many of these high-cost coastal states lost migrants during the middle part of the decade to

**Figure C: Interstate Migration Rate by Age, United States, 2000–01 and 2008–09**



Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

interior states where housing seemed more affordable. In 2004–05, California and New York each lost about a quarter million migrants to other parts of the country. As more Americans stayed put in 2007–08, California’s migration loss shrank to 144,000 and New York’s roughly halved to 126,000. A similar retention of potential out-migrants occurred in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut, as evidently many young couples, empty nesters and retirees waited until new opportunities arose elsewhere.

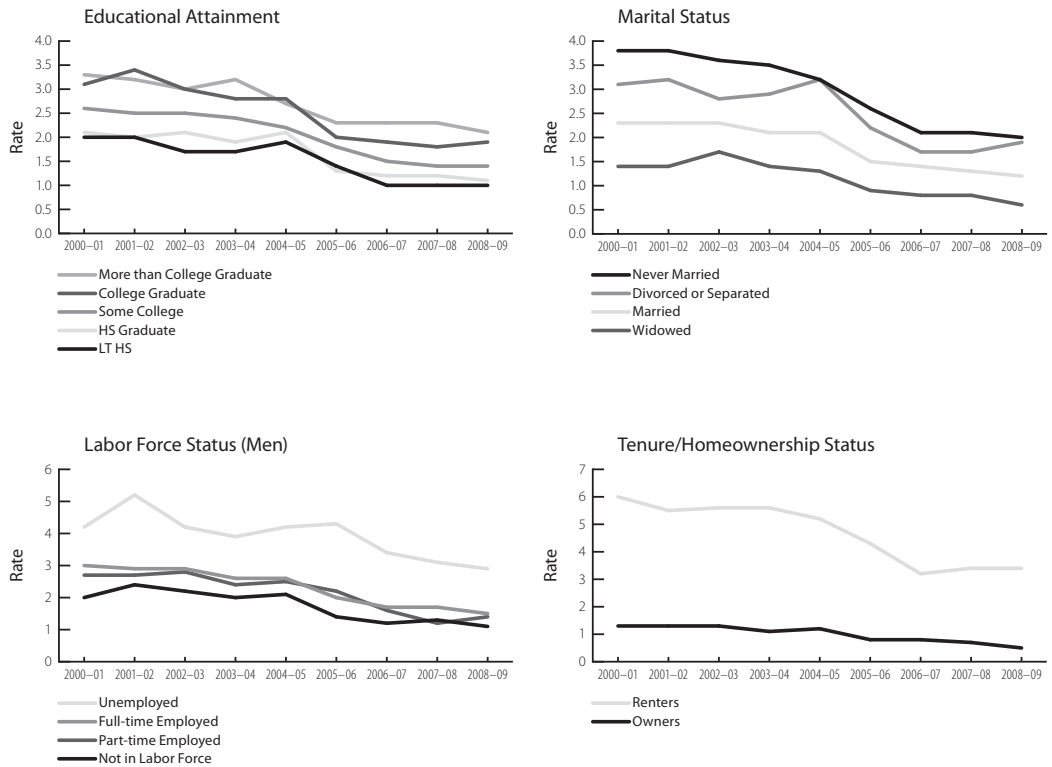
During much of the post-World War II period, when Northerners contemplated moving to the Sun Belt, three states tended to stand out—Florida for Easterners; Texas for Midwesterners and California for people from all parts of the country. Florida and Texas kept their luster in attracting migrants up through the first decade of

this century (Table F). California began to lose its magnetism for domestic migrants during the 1990s, first due to a sharp economic downturn and later to high housing costs. The recent migration downturn has impacted each of these states somewhat differently.

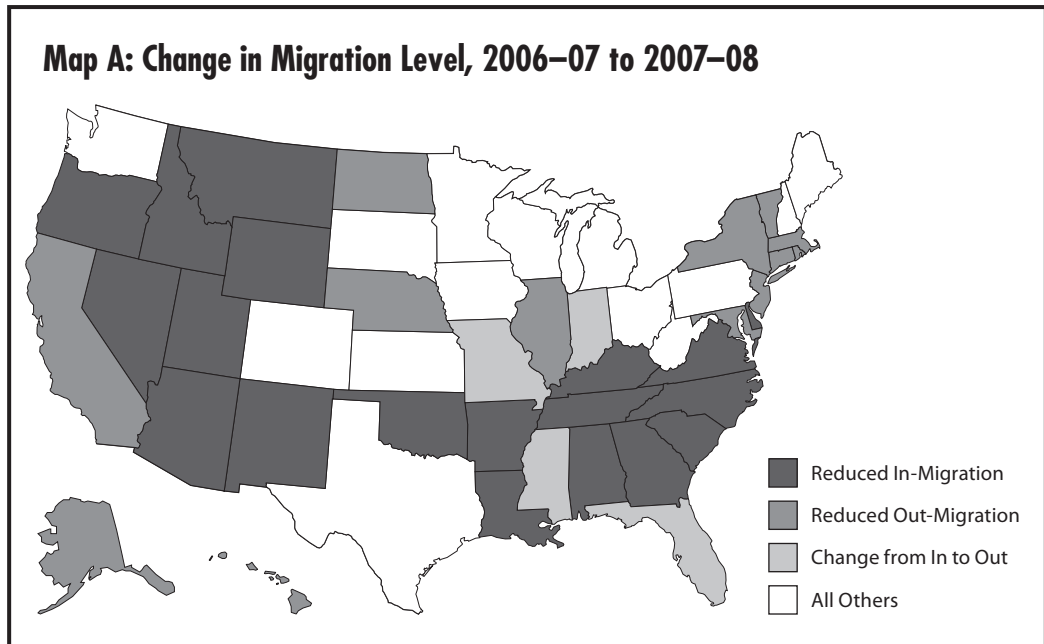
**Florida**

Florida, of the three, is a poster child for the recent housing slump. Long a magnet for retirees and more recently for broader segments of the population, Florida led the nation in domestic migration for the first half of this decade. Yet overbuilding and a high level of foreclosures made it one of the first states to show dramatic declines in migration, including a surprising switch from net in- to net out-migration between 2006–07 and 2007–08. This devastated the state’s economy, which had

**Figure D: Interstate Migration Rate by Demographic/Economic Attributes, United States, 2000–2001 to 2008–09**



Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data.



relied heavily on the construction and real estate industries.<sup>6</sup>

The major contributor to Florida's migration loss was its exchange with the Northeast (Figure F). In-migration from that region and especially from New York and its metropolitan areas, dominated that from other regions through 2005, then fell precipitously through 2008. Meanwhile, Florida began to export migrants on net to other parts of the South by 2005–06, a pattern that accelerated the following year. Major migration gainers from Florida include Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. (See Table C for the top and bottom five state contributors to Florida's migration.)

The shift from net in-migration to net out-migration in Florida was especially strong for whites, Hispanics, younger people, married couples and persons with some college education (Table D). Despite its total net out-migration, Florida still attracted people aged 55 and over in 2008–09. Of course, the considerable reduction in the in-migration of younger age groups stands to rob Florida of some of its traditionally vibrant, youthful, middle-class labor force.

### ***Texas***

Texas provides a sharp contrast to Florida. It is part of an economically different Sun Belt than Florida, one largely insulated from the mortgage

crisis, steep home price declines and employment losses.<sup>7</sup> Texas' more diverse economy and stricter home mortgage regulation (which itself resulted from excesses of the previous decade) have produced far fewer job losses and foreclosures than Florida, Arizona and Nevada.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, Texas' migration patterns differ sharply from Florida's and California's (Figure E). Buffeted to some degree by in-migration from post-Katrina New Orleans, the state has shown consistent net in-migration over the past few years (Figure F). From 2004 to 2008, aside from Louisiana (where gains were strong post-Katrina but short-lived), California and Florida contributed the most migrants to Texas, while smaller but significant gains came from Illinois and New York.

A broad array of demographic groups, including whites, Hispanics, children and younger married couples drove Texas' recent migration gains (Table D). Its reduced black in-migration can be attributed, in part, to Katrina-related return migration to Louisiana. Notably, Texas displayed heightened attraction for college graduates in 2008–09 compared with 2004–05, which could benefit the state economically over the long run.

### ***California***

The third traditional Sun Belt state, California, continues to show net domestic out-migration,

DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table B: Net Domestic Migration and International Migration, Large Metro Areas by Region, 2000 to 2008\***

| Region/<br>metro area** | 2008<br>population<br>(1,000s) | Annual domestic migration |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 2000–08 Total         |                            |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
|                         |                                | 2000–01                   | 2001–02  | 2002–03  | 2003–04  | 2004–05  | 2005–06  | 2006–07  | 2007–08  | Domestic<br>migration | International<br>migration |
| <b>North</b>            |                                |                           |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                       |                            |
| New York.....           | 19,007                         | -176,418                  | -207,800 | -236,767 | -248,028 | -284,253 | -273,991 | -219,104 | -144,099 | -1,790,460            | 1,102,658                  |
| Philadelphia.....       | 5,838                          | -14,758                   | -7,821   | -7,039   | -8,118   | -13,995  | -16,119  | -18,598  | -21,848  | -108,296              | 95,882                     |
| Boston.....             | 4,523                          | -13,945                   | -35,445  | -47,036  | -46,821  | -46,088  | -32,988  | -22,508  | -8,261   | -253,092              | 165,260                    |
| Pittsburgh.....         | 2,351                          | -8,085                    | -5,404   | -4,654   | -8,698   | -11,148  | -9,860   | -5,062   | -2,432   | -55,343               | 15,576                     |
| Providence.....         | 1,597                          | 3,047                     | 5,679    | 3,428    | -7,485   | -13,530  | -14,282  | -13,766  | -10,626  | -47,535               | 29,689                     |
| <b>Midwest</b>          |                                |                           |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                       |                            |
| Chicago.....            | 9,570                          | -55,164                   | -68,856  | -72,424  | -65,555  | -77,736  | -69,542  | -55,355  | -42,110  | -506,742              | 385,958                    |
| Detroit.....            | 4,425                          | -25,209                   | -33,974  | -30,532  | -31,013  | -38,727  | -46,477  | -59,081  | -62,160  | -327,173              | 91,394                     |
| Minn.-St.Paul.....      | 3,230                          | 7,571                     | -4,601   | -9,151   | -4,184   | -7,224   | -2,764   | -1,965   | -3,440   | -25,758               | 72,601                     |
| St. Louis.....          | 2,817                          | -4,420                    | -4,495   | -2,145   | -4,724   | -7,880   | -3,670   | -6,901   | -5,567   | -39,802               | 26,547                     |
| Cincinnati.....         | 2,155                          | -1,560                    | -4,901   | -3,657   | -2,075   | -1,837   | -680     | -1,354   | -3,569   | -19,633               | 17,287                     |
| Cleveland.....          | 2,088                          | -14,943                   | -13,586  | -13,684  | -14,597  | -17,697  | -20,487  | -16,829  | -14,896  | -126,719              | 25,432                     |
| Kansas City.....        | 2,002                          | 4,294                     | 5,848    | 196      | 1,047    | 1,401    | 3,798    | 4,529    | 1,413    | 22,526                | 28,730                     |
| Columbus.....           | 1,773                          | 5,670                     | 430      | 3,333    | 2,288    | 2,672    | 3,473    | 3,222    | 2,499    | 23,587                | 30,262                     |
| Indianapolis.....       | 1,715                          | 9,196                     | 6,437    | 6,026    | 7,102    | 7,720    | 10,113   | 8,815    | 6,707    | 62,116                | 20,679                     |
| Milwaukee.....          | 1,549                          | -8,619                    | -7,139   | -7,866   | -10,040  | -12,903  | -11,551  | -7,844   | -6,443   | -72,405               | 23,709                     |
| <b>South</b>            |                                |                           |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                       |                            |
| Dallas.....             | 6,300                          | 48,552                    | 13,919   | -1,303   | 8,504    | 23,455   | 71,433   | 52,260   | 43,175   | 259,995               | 293,077                    |
| Houston.....            | 5,728                          | 4,570                     | 24,498   | 2,895    | 6,427    | 6,187    | 88,885   | 19,981   | 36,724   | 190,167               | 266,850                    |
| Miami.....              | 5,415                          | -3,665                    | -1,766   | -20,134  | -3,199   | -9,923   | -50,595  | -84,268  | -46,997  | -220,547              | 423,136                    |
| Atlanta.....            | 5,376                          | 47,792                    | 26,219   | 22,507   | 32,297   | 51,462   | 95,661   | 75,098   | 43,051   | 394,087               | 181,920                    |
| Washington, D.C.....    | 5,358                          | 15,922                    | 1,296    | -8,500   | -14,535  | -16,790  | -45,148  | -35,337  | -18,259  | -121,351              | 245,228                    |
| Tampa.....              | 2,734                          | 30,512                    | 34,285   | 32,262   | 49,427   | 52,008   | 39,331   | 16,117   | 6,510    | 260,452               | 59,852                     |
| Baltimore.....          | 2,667                          | -235                      | 4,108    | 3,556    | -6,434   | -5,883   | -6,573   | -11,158  | -12,352  | -34,971               | 31,238                     |
| Orlando.....            | 2,055                          | 30,423                    | 27,098   | 27,184   | 44,365   | 51,939   | 34,307   | 11,570   | 3,153    | 230,039               | 72,270                     |
| San Antonio.....        | 2,031                          | 5,651                     | 16,252   | 16,578   | 15,025   | 15,605   | 31,421   | 30,910   | 22,791   | 154,233               | 28,977                     |
| Charlotte.....          | 1,702                          | 17,355                    | 14,067   | 13,749   | 18,992   | 31,342   | 43,295   | 45,549   | 34,387   | 218,736               | 42,720                     |
| Virginia Beach.....     | 1,658                          | -4,711                    | 12,208   | 22,181   | 332      | -4,659   | -3,727   | -14,556  | -15,523  | -8,455                | -2,681                     |
| Austin.....             | 1,653                          | 34,655                    | 4,780    | 6,916    | 14,624   | 22,537   | 38,918   | 40,561   | 35,041   | 198,032               | 59,259                     |
| Nashville.....          | 1,551                          | 8,171                     | 4,164    | 7,332    | 13,458   | 16,605   | 22,834   | 20,638   | 16,625   | 109,827               | 25,388                     |
| Jacksonville.....       | 1,313                          | 14,164                    | 17,992   | 17,543   | 19,733   | 17,781   | 18,753   | 11,405   | 4,768    | 122,139               | 11,101                     |
| <b>West</b>             |                                |                           |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                       |                            |
| Los Angeles.....        | 12,873                         | -104,034                  | -109,505 | -119,876 | -140,949 | -200,728 | -227,993 | -221,144 | -115,037 | -1,239,266            | 815,517                    |
| Phoenix.....            | 4,282                          | 49,818                    | 49,846   | 44,673   | 66,231   | 98,699   | 102,954  | 65,949   | 51,077   | 529,247               | 168,765                    |
| San Francisco.....      | 4,275                          | -24,917                   | -79,116  | -74,174  | -64,659  | -51,236  | -40,504  | -20,536  | 5,506    | -349,636              | 249,902                    |
| Riverside.....          | 4,116                          | 57,212                    | 66,484   | 85,910   | 95,221   | 72,502   | 61,177   | 29,715   | -7,608   | 460,613               | 96,382                     |
| Seattle.....            | 3,345                          | 4,962                     | -7,177   | -12,931  | -10,269  | 5,125    | 21,252   | 10,281   | 11,869   | 23,112                | 103,670                    |
| San Diego.....          | 3,001                          | 6,446                     | 3,674    | 1,133    | -38,101  | -36,060  | -35,785  | -15,553  | 420      | -113,826              | 98,650                     |
| Denver.....             | 2,507                          | 16,883                    | -5,212   | -12,539  | -7,127   | -429     | 10,161   | 15,772   | 17,872   | 35,381                | 93,190                     |
| Portland.....           | 2,207                          | 17,123                    | 14,485   | 4,025    | 485      | 12,335   | 18,366   | 17,101   | 17,996   | 101,916               | 68,655                     |
| Sacramento.....         | 2,110                          | 37,274                    | 35,844   | 25,874   | 18,293   | 4,757    | 1,779    | 3,757    | 4,524    | 132,102               | 63,544                     |
| Las Vegas.....          | 1,866                          | 41,311                    | 37,491   | 35,714   | 53,848   | 39,186   | 44,436   | 32,876   | 14,365   | 299,227               | 65,758                     |
| San Jose.....           | 1,819                          | -36,884                   | -58,476  | -44,179  | -33,479  | -22,154  | -17,797  | -11,903  | -2,625   | -227,497              | 162,882                    |

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.

\*Forty largest metro areas based on 2008 population estimates.

\*\*Official name as defined by the Office of Management and Budget is abbreviated.

which began in the 1990s (Figure E). A significant portion of that population loss has been attributed to the high cost of living in coastal California, which tended to spread migrants to other nearby states—Nevada, Arizona, Oregon and Washington—as well as to other parts of the Intermountain West and Texas.<sup>9</sup>

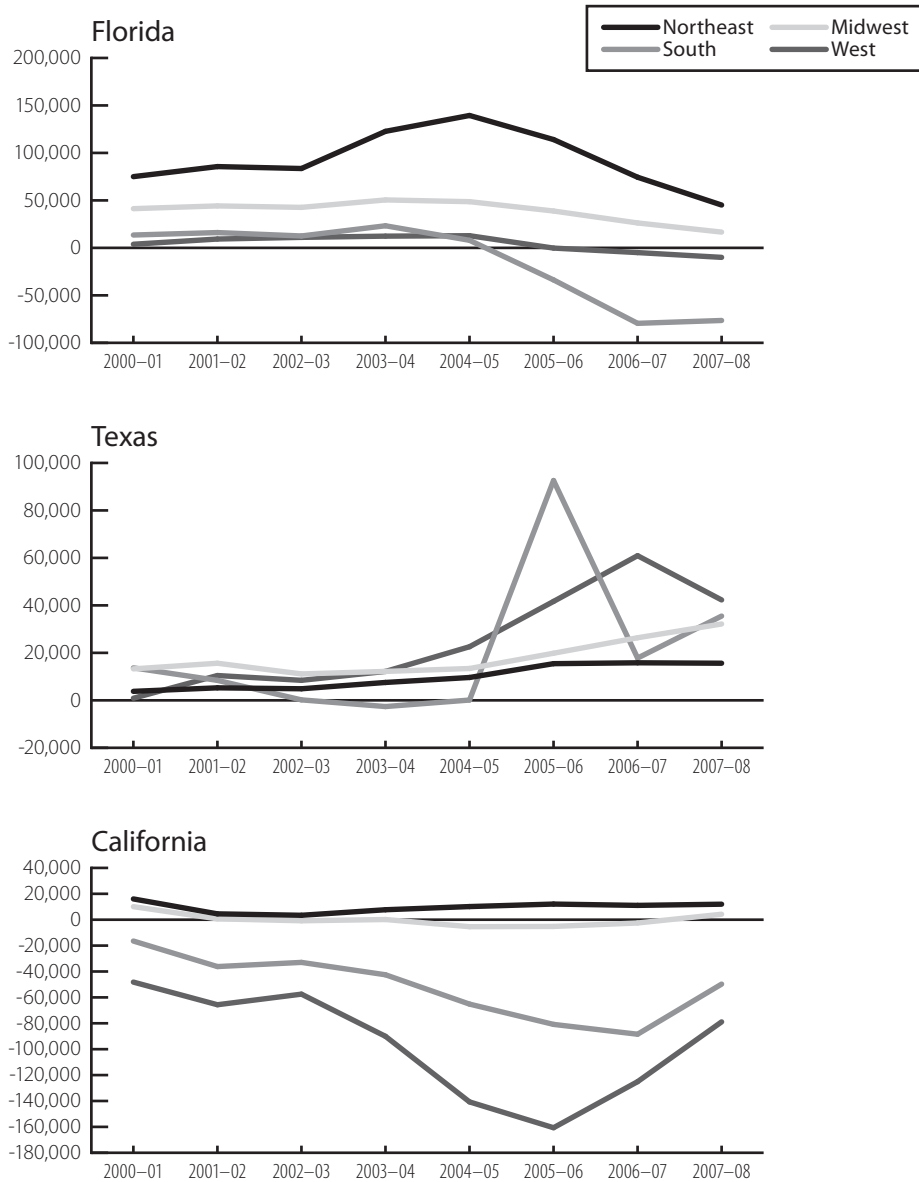
While Florida attracted many more domestic in-migrants during the mid-decade housing bubble, California showed accelerated out-migration

during those years. As the bubble began to burst, domestic out-migration from California slowed considerably. Migration away from areas stretching from San Francisco to San Diego, where high housing prices fueled “middle class flight” to the interior West, has now retrenched as home foreclosures rise and job opportunities diminish in Nevada and Arizona.

Those Western states very much drive California’s overall migration trend (Figure F). The

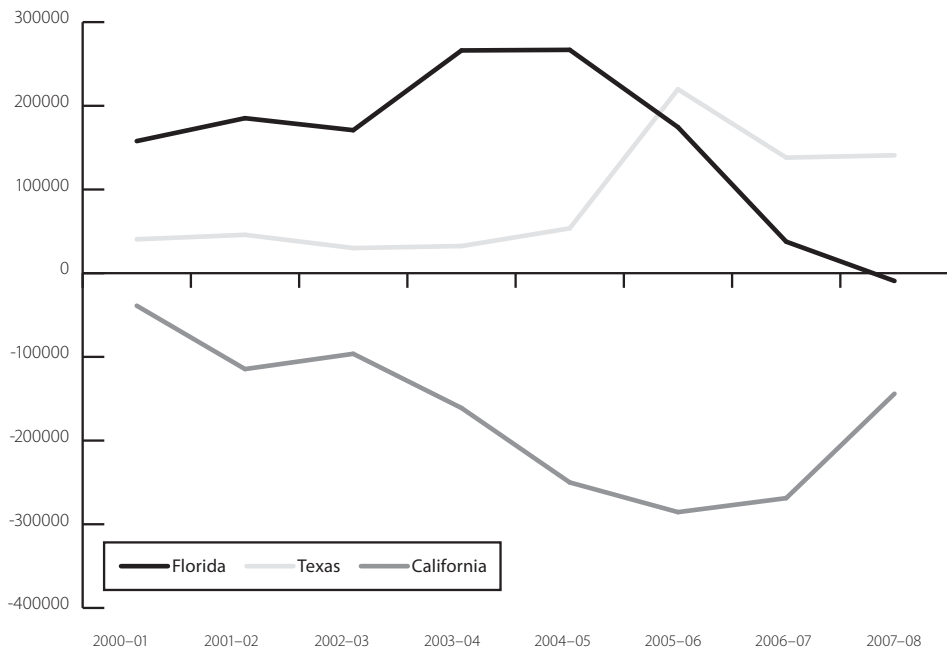


**Figure F: Contribution to Net Domestic Migration by Region for Florida, Texas, and California, 2000–01 to 2007–08**



Source: Brookings analysis of Internal Revenue Service Migration Flow data.

**Figure E: Net Domestic Migration, Florida, Texas, and California, 2000–01 to 2007–08**



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.

lion’s share of domestic net out-migration was absorbed by other Western states during the first half of the decade, but between 2006 and 2008, the annual losses dropped by roughly half. Among these states, California lost the most migrants to Arizona and Nevada during the “bubble” year of 2004–05. Now, Texas absorbs the greatest number of California out-migrants. In 2007–08, California experienced net out-migration to 36 states and the District of Columbia, and received small net migration gains from Northeastern and Midwestern states including New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Michigan (Table C).

During the middle part of the decade, younger couples and singles with moderate education levels dominated the groups leaving California for lower-cost housing and job opportunities (Table D). Now, the state seems to be retaining many of these same groups, particularly younger whites and Hispanics who are married couples or singles, as housing cost pressures ease. Among educational groups, college graduates flipped

from considerable net out-migration to modest net in-migration, as the housing market and job opportunities dried up in other parts of the country. For the moment, the national migration slowdown appears to have benefited California, as more of its younger, well-educated residents have remained.

**C. The metro areas that experienced the greatest recent migration declines were those that reaped the most migrants during the mid-decade housing bubble.**

Metropolitan areas provide a sharper contrast between the “winners” and “losers” in the recent migration slowdown. For example, the Riverside metropolitan area in southern California experienced a housing bubble similar to those in Las Vegas and Phoenix, and migration trends there have differed from those occurring in coastal California metropolitan areas.

Several metropolitan areas that gained substantial numbers of in-migrants during the hous-

**Table C: Top Five Sources and Destinations for Net Domestic Migration, Selected States, 2004–05 to 2007–08, continued on next page**

| <i>States/sources<br/>or destinations</i> | <i>Contributions to net domestic migration</i> |                |                |                |                | <i>Total</i>   |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | <i>2003–04</i>                                 | <i>2004–05</i> | <i>2005–06</i> | <i>2006–07</i> | <i>2007–08</i> | <i>2003–08</i> |
| <b>Florida</b>                            |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Sources</b>                            |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| New York .....                            | 53,145   | 62,600         | 52,073         | 32,800         | 18,018         | 218,636        |
| New Jersey .....                          | 23,841   | 27,300         | 23,563         | 16,639         | 11,236         | 102,579        |
| Massachusetts .....                       | 15,902   | 16,838         | 13,117         | 8,072          | 3,931          | 57,860         |
| Michigan .....                            | 9,036  | 10,020         | 10,521         | 10,205         | 8,286          | 48,068         |
| Pennsylvania .....                        | 11,960   | 13,400         | 10,197         | 6,629          | 4,626          | 46,812         |
| <b>Destinations</b>                       |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| Georgia .....                             | 1,098  | -3,008         | -15,828        | -27,487        | -19,995        | -65,220        |
| North Carolina .....                      | -269   | -2,703         | -11,398        | -17,573        | -15,804        | -47,747        |
| Tennessee .....                           | -340   | -4,045         | -9,679         | -12,691        | -10,479        | -37,234        |
| Texas .....                               | 2,967  | 1,672          | -6,232         | -13,293        | -15,142        | -30,028        |
| South Carolina .....                      | 583  | -524           | -4,734         | -7,081         | -6,403         | -18,159        |
| <b>Texas</b>                              |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Sources</b>                            |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| California .....                          | 11,990   | 23,270         | 41,164         | 50,647         | 32,406         | 159,477        |
| Louisiana .....                           | 3,576  | 5,617          | 79,791         | -6,708         | -192           | 82,084         |
| Florida .....                             | -2,967   | -1,672         | 6,232          | 13,293         | 15,142         | 30,028         |
| Illinois .....                            | 4,172  | 4,753          | 5,676          | 6,257          | 6,675          | 27,533         |
| New York .....                            | 3,015  | 3,782          | 5,179          | 5,799          | 5,218          | 22,993         |
| <b>Destinations</b>                       |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| Arkansas .....                            | -933   | -1,559         | -622           | 698            | 1,628          | -788           |
| District of Columbia .....                | -164   | -110           | -168           | -145           | 56             | -531           |
| Montana .....                             | -242   | 175            | -78            | -126           | 30             | -241           |
| <b>California</b>                         |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Sources</b>                            |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| New York .....                            | 2,641  | 3,842          | 3,779          | 3,467          | 3,303          | 17,032         |
| New Jersey .....                          | 2,193  | 2,762          | 3,041          | 2,557          | 2,988          | 13,541         |
| Massachusetts .....                       | 2,404  | 2,663          | 3,062          | 2,846          | 2,498          | 13,473         |
| Michigan .....                            | 1,418  | 1,237          | 2,226          | 2,931          | 4,218          | 12,030         |
| Illinois .....                            | 2,744  | 1,287          | 1,415          | 1,172          | 2,298          | 8,916          |
| <b>Destinations</b>                       |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| Arizona .....                             | -24,620  | -45,265        | -49,026        | -31,408        | -15,533        | -165,852       |
| Texas .....                               | -11,990  | -23,270        | -41,164        | -50,647        | -32,406        | -159,477       |
| Nevada .....                              | -30,374  | -31,610        | -30,925        | -24,743        | -12,094        | -129,746       |
| Oregon .....                              | -11,072  | -18,159        | -21,667        | -16,549        | -12,577        | -80,024        |
| Washington .....                          | -7,554   | -14,211        | -16,986        | -13,099        | -11,890        | -63,740        |
| <b>New York</b>                           |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Sources</b>                            |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| Michigan .....                            | 13   | 68             | 648            | 1,044          | 1,331          | 3,104          |
| Massachusetts .....                       | 693  | 71             | 12             | -446           | -152           | 178            |
| North Dakota .....                        | 2  | 53             | 34             | -31            | 29             | 87             |
| <b>Destinations</b>                       |  |                |                |                |                |                |
| Florida .....                             | -53,145  | -62,600        | -52,073        | -32,800        | -18,018        | -218,636       |
| New Jersey .....                          | -26,488  | -26,923        | -24,144        | -18,529        | -15,737        | -111,821       |
| North Carolina .....                      | -10,273  | -14,418        | -16,968        | -17,862        | -15,970        | -75,491        |
| Pennsylvania .....                        | -15,115  | -15,437        | -15,613        | -12,094        | -7,759         | -66,018        |
| Georgia .....                             | -8,692   | -10,648        | -12,681        | -12,742        | -8,904         | -53,667        |

Source: Brookings analysis of Internal Revenue Service Migration Flow data.

ing bubble years seem to have lost their attractive power (Table E). In both 2003–04 and 2004–05, Riverside, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Tampa, Orlando and Atlanta led all metropolitan areas in net domestic migration. By 2005–06, Tampa and Orlando had already dropped to eighth and ninth as Florida’s housing bubble began to burst, while Riverside fell but remained in the top six. But by 2007–08, Riverside had turned from a domestic migration gainer to one of the biggest losers (ranked 350 out

of 363); Tampa and Orlando plummeted further down the list; and Las Vegas dropped to 13th.

As migration to Florida and the Intermountain West waned in the wake of the mortgage crisis, other metro areas climbed the list of top gainers. Chief among these were metro areas in Texas. Yet recent migration gains among the top-ranked metro areas were not nearly as high as those in the middle of the decade. Phoenix continued to lead all other metro areas in domestic migration in 2007–

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Table C: Top Five Sources and Destinations for Net Domestic Migration, Selected States, 2004–05 to 2007–08, continued**

| <i>States/sources or destinations</i> | <i>Contributions to net domestic migration</i> |                |                |                |                | <i>Total</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
|                                       | <i>2003–04</i>                                 | <i>2004–05</i> | <i>2005–06</i> | <i>2006–07</i> | <i>2007–08</i> |              |
| <b>Arizona</b>                        |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| <b>Sources</b>                        |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| California.....                       | 24,620   | 45,265         | 49,026         | 31,408         | 15,533         | 165,852      |
| Illinois.....                         | 5,138  | 5,430          | 5,261          | 3,616          | 3,224          | 22,669       |
| Michigan.....                         | 2,347  | 2,922          | 3,757          | 4,674          | 5,096          | 18,796       |
| New York.....                         | 3,067  | 3,532          | 3,992          | 3,221          | 2,121          | 15,933       |
| Ohio.....                             | 2,008  | 2,274          | 2,855          | 2,581          | 2,197          | 11,915       |
| <b>Destinations</b>                   |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| Texas.....                            | 1,621  | 2,016          | -565           | -3,536         | -3,524         | -3,988       |
| Idaho.....                            | 129  | -390           | -631           | -914           | -739           | -2,545       |
| Arkansas.....                         | -145   | -140           | -360           | -309           | -323           | -1,277       |
| North Carolina.....                   | 322  | 136            | -523           | -622           | -562           | -1,249       |
| Tennessee.....                        | -48  | -169           | -325           | -396           | 74             | -864         |
| <b>Nevada</b>                         |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| <b>Sources</b>                        |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| California.....                       | 30,374   | 31,610         | 30,925         | 24,743         | 12,094         | 129,746      |
| New York.....                         | 2,330  | 2,624          | 2,344          | 1,738          | 1,243          | 10,279       |
| Illinois.....                         | 2,261  | 2,010          | 2,059          | 1,277          | 1,051          | 8,658        |
| Michigan.....                         | 896  | 985            | 1,534          | 2,031          | 2,382          | 7,828        |
| Hawaii.....                           | 981  | 1,355          | 1,288          | 1,821          | 1,066          | 6,511        |
| <b>Destinations</b>                   |  |                |                |                |                |              |
| Arizona.....                          | -307   | -2,224         | -2,136         | -965           | -733           | -6,365       |
| Idaho.....                            | -194   | -720           | -1,207         | -1,011         | -902           | -4,034       |
| Texas.....                            | 729  | 74             | -767           | -1,412         | -1,754         | -3,130       |
| Utah.....                             | 1,381  | -413           | -875           | -1,323         | -1,768         | -2,998       |
| Oregon.....                           | 681  | -254           | -588           | -633           | -687           | -1,481       |

Source: Brookings analysis of Internal Revenue Service Migration Flow data.

**Table D: Net Domestic Migration by Demographic Characteristics, Florida, Texas and California, 2004–05 to 2007–08**

|                               | <i>Florida</i> |                | <i>Texas</i>   |                | <i>California</i> |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                               | <i>2004–05</i> | <i>2007–08</i> | <i>2004–05</i> | <i>2007–08</i> | <i>2004–05</i>    | <i>2007–08</i> |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>         |                |                |                |                |                   |                |
| White                         | 112,217        | -7,790         | 54,624         | 66,162         | -160,452          | -65,340        |
| Black                         | 13,593         | 9,462          | 49,252         | 17,252         | -21,648           | -13,063        |
| Hispanic                      | 45,178         | -13,375        | 8,292          | 33,882         | -91,423           | -45,007        |
| Asian                         | 9,908          | -1,715         | 4,649          | 10,103         | -4,232            | 3,957          |
| <b>Age</b>                    |                |                |                |                |                   |                |
| Under 15                      | 24,488         | -8,380         | 33,938         | 49,675         | -88,709           | -39,285        |
| 15–24                         | 23,477         | -8,727         | 12,775         | 10,104         | -11,753           | -2,770         |
| 25–34                         | 22,428         | -19,948        | 20,887         | 37,123         | -44,598           | -22,716        |
| 35–44                         | 21,395         | -2,227         | 13,367         | 19,456         | -54,905           | -20,927        |
| 45–54                         | 27,298         | 264            | 11,965         | 4,970          | -30,277           | -12,783        |
| 55–64                         | 41,784         | 14,306         | 7,003          | 2,111          | -28,416           | -10,891        |
| 65–                           | 16,209         | 8,766          | 12,721         | 6,460          | -22,315           | -8,121         |
| <b>Educational Attainment</b> |                |                |                |                |                   |                |
| Less than HS                  | 15,584         | 3,649          | 8,698          | 12,365         | -27,272           | -16,335        |
| HS Grad                       | 37,741         | 4,760          | 18,269         | 11,678         | -53,144           | -20,699        |
| Some College                  | 35,745         | -9,449         | 29,726         | 25,927         | -59,052           | -42,641        |
| College Grad                  | 40,044         | 2,201          | 9,250          | 20,150         | -41,043           | 4,237          |
| <b>Marital Status</b>         |                |                |                |                |                   |                |
| Never married                 | 49,982         | -4,821         | 18,116         | 23,265         | -22,631           | -18,417        |
| Currently married             | 94,780         | -551           | 43,607         | 48,795         | -131,581          | -45,790        |
| Divorced/Separated            | 13,923         | 3,498          | 17,434         | 8,990          | -38,002           | -16,689        |
| Widowed                       | 202            | -4,947         | 3,288          | 2,769          | -9,193            | -2,626         |

Source: Brookings analysis of American Community Survey data.

**Table E: Metro Areas with Highest Annual Net Domestic Migration, 2003–04 to 2007–08\***

| 2003–04            |        | 2004–05            |        | 2005–06            |         | 2006–07             |        | 2007–08              |               |
|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|---------|---------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------|
| <b>1 Riverside</b> | 95,221 | <b>1 Phoenix</b>   | 98,699 | <b>1 Phoenix</b>   | 102,954 | <b>1 Atlanta</b>    | 75,098 | <b>1 Phoenix</b>     | 51,077        |
| <b>2 Phoenix</b>   | 66,231 | <b>2 Riverside</b> | 72,502 | <b>2 Atlanta</b>   | 95,661  | <b>2 Phoenix</b>    | 65,949 | 2 Dallas             | 43,175        |
| <b>3 Las Vegas</b> | 53,848 | <b>3 Tampa</b>     | 52,008 | 3 Houston          | 88,885  | 3 Dallas            | 52,260 | <b>3 Atlanta</b>     | <b>43,051</b> |
| <b>4 Tampa</b>     | 49,427 | <b>4 Orlando</b>   | 51,939 | 4 Dallas           | 71,433  | 4 Charlotte         | 45,549 | 4 Houston            | 36,724        |
| <b>5 Orlando</b>   | 44,365 | <b>5 Atlanta</b>   | 51,462 | <b>5 Riverside</b> | 61,177  | 5 Austin            | 40,561 | 5 Austin             | 35,041        |
| <b>6 Atlanta</b>   | 32,297 | <b>6 Las Vegas</b> | 39,186 | <b>6 Las Vegas</b> | 44,436  | 6 New Orleans       | 36,155 | 6 Charlotte          | 34,387        |
|                    |        |                    |        | <b>8 Tampa</b>     | 39,331  | <b>7 Las Vegas</b>  | 32,876 | <b>13 Las Vegas</b>  | 14,365        |
|                    |        |                    |        | <b>10 Orlando</b>  | 34,307  | <b>10 Riverside</b> | 29,715 | <b>25 Tampa</b>      | 6,510         |
|                    |        |                    |        |                    |         | <b>15 Tampa</b>     | 16,117 | <b>57 Orlando</b>    | 3,153         |
|                    |        |                    |        |                    |         | <b>19 Orlando</b>   | 11,570 | <b>350 Riverside</b> | -7,608        |

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.  
\*Bold denotes metro areas ranking one to six in 2003–04.

08, but its net annual inflow was only about half what it was just two years earlier. The same held for Atlanta, the second-largest gainer in 2007–08.

Large metro areas in Texas, including Dallas, Houston and Austin, exhibit an entirely different pattern. They experienced far greater net immigration in the latter years of this decade, at the same time that the migration bubble burst in Florida. Large gains in Houston, and to a lesser extent Dallas, in 2005–06 reflect in part temporary gains from Louisianans displaced by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Even as interstate migration plummeted nationwide, the three metro areas each still managed to post net gains of between 35,000 and 45,000 migrants in 2007–08.

Coastal California metro areas display something of a mirror-image migration pattern. While the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego and especially Los Angeles saw increasing out-migration through the middle part of the decade, that trend moderated along with home prices during the past few years. San Francisco and San Diego each posted small migration gains in 2007–08. Los Angeles lost only about half as many migrants that year as it did in 2005–06. Its pattern roughly inverts that of the Phoenix metro area, the destination for many Angelinos in the early to mid-2000s. Las Vegas and Riverside also received many of their migrants from coastal California during that earlier period, but have since seen inflows plummet.

As Map A demonstrates, the impact of the migration slowdown was hardly limited to these Sun Belt destinations (Figure G). The Boston and

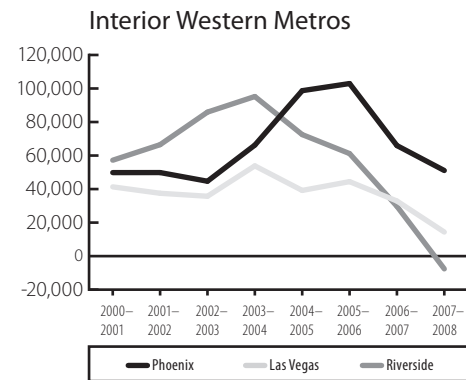
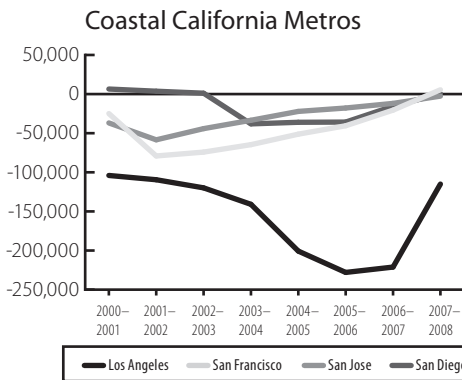
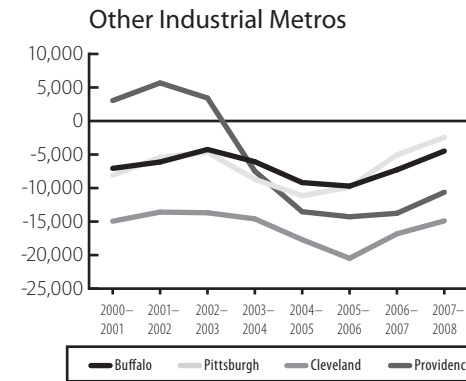
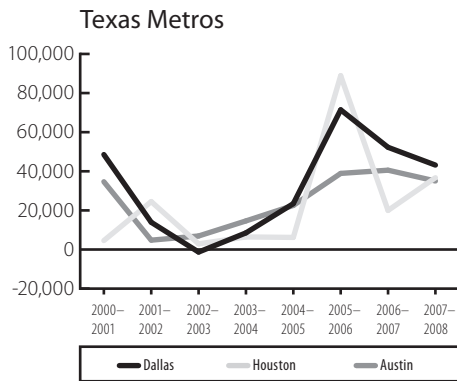
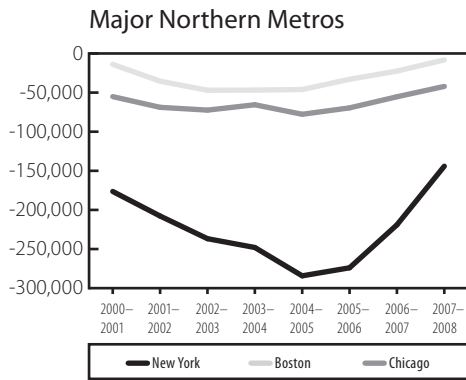
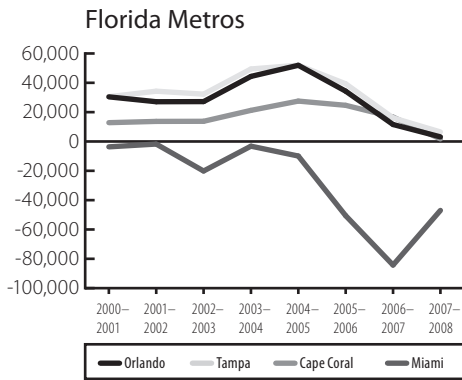
Chicago metro areas shed increasing numbers of migrants through the middle part of the decade, but began to stanch the outflow in 2005–06. The same held for the New York area; while net out-migration reduced its population by 144,000 in 2007–08, that was only about half the migration loss it sustained just three years prior. Pittsburgh posted its smallest decline from net migration in more than a decade, while rising outflows from Buffalo, Cleveland and Providence moderated after peaking in 2005–06. The latter two metro areas have among the weakest regional economies in the United States today, however, and their migration fortunes may slip once again as long-distance household mobility begins to rise.<sup>10</sup>

**D. Although international migration to the U.S. has also declined, it continued to offset losses from domestic migration in many large metropolitan immigrant gateways.**

Recent data suggest that the size of the U.S. foreign-born population may have stood almost still between 2007 and 2008, after increasing by about 500,000 the prior year and by an average of 1 million annually between 1990 and 2006.<sup>11</sup> This is attributable in part to a slowdown in Mexican immigrants.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this reduced flow, immigration remained an important contributor to population gains in large metropolitan gateways, which retain a high concentration of the nation’s foreign born. From 2000 to 2008, 25 percent of all net immigrant gains occurred in the two largest metropolitan magnets, New York and Los Ange-

**Figure G: Net Domestic Migration, Selected Metro Areas by State/Region, 2000–01 to 2007–08**



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.

**Table F: Net Domestic Migration and International Migration, U.S. States, 2000 to 2008**

| State or other jurisdiction | Annual domestic migration |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 2000–08 Total      |                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|
|                             | 2000–01                   | 2001–02  | 2002–03  | 2003–04  | 2004–05  | 2005–06  | 2006–07  | 2007–08  | Domestic migration | International migration |
| Alabama.....                | -8,850                    | -8,616   | 4,821    | 5,123    | 16,248   | 32,945   | 18,496   | 15,118   | 75,285             | 29,910                  |
| Alaska.....                 | -2,891                    | 1,916    | 2,619    | 629      | -868     | -1,981   | -3,909   | -3,732   | -8,217             | 3,947                   |
| Arizona.....                | 56,868                    | 69,983   | 63,038   | 90,745   | 132,123  | 137,697  | 87,245   | 62,980   | 700,679            | 208,005                 |
| Arkansas.....               | -318                      | 341      | 5,175    | 10,961   | 15,405   | 21,361   | 7,946    | 6,934    | 67,805             | 26,388                  |
| California.....             | -38,896                   | -114,576 | -96,329  | -161,077 | -250,028 | -285,494 | -268,809 | -144,061 | -1,359,270         | 1,754,946               |
| Colorado.....               | 44,912                    | 14,441   | -7,517   | -3,332   | 8,600    | 31,864   | 33,021   | 36,878   | 158,867            | 137,152                 |
| Connecticut.....            | -7,175                    | -2,754   | 47       | -14,320  | -17,357  | -15,125  | -24,218  | -14,985  | -95,887            | 99,037                  |
| Delaware.....               | 2,835                     | 4,193    | 5,814    | 6,090    | 7,813    | 5,792    | 4,615    | 4,126    | 41,278             | 13,669                  |
| Florida.....                | 157,832                   | 185,226  | 170,864  | 266,157  | 266,850  | 174,416  | 37,650   | -9,286   | 1,249,709          | 668,040                 |
| Georgia.....                | 55,256                    | 43,308   | 36,629   | 51,800   | 62,318   | 120,420  | 98,666   | 56,674   | 525,071            | 233,520                 |
| Hawaii.....                 | -6,518                    | -724     | 5,019    | -1,972   | 1,058    | -3,461   | -11,849  | -3,752   | -22,199            | 29,355                  |
| Idaho.....                  | 7,422                     | 6,847    | 9,068    | 13,170   | 20,215   | 22,049   | 19,975   | 12,767   | 111,513            | 17,142                  |
| Illinois.....               | -69,865                   | -79,082  | -78,604  | -72,343  | -85,236  | -72,434  | -56,984  | -52,349  | -566,897           | 409,865                 |
| Indiana.....                | -6,499                    | -13,033  | -2,231   | -4,363   | 3,423    | 6,530    | 628      | -1,979   | -17,524            | 68,416                  |
| Iowa.....                   | -13,271                   | -13,252  | -8,497   | -3,840   | -5,533   | -598     | -2,491   | 411      | -47,071            | 35,444                  |
| Kansas.....                 | -13,837                   | -9,577   | -9,750   | -11,929  | -10,937  | -6,743   | -3,280   | 284      | -65,769            | 44,788                  |
| Kentucky.....               | -1,329                    | 4,543    | 10,926   | 5,941    | 13,606   | 10,464   | 17,044   | 11,828   | 73,023             | 29,943                  |
| Louisiana.....              | -33,945                   | -18,993  | -10,584  | -9,846   | -14,335  | -271,330 | 27,500   | 13,555   | -317,978           | 22,128                  |
| Maine.....                  | 6,260                     | 8,664    | 9,194    | 3,711    | 2,586    | 395      | -963     | -2,063   | 27,784             | 5,142                   |
| Maryland.....               | 8,893                     | 12,872   | 7,579    | -10,944  | -12,488  | -25,890  | -33,716  | -32,161  | -85,855            | 131,327                 |
| Massachusetts.....          | -15,550                   | -30,885  | -43,558  | -54,506  | -55,443  | -44,064  | -32,607  | -18,675  | -295,288           | 204,945                 |
| Michigan.....               | -25,441                   | -34,999  | -32,954  | -39,853  | -57,267  | -73,991  | -95,787  | -109,257 | -469,549           | 151,589                 |
| Minnesota.....              | 7,441                     | -5,144   | -9,347   | -7,504   | -12,513  | -5,269   | -5,028   | -7,136   | -44,500            | 86,871                  |
| Mississippi.....            | -9,340                    | -7,206   | -1,200   | 3,660    | 553      | -16,819  | 3,833    | -753     | -27,272            | 10,116                  |
| Missouri.....               | 2,387                     | 3,731    | 5,355    | 4,621    | 7,804    | 11,302   | 4,501    | -2,384   | 37,317             | 50,449                  |
| Montana.....                | -399                      | 1,376    | 4,566    | 6,102    | 5,731    | 6,568    | 6,308    | 5,986    | 36,238             | 2,075                   |
| Nebraska.....               | -8,364                    | -4,419   | -2,685   | -5,123   | -3,515   | -5,168   | -5,367   | -1,491   | -37,132            | 26,464                  |
| Nevada.....                 | 47,859                    | 54,015   | 43,286   | 67,007   | 52,331   | 53,827   | 40,312   | 16,316   | 364,953            | 82,157                  |
| New Hampshire.....          | 10,507                    | 8,365    | 5,499    | 5,454    | 2,722    | 1,790    | -2,374   | -2,473   | 29,490             | 13,702                  |
| New Jersey.....             | -32,148                   | -31,049  | -42,275  | -51,221  | -67,340  | -77,639  | -72,370  | -56,208  | -430,250           | 370,173                 |
| New Mexico.....             | -9,406                    | 4,542    | 4,383    | 4,966    | 6,981    | 7,703    | 8,082    | 1,032    | 28,283             | 32,959                  |
| New York.....               | -165,928                  | -180,276 | -188,515 | -209,755 | -248,647 | -233,306 | -185,638 | -126,209 | -1,538,274         | 844,299                 |
| North Carolina.....         | 46,295                    | 43,785   | 47,499   | 44,338   | 73,418   | 110,632  | 116,245  | 98,074   | 580,286            | 182,816                 |
| North Dakota.....           | -6,796                    | -4,061   | -1,385   | 955      | -3,390   | -2,087   | -2,251   | -381     | -19,396            | 3,083                   |
| Ohio.....                   | -37,792                   | -37,723  | -33,067  | -37,675  | -45,033  | -50,275  | -47,350  | -49,752  | -338,667           | 92,711                  |
| Oklahoma.....               | -10,013                   | 1,072    | 1,078    | -3,966   | -531     | 15,688   | 14,736   | 7,954    | 23,182             | 40,913                  |
| Oregon.....                 | 13,654                    | 23,342   | 11,582   | 2,444    | 22,821   | 33,735   | 25,297   | 24,756   | 157,631            | 88,851                  |
| Pennsylvania.....           | -24,247                   | -6,556   | 1,211    | -3,061   | -3,334   | 3,312    | -5,056   | -11,462  | -49,193            | 128,650                 |
| Rhode Island.....           | 2,181                     | 3,053    | 1,563    | -5,659   | -10,937  | -11,100  | -12,013  | -8,816   | -41,728            | 23,946                  |
| South Carolina.....         | 14,333                    | 19,287   | 26,053   | 29,254   | 30,133   | 48,538   | 54,115   | 49,736   | 271,449            | 39,552                  |
| South Dakota.....           | -1,715                    | -1,387   | 361      | 1,712    | 160      | 1,988    | 2,146    | 2,194    | 5,459              | 4,400                   |
| Tennessee.....              | 11,645                    | 11,546   | 20,658   | 24,066   | 42,720   | 50,821   | 47,193   | 31,198   | 239,847            | 59,377                  |
| Texas.....                  | 40,485                    | 45,853   | 30,039   | 32,414   | 53,582   | 219,742  | 138,088  | 140,862  | 701,065            | 818,866                 |
| Utah.....                   | -6,435                    | -4,321   | -8,162   | -2,438   | 9,373    | 18,428   | 23,846   | 17,605   | 47,896             | 61,465                  |
| Vermont.....                | 666                       | 1,471    | 557      | 67       | -556     | -654     | -1,767   | -1,703   | -1,919             | 4,914                   |
| Virginia.....               | 16,126                    | 29,478   | 40,783   | 20,517   | 29,335   | 10,184   | 3,796    | 2,678    | 152,897            | 154,105                 |
| Washington.....             | 16,751                    | 14,763   | 9,318    | 14,793   | 23,579   | 47,614   | 31,774   | 40,588   | 199,180            | 159,211                 |
| West Virginia.....          | -7,062                    | 1,998    | 4,423    | 2,294    | 2,283    | 2,614    | 2,449    | 3,788    | 12,787             | 4,209                   |
| Wisconsin.....              | 872                       | 5,042    | 602      | 1,700    | -2,042   | -5,560   | -4,995   | -7,022   | -11,403            | 57,253                  |
| Wyoming.....                | -3,173                    | 2,136    | 148      | 1,050    | 325      | 3,207    | 6,638    | 5,390    | 15,721             | 1,999                   |
| Dist. of Columbia ...       | -4,277                    | -7,556   | -10,261  | -7,014   | -6,766   | -2,638   | -3,323   | -1,622   | -43,457            | 25,027                  |

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.

les. The top eight metro areas accounted for 49 percent of the net gains (Table G).

Metropolitan New York and Los Angeles each withstood considerable domestic out-migration, especially during the “bubble years” when many of their residents were drawn to growing, more afford-

able destinations in the South and West. During those years, international migration gains countered domestic migration declines. And as net domestic out-migration fell rapidly from its mid-decade peak by 2007–08, immigration—while down from its own peak early in the decade—held relatively steady.

**Table G: Annual Net International and Domestic Migration, Largest Immigrant Destination Metro Areas, 2000–01 to 2007–08**

| <i>Metro area/<br/>type of<br/>migration</i> | 2000–<br>2001 | 2001–<br>2002 | 2002–<br>2003 | 2003–<br>2004 | 2004–<br>2005 | 2005–<br>2006 | 2006–<br>2007 | 2007–<br>2008 | Total      |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>New York</b>                              |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 166,837       | 157,472       | 138,747       | 125,810       | 132,549       | 135,277       | 122,908       | 123,058       | 1,102,658  |
| Domestic                                     | -176,418      | -207,800      | -236,767      | -248,028      | -284,253      | -273,991      | -219,104      | -144,099      | -1,790,460 |
| <b>Los Angeles</b>                           |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 124,689       | 117,720       | 103,045       | 93,827        | 98,800        | 98,254        | 89,508        | 89,674        | 815,517    |
| Domestic                                     | -104,034      | -109,505      | -119,876      | -140,949      | -200,728      | -227,993      | -221,144      | -115,037      | -1,239,266 |
| <b>Miami</b>                                 |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 64,038        | 60,445        | 53,088        | 48,357        | 50,887        | 51,971        | 47,144        | 47,206        | 423,136    |
| Domestic                                     | -3,665        | -1,766        | -20,134       | -3,199        | -9,923        | -50,595       | -84,268       | -46,997       | -220,547   |
| <b>Chicago</b>                               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 58,856        | 54,871        | 46,195        | 45,673        | 46,934        | 47,735        | 42,647        | 43,047        | 385,958    |
| Domestic                                     | -55,164       | -68,856       | -72,424       | -65,555       | -77,736       | -69,542       | -55,355       | -42,110       | -506,742   |
| <b>Dallas</b>                                |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 44,845        | 42,217        | 36,784        | 33,813        | 35,473        | 35,458        | 32,194        | 32,293        | 293,077    |
| Domestic                                     | 48,552        | 13,919        | -1,303        | 8,504         | 23,455        | 71,433        | 52,260        | 43,175        | 259,995    |
| <b>Houston</b>                               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 40,772        | 38,474        | 33,667        | 30,705        | 32,283        | 32,227        | 29,330        | 29,392        | 266,850    |
| Domestic                                     | 4,570         | 24,498        | 2,895         | 6,427         | 6,187         | 88,885        | 19,981        | 36,724        | 190,167    |
| <b>San Francisco</b>                         |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 38,223        | 35,981        | 31,542        | 28,792        | 30,288        | 30,138        | 27,434        | 27,504        | 249,902    |
| Domestic                                     | -24,917       | -79,116       | -74,174       | -64,659       | -51,236       | -40,504       | -20,536       | 5,506         | -349,636   |
| <b>Washington</b>                            |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |            |
| International                                | 38,132        | 33,480        | 24,643        | 32,068        | 29,807        | 31,879        | 27,244        | 27,975        | 245,228    |
| Domestic                                     | 15,922        | 1,296         | -8,500        | -14,535       | -16,790       | -45,148       | -35,337       | -18,259       | -121,351   |

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data.

Similar patterns defined Miami, Chicago and Washington, D.C. In each metro area, domestic out-migration dropped approaching 2008, while international migration remained positive amid small but steady declines. Those three metro areas, unlike New York and Los Angeles, posted international migration gains that exceeded domestic migration losses in 2007–08, reversing trends from the previous year. In San Francisco, the early decade “dot-com bust” fueled domestic out-migration which moderated over the course of the 2000s, even as annual immigration to the region remained positive and relatively stable.

Two Texas metro areas, Dallas and Houston, rank fifth and sixth among U.S. metropolitan areas in attracting international migrants. Like the other large gateways, Dallas and Houston showed steadily declining levels—though positive and significant levels—of migration from abroad. Unlike those other gateways, however, net domestic migration to these metro areas remained positive, and by 2007–08, contributed more to these areas’ population gains than international migration.

## Conclusion

On a variety of dimensions, migration in the United States has come to a standstill. In the past two years, fewer Americans have moved long distances and locally than was the case for most of the post-World War II period. Some of this decline reflects the continuation of long-term trends, such as aging of the population and increased homeownership. Yet the recent sharp downturn in Americans’ mobility can be attributed to the bursting housing bubble and the financial crisis that precipitated a global recession.

The great migration slowdown generated distinct regional impacts. Several areas whose economies depended greatly on continued in-migration and growth—in the South and West regions and outer suburbs and exurbs nationwide—suddenly saw their economic engines and tax bases wither. Other areas that had lost large numbers of migrants to these fast growing magnets—previously “unaffordable” coastal metropolitan areas, declining manufacturing areas and urban cores everywhere—have seen a recent reduction in their



out-migration and potential economic gains from the migration slowdown.

How long will the current migration slowdown last? Some observers believe this is the beginning of a long-term trend, while others assert that the current migration downturn is simply a blip and that historical American mobility rates will soon resume.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, commentators have voiced strong opinions about what “the other side” will look like if and when migration rates pick back up. Some view the bursting of the housing bubble and the areas it propped up—“cities in the sand” to use Richard Florida’s phrase for superheated mid-decade growth areas—as the demise of a narrow form of development that depended primarily on real estate growth, fueled by the excesses of easy credit and relatively affordable housing. Such areas, Florida suggests, will have a hard time achieving their past migration attractiveness unless more diverse economies emerge in these areas.<sup>14</sup> Christopher Leinberger sees the recent suburban housing busts as the beginning of fundamental structural change in housing markets with the pendulum swinging back to urban core living, where at the extreme, suburbs will become uninhabited “slums.”<sup>15</sup> Joel Kotkin sees the recent migration downturn as ushering in a “new localism” trend in America, a rootedness associated with an aging population, the Internet and an increased focus on family life.<sup>16</sup>

If migration did continue to stagnate at the recent 2007–09 levels, it would mark a sharp deviation from the long-term mobility and pioneering spirit that has characterized generations of Americans. The fact that, once again, new waves of immigrants and their children are populating large sections of our country and the younger segments of our age structure, suggests that the restlessness that has long linked aspirations of upward social mobility with geographic mobility is likely to continue. Domestic migration levels will probably not hit the high-water mark seen in the immediate post-World War II period, but there is reason to believe that when the housing market clears and recovery is well underway, more “normal” 1990s levels of migration will revive.

Which areas of the country will benefit will depend greatly on the preferences of more globally aware, diverse, “Millennial” 20-somethings, who will comprise an estimated 40 percent of adult migrants in the years immediately ahead. It is probably true that the attractiveness of previous real estate-fueled

growth magnets will not return to mid-decade levels anytime soon. Yet other metropolitan areas could be major draws. Already, there are signs of relatively strong economic performance in both Sun Belt and Snow Belt areas with diversified, new economy industries, or specializations in “eds and meds.”<sup>17</sup> These areas include Seattle, Austin, Washington, D.C., Houston, Dallas, San Jose and Raleigh-Durham, as well as traditional young professional magnets like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Within these broad areas, there probably will also be movement to outer suburbs and exurbs, though at reduced levels, and accompanied by a further “filling in” of their vibrant urban cores.

Moving ahead in America has long meant moving on, across both long distances (to new or better jobs) and short distances (to new or better homes). The betting here is that even the Great Recession and the great migration slowdown that accompanied it have not fundamentally altered this uniquely American idea. Migration rates eventually will rise again, but the winners and losers may look slightly different than during the last boom.

\*This article is excerpted from the report: William H. Frey, *The Great American Migration Slowdown: Regional and Metropolitan Dimensions*, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution, December 2009.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Charles B. Nam, William J. Serow and David F. Sly, *International Handbook on Internal Migration* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990); Catherine Moye, "Moving Stories." *Financial Times*, August 21, 2009; Larry H. Long, *Migration and Residential Mobility in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988).

<sup>2</sup>More information on these sources can be found at: ASEC (<http://www.census.gov/cps>); ACS (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www>); Population Estimates Program (<http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.html>); IRS migration data (<http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/indtaxstats/article/0,,id=96943,00.html>). See also: Emily Gross, "Internal Revenue Service Area-to-Area Migration Data: Strengths, Limitations and Current Trends" (Internal Revenue Service, 2005).

<sup>3</sup>Reasons for moving across different distances and among different demographic groups are explored in Jason Schachter, *Why People Move: Exploring the March 2000 Current Population Survey* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001); and D'Vera Cohn and Rich Morin, *American Mobility: Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?* (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2008).

<sup>4</sup>Among local residential movers, those with the least education are most likely to move. In 2007–08, within-county migration rates for individuals with less than a high school education was 8.5 percent, compared with 6.3 percent for those who only graduated from high school and 4.5 percent for those who had schooling beyond college. This reflects the fact that less educated groups are more likely to be renters, who are much more prone to move than homeowners. Homeownership is less of a barrier for long-distance migrants.

<sup>5</sup>Among racial groups, blacks, Asians and Hispanics showed bigger declines in interstate migration than whites.

<sup>6</sup>"Sorrow In the Sunshine." *The Economist*, July 11, 2009, page 33. Recent estimates produced by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic Business Research also show that the state sustained an overall population loss between April 2008 and April 2009. "Preliminary 2009 Florida Population Estimates" (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2009).

<sup>7</sup>Alan Berube and others, *MetroMonitor: Tracking Economic Recession and Recovery in America's 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas*, (Brookings, September 2009).

<sup>8</sup>"Lone Star Rising: A special report on Texas." *The Economist*, July 11, 2009.

<sup>9</sup>Hans Johnson and Richard Lovelady, "Migration Between California and Other States: 1985–1994" (Sacramento: California Research Bureau of the California State Library and the Demographic Unit of the California Department of Finance, 1995); James P. Allen and Eugene Turner, "Migrants Between California and Other States." *The California Geographer* 47 (2007): 1–26; William H. Frey and Kao Lee Liaw, "Migration Within the United States: Role of Race-Ethnicity." *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs* (2005): 207–262; Dowell Meyers, John Pitkin and Ricardo Ramirez, "The New Homegrown Majority in California: Recognizing the New Reality of Growing Com-

mitment to the Golden State" (Los Angeles: USC School of Policy, Planning and Development, 2009).

<sup>10</sup>Berube and others, *MetroMonitor*.

<sup>11</sup>The 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) recorded a U.S. foreign-born population of 37,960,935, lower than the 38,059,694 total for 2007. The 98,759-person decline is within sampling error, but it is the first recorded decline in the U.S. foreign-born population in the ACS since 2000, or the decennial census since 1970. Nonetheless, the size of the foreign-born population is affected by mortality and fertility of long-term foreign-born residents as well as recent international movement in both directions. Thus there continue to be new immigrant flows into the United States from more direct annual international migration estimates presented in this section.

<sup>12</sup>Jeffrey Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?* (Washington: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009).

<sup>13</sup>Todd Lewan, "Has Twilight Come to the Sun Belt?" *The Gainesville Sun*, May 30, 2009.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Florida, "How the Crash Will Reshape America." *The Atlantic*, March, 2009, pp. 44–56.

<sup>15</sup>Christopher B. Leinberger, "The Next Slum?" *The Atlantic*, March 2008, pp. 70–75.

<sup>16</sup>Joel Kotkin, "There is No Place Like Home." *Newsweek*, October, 19, 2009, pp. 42–43.

<sup>17</sup>Berube and others, *MetroMonitor*.

About the Author

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