 Issues for Florida Communities 4
Who’s Moving into Metro and Nonmetro Florida: Human Resource Flows

Glenn D. Israel

The flow of human resources through immigration to Florida suggests that metro counties are benefiting more than nonmetro counties.

Only a hermit might not know that Florida’s population explosion has occurred as a result of the millions of people who have moved to the state. But how have these inmigrants affected the places to which they move? To what extent do immigrants bring skills, experience, and training that enhances the human resource base of their communities? In addition, what does it mean if metro counties receive inmigrants with higher human resources than nonmetro counties?

In this paper, characteristics of people who are recent migrants, migrants who have lived in Florida for some time, and native Floridians are examined. Comparison of these groups provides some clues about the relative gains in human resources that metro and nonmetro counties have had as a result of immigration. Although we can examine the human resources of people who move into Florida, we will not know how human resources are affected by outmigration from Florida to other states or by migration between counties within Florida (Smith, 1990).

DEFINITIONS

- A metropolitan county is defined as, a) a county with a central city of 50,000 or more residents, b) one of a pair of counties with 50,000 urban residents between them and a total population of at least 100,000, or c) a smaller county which is economically or socially integrated with an adjacent urban nucleus. All other counties are defined as nonmetropolitan.

- "Recent migrants" refers to those who have lived in Florida less than 10 years. Migrants who have lived in Florida for 10 or more years are called "past migrants." Residents who have lived their entire life in Florida are called "natives."

- White-collar jobs refers to workers in professional and technical occupations, managerial and administrative, sales or clerical occupations. Service jobs are just that. Military employees, farmers, and blue-collar workers comprise the remaining categories on which the ratios are based.

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2. Glenn D. Israel, associate professor and Program Specialist, Agricultural Education and Communication Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611. Team leader, Revitalizing Rural Florida Extension program.
Table 1. Net Migration in Selected Florida Counties, 1980-1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss/Small Gain</th>
<th>High Gain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gadsden</td>
<td>Palm Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4,396</td>
<td>274,629</td>
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<td>Hardee</td>
<td>Broward</td>
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<td>224,093</td>
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<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Dade</td>
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<td>206,404</td>
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<td>Union</td>
<td>Pinellas</td>
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<td>-396</td>
<td>159,878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
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<tr>
<td>-77</td>
<td>159,306</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf</td>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
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<td>395</td>
<td>131,728</td>
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<td>Madison</td>
<td>Lee</td>
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<td>795</td>
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<td>Holmes</td>
<td>Volusia</td>
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<td>956</td>
<td>115,730</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>Brevard</td>
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<td>1,004</td>
<td>110,521</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>Pasco</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,113</td>
<td>99,496</td>
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**RECENT MIGRATION TRENDS**

During the 1980s, Florida’s population grew by 32.8 percent to reach 12.9 million. Nearly all of this growth was due to net migration. While some people moved out of Florida during the 1980s, many more people moved in -- a net gain of 3.2 million. By the end of the 1980s, growth from net inmigration had begun to slow (Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1991).

Many people don’t realize that the growth was not distributed evenly. All but two of Florida’s counties grew during the 1980s, with Gadsden and Hardee Counties losing a small percentage of their population. But even though most counties grew during the last decade, nonmetro counties in North Florida and the Panhandle had among the lowest number of net inmigrants (Table 1). In contrast, counties with the largest net inmigration were all metro counties located in the Florida peninsula (Figure 1). Clearly, growth from net inmigration is affecting some counties more than others.

**HUMAN RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES OF MIGRANTS**

The skills, experience, and training that migrants bring with them are indicated by objective measures: education, labor force participation, employment status, occupational status, and income. Given that age affects many of these measures, this is also included in our examination of inmigrants.

**Figure 1.** Map of Florida’s metro counties (shaded) and nonmetro counties.

**Figure 2.** Percent 18-44 years of age by resident status.

**Age**

In general, a greater percentage of recent migrants are in the younger age groups than past migrants and natives (Figure 2). However, nonmetro counties lag behind metro counties in attracting younger immigrants. Because younger immigrants have more years to work before they retire, counties which receive a larger share of such people will benefit more than counties that receive a smaller share. In this case, it is the metro counties.
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Figure 3. Percent of college graduates by resident status.

Figure 4. Percent participating in the labor force by resident status.

Figure 5. Percent employed by resident status.

Education

A greater proportion of all migrants to Florida have graduated from college than have native residents. The percentage is higher still for recent migrants than for past migrants. Although the percentage of college graduates among recent nonmetro migrants is higher than that of past nonmetro migrants, it lags behind the rate for metro migrants (Figure 3).

Labor Force Participation

For Florida as a whole, migrants participate in the labor force at nearly the same rate as native residents (Figure 4). This is more true for recent migrants than for past migrants -- a reflection of the younger age structure among recent migrants. More significantly, just over half of nonmetro migrants (both recent and past migrants) are not in the labor force. The labor force participation rate for nonmetro migrants is much lower than the metro rate.

While the older age structure found among nonmetro migrants appears to account for much of this difference, the reasons that migrants gave for moving to Florida provide some further explanation. Among recent migrants, metro migrants were twice as likely as nonmetro migrants to say they moved for employment (16 and 32 percent, respectively). Conversely, more recent nonmetro migrants said they moved for the climate than did recent metro migrants (35 and 25 percent, respectively).

Employment Status

For those residents who are in the labor force (and excluding those who are not), there is little difference in employment status (Figure 5). Nonmetro residents have a slightly lower employment rate than metro residents. In particular, recent nonmetro migrants had the lowest employment rate (87 percent), but recent metro migrants had a similar rate (89 percent).

Occupational Status

Of all the measures of human resources, occupational status presents the most unclear picture. For Florida as a whole, the ratio of service jobs to white-collar jobs is highest among recent immigrants.
and lowest among native workers (Israel and Stephenson, 1990) (Figure 6). In other words, the percentage of service workers (those who are not white- or blue-collar workers, farmers or in the military) is highest among recent immigrants (27 percent). This is consistent with reports that most of the jobs created during the 1980s were in the service sector of the economy.

While past immigrants to nonmetro counties were somewhat more likely to have a white-collar occupation and less likely to be in a service occupation than were past metro immigrants (shown by their respective ratios, .7 and .8), the ratio reversed for recent immigrants with a ratio of 1 service job to each white-collar job in nonmetro counties and .9 service jobs to every white-collar job in metro counties. The trend of increasing service occupations in nonmetro counties appears somewhat inconsistent with the widely held belief that the tourism and hospitality industries are most developed in metro areas, especially the Orlando metropolitan area.

**Income**

Overall, slightly over one-quarter of Florida’s residents reported incomes over $45,000 (Figure 7). Nonmetro migrants had a smaller percentage with incomes over $45,000 than their metro counterparts. This difference increased among recent immigrants from that for past immigrants. In part, the difference between metro and nonmetro migrants may be a result of the differences noted earlier in the age structure, labor force participation, and unemployment rates.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The flow of human resources through immigration to Florida suggests that metro counties are benefiting more than nonmetro counties. The convergence among the measures -- age, education, labor force participation, employment status, and income, show a relative advantage for metro counties in receiving people with "higher" human resource attributes.

What does this mean for nonmetro Florida? Nonmetro Florida already lags behind metro Florida in educational levels, the employment rate, and per capita income (Israel and Stephenson, 1990). This, together with the inability to attract an equal share of the human resources flowing into the state, will make it more difficult to catch up with metro areas. And, if the characteristics of outmigrants from Florida’s nonmetro counties are similar to those of the U.S., then the prospects for improving the stock of nonmetro human resources are bleak. This is because nonmetro counties are losing their youngest and best educated to metropolitan areas (Lichter, McLaughlin, and Cornwell).

The data also imply that nonmetro counties will have a smaller human resource base on which to draw as residents work to meet the challenges facing their communities. The question is not will people do it, but how effectively they are able to meet those...
challenges. In this regard, nonmetro counties may suffer.

**RESOURCES FOR CITIZENS AND LEADERS**

Citizens and leaders who wish to better understand migration and its impact on their community can contact their county’s Cooperative Extension Service office. Information about conducting a public policy process for dealing with migration specifically, or broader human resource issues, is available (Beaulieu, 1992; Israel, 1992). These materials can help in clarifying the issue, identifying alternative policies, assessing the consequences of policies, making choices, and developing an implementation plan (Beaulieu, 1992). Through the use of these resources, citizens and leaders will be better able to address what may be undesirable impacts on human resources in their community.

**ABOUT THE DATA**

The data came from nine monthly "Florida Consumer Confidence Surveys" conducted during 1991 by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida. Telephone survey methods are used to collect information from adults sampled from across the state. A total of 5,113 respondents comprise the data set. The number for any one measure of human capital may vary due to nonresponse. Some biases have been found in the data—notably, fewer blacks and more females are in the sample as compared to Census data (Smith, 1990).

**LITERATURE CITED**


