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GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF GEORGIA'S INTERSTATE MIGRATION PATTERNS

Georgia's population has been steadily growing since 1990, in part due to an increase in migration of residents from other states. This policy brief looks at the geographic breakdown of Georgia's migration patterns for both the elderly (people aged 65 and over) and non-elderly (people under age 65).

We use State-to-State Migration Flows from the U.S. Census to get our migration estimates for 1990 and 2000. For 1990 (2000), a person is considered a migrant if they lived in one state in 1985 (1995) and a different state in 1990 (2000). We are unable to observe if more than one move occurred during this five-year period; in essence, we are measuring the last move of individuals.

Table 1A lists the top ten states from which elderly citizens moved to Georgia in 1985-1990 and 1995-2000. Florida, New York and Alabama are the top three states from which Georgia receives the elderly, with the number of people moving to Georgia from Florida being at least 3 times as large as from any other state. The top ten states account for approximately 70 percent of all elderly migrants coming into Georgia between 1995 and 2000. The elderly who migrated to Georgia between 1995 and 2000 comprise 3 percent of the total elderly population in Georgia in 2000.

Table 1B repeats the exercise for the states from which non-elderly citizens moved to Georgia during the same time span. Florida is once again the main state from which Georgia receives residents, with the number of people moving to Georgia from Florida being twice as large as from any other state in 2000. The top ten states account for 62 to 64 percent of all non-elderly movers coming into Georgia. The non-elderly who moved to Georgia between 1995 and 2000 made up 8.4 percent of the non-elderly population in Georgia in 2000.

Table 2A lists the top states that elderly citizens left Georgia for in 1985-1990 and 1990-2000. The top five states are all Southern states, with Florida being a significantly more popular destination than any other state. The top ten states accounted for 75 percent of all elderly residents who moved from Georgia in 1995-2000.

Table 2B lists the top states that non-elderly citizens left Georgia for in 1985-1990 and 1995-2000. Once again, the top 5 states are all Southern, with Florida being twice as popular as any other destination. The top ten states account for approximately 66 percent of all non-elderly residents who left Georgia in 1995-2000.

TABLE 1A: TOP TEN STATES THAT GEORGIA GAINS ELDERLY (AGED 65+) MIGRANTS FROM

-----1985-1990-----			-----1995-2000-----		
State		Number of Migrants	State		Number of Migrants
1	Florida	7,061	1	Florida	11,405
2	New York	2,350	2	New York	3,291
3	Alabama	2,031	3	Alabama	2,596
4	Tennessee	1,444	4	North Carolina	2,126
5	California	1,319	5	Tennessee	1,908
6	Illinois	1,228	6	South Carolina	1,787
7	New Jersey	1,108	7	Illinois	1,684
8	North Carolina	1,094	8	California	1,612
9	Ohio	1,068	9	New Jersey	1,562
10	South Carolina	999	10	Ohio	1,552
Top Ten Total		19,702	Top Ten Total		29,523
Total (All States)		27,462	Total (All States)		42,444
Top Ten as Percentage of Total		71.7	Top Ten as Percentage of Total		69.6

TABLE 1B: TOP TEN STATES THAT GEORGIA GAINS NON-ELDERLY MIGRANTS FROM

-----1985-1990-----			-----1995-2000-----		
State		Number of Migrants	State		Number of Migrants
1	Florida	119,073	1	Florida	157,423
2	Texas	63,898	2	New York	67,499
3	Alabama	53,246	3	California	65,590
4	Tennessee	43,398	4	Texas	59,487
5	North Carolina	40,326	5	Alabama	54,238
6	New York	39,961	6	North Carolina	51,355
7	South Carolina	39,840	7	South Carolina	46,414
8	California	37,396	8	Tennessee	45,483
9	Louisiana	32,867	9	Virginia	37,618
10	Ohio	31,327	10	Illinois	34,632
Top Ten Total		501,332	Top Ten Total		619,739
Total (All States)		804,566	Total (All States)		965,558
Top Ten as Percentage of Total		62.3	Top Ten as Percentage of Total		64.2

The list of states that form the main flows of interstate residents to and from Georgia appear stable, with Florida being by far the largest player. These states can be split into 2 categories: nearby Southern states, and states with large populations (New York, California, Ohio). Thus, the size and/or location of other states play the largest role in determining which states have major migration flows with Georgia.

In Table 3A, we list the seven states that appear in the top 10 as both destinations for elderly movers from Georgia and donors to Georgia, along with the mean and median income of those migrants.¹ Of these 7 states, Georgia received richer elderly migrants (on average) than it lost from 4 states in 1985-1990, and lost richer residents (on average) than it gained to 3 states. In 1995-2000, Georgia received richer elderly migrants (on average) from only California, losing richer elderly residents (on average) to the remaining 6 states. In both years Florida received richer elderly migrants from Georgia (on average) than it lost to Georgia. Overall, the elderly moving into the Georgia were poorer on average than the overall elderly population in both 1990 and 2000.

Table 3B repeats the exercise for non-elderly migrants. Of the 7 states, Georgia received richer non-elderly migrants (on average) from 4 states in 1985-1990, and lost richer residents (on average) than it gained to 3 states: Florida, New York, and California. This pattern remained the same for 1995-2000. Overall, the average non-elderly individual moving to Georgia was poorer than those leaving the state in 1985-1990. These new individuals were also poorer than the average non-elderly resident in Georgia. This pattern reversed itself in 1995-2000, as the average non-elderly resident moving to Georgia was richer than the non-elderly resident moving from Georgia.

In conclusion, some stark patterns emerge. Florida is Georgia's largest contributor of and destination for both the elderly and non-elderly, with the Florida-Georgia corridor accounting for at least twice as much movement than any other corridor. The residents moving to Georgia from Florida are poorer (on average) than those moving from Georgia to Florida, regardless of age. Overall, Georgia receives poorer (on average) elderly than it loses, although the number of elderly moving into the state make up less than 3 percent of the total of people moving into the state. Georgia used to receive poorer (on average) non-elderly than it lost, but this pattern reversed itself in 1995-2000.

Does Georgia want to have net positive in-migration of the elderly and does Georgia want to increase the rate of net in-migration? If so, what factors might explain the net in-migration of the elderly that would suggest policies that Georgia could enact?

Georgia should be concerned that the elderly who are leaving have higher income than those who are moving to Georgia. We need to better understand why this is happening and the characteristics of the two groups. For example, are we losing some very wealthy retirees who cause the average income of elderly out-migrants to be high? Are we losing younger elderly, i.e. those with more earnings, but gaining older retirees who have little earnings?

Finally Georgia needs to better understand the fiscal implications for expenditures and revenues of elderly migration.

Notes

1. Incomes are calculated using the IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) dataset. While the sample size of the IPUMS is small, we still learn some good insights.

References

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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TABLE 2A: TOP TEN STATES THAT GEORGIA LOSES ELDERLY (AGED 65+) MIGRANTS TO

-----1985-1990-----			-----1995-2000-----		
State		Number of Migrants	State		Number of Migrants
1	Florida	5,802	1	Florida	7,810
2	Alabama	1,623	2	Alabama	2,689
3	Tennessee	1,418	3	South Carolina	2,502
4	North Carolina	1,328	4	Tennessee	2,360
5	South Carolina	1,142	5	North Carolina	2,068
6	California	676	6	Texas	1,091
7	Texas	655	7	California	925
8	Virginia	528	8	Virginia	887
9	New York	443	9	New York	600
10	Ohio	432	10	Ohio	597
Top Ten Total		14,047	Top Ten Total		21,529
Total (All States)		16,856	Total (All States)		28,518
Top Ten as Percentage of Total		83.3	Top Ten as Percentage of Total		75.5

TABLE 2B: TOP TEN STATES THAT GEORGIA LOSES NON-ELDERLY MIGRANTS TO

-----1985-1990-----			-----1995-2000-----		
State		Number of Migrants	State		Number of Migrants
1	Florida	91,891	1	Florida	99,225
2	Alabama	42,180	2	Alabama	48,597
3	North Carolina	36,314	3	North Carolina	47,514
4	South Carolina	35,827	4	Tennessee	42,723
5	Tennessee	33,025	5	Texas	41,940
6	California	27,354	6	South Carolina	41,149
7	Texas	25,364	7	California	28,610
8	Virginia	24,032	8	Virginia	25,665
9	Ohio	15,374	9	New York	18,358
10	New York	13,656	10	Ohio	17,732
Top Ten Total		345,017	Top Ten Total		411,513
Total (All States)		501,969	Total (All States)		624,853
Top Ten as Percentage of Total		68.7	Top Ten as Percentage of Total		65.9

TABLE 3A: MEAN AND MEDIAN INCOME LEVELS OF ELDERLY MIGRANTS TO AND FROM GEORGIA

-----1985-1990 Migrants to Georgia-----				-----1985-1990 Migrants from Georgia-----			
State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income	State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income
Florida	7,061	13,547	8,716	Florida	5,802	15,864	9,444
New York	2,350	18,657	11,670	New York	443	14,434	10,704
Alabama	2,031	10,321	6,472	Alabama	1,623	10,110	7,296
Tennessee	1,444	14,890	9,000	Tennessee	1,418	10,069	8,000
California	1,319	13,504	10,400	California	676	15,896	8,868
North Carolina	1,094	11,775	8,400	North Carolina	1,328	15,985	10,000
South Carolina	999	11,723	7,832	South Carolina	1,142	15,732	10,015
All Elderly Migrants	19,702	13,001	7,200	All Elderly Migrants	14,047	14,464	8,500
Elderly GA Residents	654,651	13,618	7,500	Elderly GA Residents	654,651	13,618	7,500
In-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		3.0		Out-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		2.1	
-----1995-2000 Migrants to Georgia-----				-----1995-2000 Migrants from Georgia-----			
State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income	State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income
Florida	11,405	24,705	14,050	Florida	7,810	25,600	15,500
New York	3,291	18,214	11,900	New York	600	34,147	21,200
Alabama	2,596	19,501	10,600	Alabama	2,689	31,012	13,600
North Carolina	2,126	20,543	12,800	North Carolina	2,068	33,556	14,900
Tennessee	1,908	15,570	9,500	Tennessee	2,360	24,427	14,400
South Carolina	1,787	24,638	13,400	South Carolina	2,502	27,519	17,000
California	1,612	28,962	14,200	California	925	23,101	13,700
All Elderly Migrants	27,462	23,145	12,500	All Elderly Migrants	21,529	26,675	15,000
Elderly GA Residents	785,280	24,053	13,000	Elderly GA Residents	785,280	24,053	13,000
In-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		3.5		Out-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		2.7	

TABLE 3B: MEAN AND MEDIAN INCOME LEVELS OF NON-ELDERLY MIGRANTS TO AND FROM GEORGIA

-----1985-1990 Migrants to Georgia-----				-----1985-1990 Migrants from Georgia-----			
State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income	State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income
Florida	119,073	13,746	7,392	Florida	91,891	15,310	9,600
Alabama	53,246	14,773	11,000	Alabama	42,180	12,298	4,500
Tennessee	43,398	15,909	11,660	Tennessee	33,025	13,851	7,300
North Carolina	40,326	16,515	10,000	North Carolina	36,314	14,831	9,141
New York	39,961	15,461	9,900	New York	13,656	17,267	9,900
South Carolina	39,840	15,489	10,000	South Carolina	35,827	14,966	9,500
California	37,396	17,109	10,000	California	27,354	19,131	10,500
All Non-Elderly Migrants	804,566	13,067	4,800	All Non-Elderly Migrants	501,969	14,266	8,400
Non-Elderly GA Residents	6,839,550	13,356	6,000	Non-Elderly GA Residents	6,839,550	13,356	6,000
In-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		11.8		Out-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		7.3	
-----1995-2000 Migrants to Georgia-----				-----1995-2000 Migrants from Georgia-----			
State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income	State	Migrants	Mean Income	Median Income
Florida	157,423	27,738	19,400	Florida	99,225	30,407	19,500
Alabama	54,238	28,458	22,000	Alabama	48,597	23,843	15,090
Tennessee	45,483	29,668	21,100	Tennessee	42,723	29,187	18,800
North Carolina	51,355	34,770	23,200	North Carolina	47,514	28,887	19,000
New York	67,499	28,579	21,000	New York	18,358	34,538	21,000
South Carolina	46,414	28,850	21,000	South Carolina	41,149	26,263	19,000
California	65,590	25,802	16,500	California	28,610	38,641	24,000
All Non-Elderly Migrants	965,558	29,112	19,800	All Non-Elderly Migrants	624,853	27,655	19,850
Non-Elderly GA Residents	7,401,237	27,854	19,000	Non-Elderly GA Residents	7,401,237	27,854	19,000
In-Migrants as Percentage of GA Population		13.0		Out-Migrants as Percentage of of GA Population		8.4	

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