

Population Notes

A look at the demography and geography of Wisconsin



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Applied Population Laboratory • Department of Community and Environmental Sociology • UW-Madison

New Set of Estimates on Net Migration

In April, a new dataset of net migration estimates for all U.S. counties by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin covering the time period from 2000 to 2010 was released to the public. The new data combined with similar datasets from prior decades now provide 60 years of age-specific net migration for US counties. These data can be extremely useful for analyzing patterns of migration and for understanding population change. The most recent set of estimates are particularly useful for analyzing the effects of major events such as Hurricane Katrina, the boom and bust of housing markets, migration patterns of the Baby Boom generation, and the movement of Latinos. *Information about the methodology used for creating the estimates can be found here: www.netmigration.wisc.edu/about.php*

Collaborators

The new dataset is a result of collaboration between researchers at four universities and was led by Richelle Winkler (Michigan Tech University) and Kenneth Johnson (The Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire). The collaboration also included Katherine Curtis, James Beaudoin and Cheng Cheng (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Paul Voss (University of North Carolina). This research was supported by grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and by the USDA's Economic Research Service.

New web portal for accessing data

Now the use and application of county-level net migration estimates is easier than ever thanks to James Beaudoin of the APL. Jim developed a public website that provides easy-to-use tools to access, view, and analyze the data. Using open source tools, the website offers custom mapping, interactive chart building, and custom data downloads that integrate county-level net migration estimates from the 1950s through the 2000s. This innovative website reflects a major area of expertise within the APL and fits well with our goal of providing access to high quality information in research, analytic, and applied contexts. You can access the web portal at: www.netmigration.wisc.edu

Migration signatures tell demographic stories

Why examine migration trends? The movement of people is an important component of population change and examining net migration trends helps to unpack and add depth to fascinating stories of regional and community character and social change. The data help to inform demographers making population estimates and projections, analyses of urbanization and counter-

urbanization, a variety of “pushes and pulls” for population change, and the movement of population groups by detailed characteristics like age, race, and ethnicity.

When considered over six decades, net migration by age data for any given county tends to form remarkably consistent patterns or “signatures.” Particularly when combined with other data or local knowledge about a county, these signatures visually represent local demographic or economic stories, help make comparisons, and provide an understanding of place-based causes and consequences of migration by age.

How to read a migration signature

The following four figures are all examples of a migration signature. On the left side are net migration rates. Along the bottom are five year age groups. Each of the colored lines on the chart represents a decade. When the lines are above the bolded 0 line, more people moved into the county at that age group than moved out. Conversely, when the lines are below the 0 line, more people moved out than in.

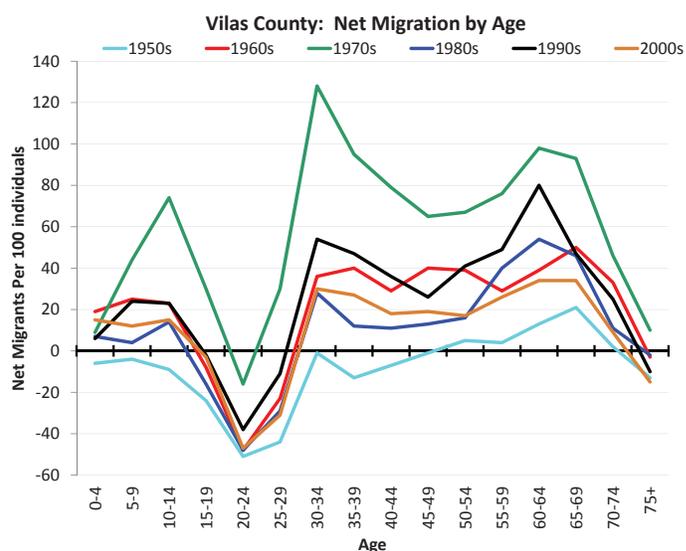


Figure 1 Migration signature for Vilas County

Figure 1 is a migration signature for Vilas County. Rising incomes in the 1990s and increasing numbers of Baby Boomers nearing retirement age in the 2000s propelled retirees to move to rural, natural amenity-rich destinations like Vilas County. The increases can be clearly seen on the migration signature chart and in recent decades, a rapidly aging population, along with population growth has impacted the communities of a changing rural locale.

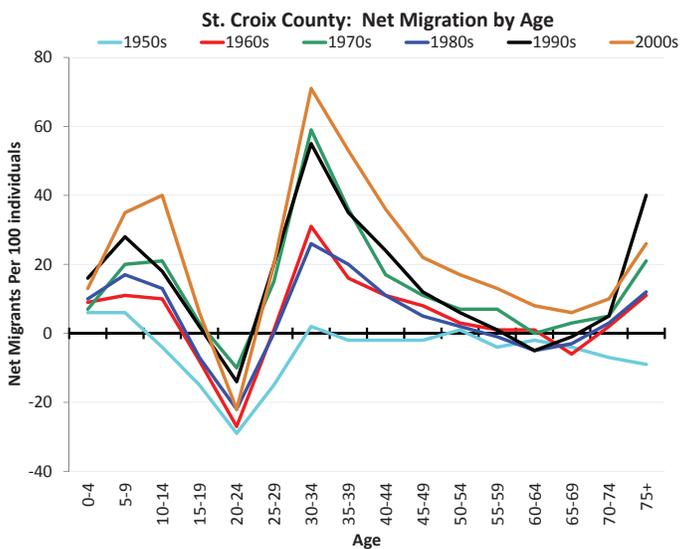


Figure 2 Migration signature for St. Croix County

Some signatures can help planners better understand patterns of population growth. **Figure 2** shows the signature for St. Croix County, Wisconsin's fastest growing county for several decades. St. Croix has grown chiefly because of its location in the path of suburbanization from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro area and has had particularly robust growth from migration at younger and working age groups. Using the data and the signature, planners can compare growth by age groups over time and prepare for differential growth in planning for social services, transportation, school enrollment, and more.

Other counties have signatures that help understand and plan for population decline. **Figure 3** shows the signature for Iron County. Iron has the highest median age in the state and with the exception of the 1970s and 1990s has had steady loss from migration at younger and working age groups, most acutely from age 15 to 24. Signatures help counties like Iron understand trends of people leaving their communities -- information important for school enrollment/consolidation and for community development projects aimed at retaining population.

It is also possible to make comparisons between counties within a single decade. For example, **Figure 4** compares net migration by age for the 2000-2010 period for Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties -- neighbors that are experiencing dramatically different patterns of population change and urban/suburban pushes and pulls.

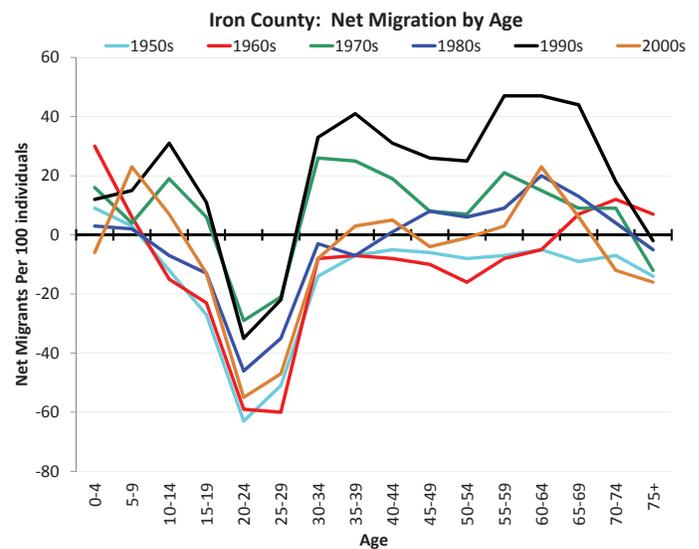


Figure 3 Migration signature for Iron County

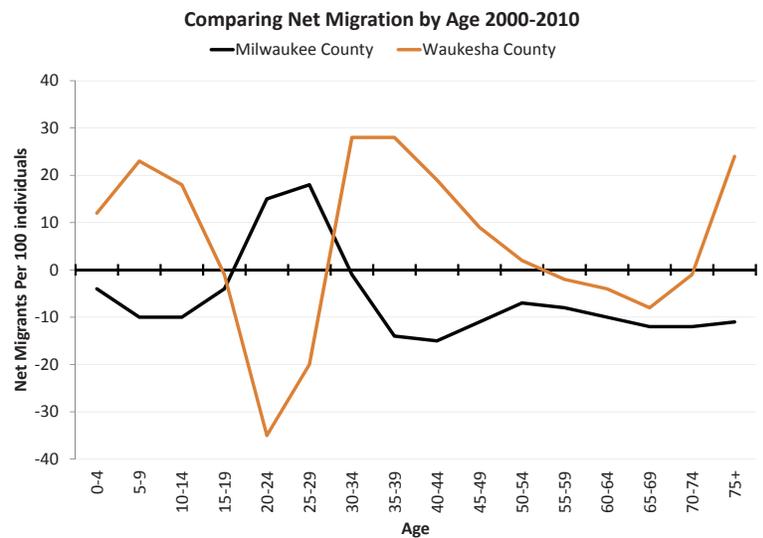


Figure 4 Net migration for Milwaukee & Waukesha Counties

There are many more stories or patterns that can be revealed by examining the migration signatures and the net migration data in general. We encourage you to interact with the website and the data to find information and patterns that are relevant to your community. Then, we would very much like to get feedback on how you are using the information. Please use the feedback link on the website or send an email to dlveroff@wisc.edu

Ongoing at the APL

-  You can now follow the APL on Twitter by clicking here [@AppliedPopLab](#) or by searching for UW-APL on Twitter
- For information about recent APL publications and projects, please visit: <http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications.php>
- The Wisconsin Food Security Project recently released an enhanced data and mapping portal. Developed by the APL's James Beaudoin, the portal provides mapping and data on food security and resources in Wisconsin. Visit the portal at: <http://www.foodsecurity.wisc.edu>



The Applied Population Laboratory (APL) is a research and outreach unit within the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Please contact us at:

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