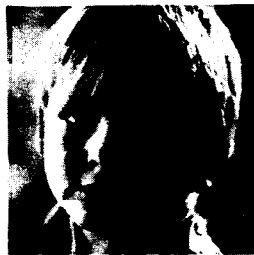




THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION
ON CHILDREN:



*AN ETHNOGRAPHIC
STUDY*



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PREFACE

Since coming to this country in 1975, I have seen many changes in Migrant Education, both in Pennsylvania and nationally. However, I am proud to have been part of a project which has seen the gathering of the richest data ever gathered in two decades of the migrant education program.

As you read *The Effects of Migration on Children* you will be as moved as I was to read the feelings and hopes and dreams of the migrant families and the migrant children themselves. You will experience as I did the power of their message to all of us who work for migrant children. Joe Prewitt-Diaz, Bob Trotter and Vic Rivera have managed in their reanalysis of the ethnographic data to identify the "culture of migrancy" with striking clarity and documentary definition.

As seen in Chapter 6, the role relationships among migrant families and their interaction with institutions affects not only their perceptions but their behaviors as well. All of this is significant information to a program that hopes to impact the future of migrant children.

Some powerful recommendations emerge as a result of the findings. Those recommendations and conclusions are contained in Chapter 8. These findings are most meaningful because they represent a very concentrated 5 person-years of study on the findings of the ethnographic research.

As State Director of Pennsylvania Migrant Education, I am most proud to share this consummate look at our families with you. The stories of migration are the stories of hope, hope for a better life. They are the dreamers. Let us pray that we are the dreammakers.

Manuel A. Recio, Ed.D

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The ethnographic materials utilized in this book were collected by Mary Felegy, Marcela Gutierrez-Mayka and Anita Wood. This year-long effort has provided the readers with a basic understanding of what we have called in this book "the culture of migrancy" Without their dedicated efforts this book would not have been possible.

To Dr. Elizabeth Blue Swadener, Dr. Murry Nelson, Dr. John Wood and Dr. Cathy Small who provided valuable feedback regarding the chapter on ethnographic methodology as a research tool.

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Ray Melecio prepared the graph in Chapter 2, and Joe Marrone a new friend, provided technical assistance every time we experienced problems with the Macintosh. Without Joe's help this book would not have been possible. To all our appreciation.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to share with the readers a re-analysis of the data of an ethnographic study that was conducted by three ethnographers to determine adequate practices in Identification and Recruitment of migrant children in the United States. Two previous publications (Reed, 1987; Trotter, Wood, Gutierrez-Mayka & Felegy, 1988) discuss the findings of the ethnography in terms of the qualities of a good recruiter and a definition of the administrative needs of the program in order to facilitate recruitment of migrant children.

The data that were collected yielded much information about migrant lifestyles, reasons to move, and a picture began to emerge about another culture which has not been often talked about: **the culture of migrancy**. The authors have re-analyzed the data focusing specifically on information that will assist the reader to understand the behaviors, motivation and lifestyles of migrants in the United States.

This report is especially powerful because it does two things. It documents what many professionals in the field had been talking about for the last 23 years since the inception of the Migrant Education Program. It takes all the information collected in the ethnography, some 1,000 pages of anecdotes and direct quotes from informants, and organizes it into a sequence paralleling the process which a migrant follows in relocating from home-base to where the crops are available for picking.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part consists of one chapter. The first chapter addresses the type of persons that compose the culture of migrancy. It points out that migrancy is a common phenomenon in this nation. One in every three children migrate at least three times during their school life. However, most of those dislocated belong to the middle classes or the urban migrants and have more access to the services, schools and facilities that create a stabilizing factor in the home for the children. Many of these migratory moves have been planned and the children have been part of the decision-making process. While parents have control of the move, the migrant child does not have the luxury of deciding when to go, where to go, or what to do once s/he gets there.

The chapter defines the population which composes the three migrant streams. It further provides a definition of who the people are and where they have come from. The first chapter attempts to assure the reader

that although migrants come from many different countries, cultures, and geographic locations in this country, they have something in common: the culture of migrancy. The ethnography reports similar behavioral patterns among this diverse population across the three migrant streams.

Part II of the book consists of one chapter. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology used to gather the data analyzed in the book. Ethnography was used to gather baseline data about migrants and their way of life. Three ethnographers spent the better part of a year living with migrants, learning their ways. They recorded the information, sought to validate the information with key informants, and then compared notes to determine the internal validity of the data that were gathered. Through case histories, structured and non-structured interviews and participant observation the ethnographers were able to document for the first time an account of what is referred to in this book as some of the elements that constitute the culture of migrancy.

Part III consists of four chapters. Each chapter discusses in depth an aspect of the cultural patterns of migration. In each chapter the authors were able to describe common behaviors among the migrants studied in the three streams.

Chapter 3 discusses migrant lifestyles before the move occurs. It indicates the lifestyle in the home-base states. The data suggest that most people migrate for economic reasons. However, once we looked closer at the quotes from the ethnography, we were able to identify other reasons: better schooling for children, making money to send home to the family, wanting children to improve their English language skills, better medical facilities or simply the desire to move.

Chapter 4 discusses the move. Detailed information is included about the process of moving from the home-base state to the upstream state. A discussion of the preparation is followed by a discussion of the uncertainty of what is awaiting the migrant family upon arrival at the new destination. The types of migrant cycles are explained. Some people migrate throughout several states; others migrate within the same state; and yet others seem to exist in perpetual motion.

Chapter 5 addresses living conditions in upstream states. The chapter discusses housing and services available to migrants and their children. Most importantly it describes the powerlessness migrant workers feel. They are victims of external environmental controls; yet they manage to survive. Therein lies the mystique of migrants. Much optimism is expressed in this

chapter. One can almost feel the excitement of encountering the unexpected and experience the frustration of traveling for days to work hard for hours to barely make ends meet. This chapter hints at the decision-making power that migrant children have with regard to whether they stay in school or decide to work in the fields. The services that the children are provided in school are briefly discussed.

Role relationships among the migrants are discussed in Chapter 6. The roles and norms for social behavior of migrant children, women and men are discussed. The discrepancy between migrant behaviors and those of the static population are noted. While teachers reported that migrant parents did not want to get involved with their children's education, migrants were reporting factors that inhibit their visit to school: long working hours, lack of knowledge of English and lack of transportation are reasons frequently given. By age fifteen children make decisions that will affect their lives. Some become successful; others remain in the cycle of migrancy. This chapter depicts the behaviors which distinguish this group from others and thus begins to provide some insights into the culture of migrancy.

Part IV consists of two chapters. Chapter 7 provides an in-depth discussion of the programs available to migrants. The Migrant Education Program and its component parts is detailed in depth. The discussion in this chapter explains the need for recruiters and other migrant personnel. The chapter addresses the services offered and almost defines, by describing the changing role of the program, the need for improvement in certain areas. However, the authors did not feel that the role of this book was to suggest direction for that changing role.

The final chapter summarizes the chapters presented previously and concludes by answering some of the questions that have been set forth in the national agenda for Migrant Education. While we do not delve into a discussion of policy, some of the statements made in this chapter may be construed by the reader as statements suggesting policy at the national level. Whatever the perception of the reader, of one thing we are sure: the program, as it is structured currently, is serving the needs of the stable population. More and better programs must be developed to serve the educational needs of children living in the culture of migrancy.

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PART I

Part I of this book introduces and explores the topic of migrancy. This Part includes the chapter that sets the stage for the remaining three parts of the book. The first chapter contains demographic data regarding the phenomenon of migrancy and identifies categories of migrants in the United States. Chapter 1 also includes definitions of terminology specific to the phenomenon of migration and descriptions of patterns of migration.

Chapter 1

THE IM/MIGRANT POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Migration in the United States consists of large internal migration coupled with immigration. For the purpose of this book, migrants are defined as those persons who are agricultural laborers who travel within the geographical boundaries of the continental United States. Events of the 1970's and 1980's resulted in a re-characterization of immigration and migration and produced dramatic national and regional demographic changes. Bouvier and Agresta (1987) report that approximately 6.6 million immigrants have entered the United States since 1970. These immigrants can be classified into four categories: 1) legal immigrants, 2) refugees, 3) undocumented workers and 4) internal migrants whose native language is other than English. It is important to note that these classifications are not mutually exclusive. Overlapping can be seen in the following descriptions.

Legal Immigrants

Hodgkinson (1986) notes that in 1979, 42% of legal immigrants came from Latin America and 42% came from Asia. The National Coalition of Advocates for

Students (NCAS) (1988) reports that the majority of persons that came from Latin America were from Mexico and Central America. By 1985, a significant majority of the immigrants legally admitted to the United States were from Mexico, Central America and the Philippines (NCAS, 1988).

Asian immigrants came from Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, China, India, Laos, Cambodia and Japan (NCAS p. 4). Chan and Kitano (1986) report that by 1980 an influx of 250,000 Koreans, 360,216 Filipinos and nearly 300,000 Vietnamese changed the character of the Asian-Pacific American population. Generalizations regarding Asian immigrations can be misleading. Chan and Kitano (1986) report that the term "Asian-Pacific American" refers to a diverse group of people with origins from a large geographic area (p. 2). Tsang and Wing (1985) indicate that most Asian-Pacific Americans are foreign born. However, this notion must be interpreted carefully. Most of the Japanese are likely to be native born and speak English as their first language. On the other hand, Korean-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans are likely to be foreign-born and speak a language other than English as their native language.

While Latin Americans and Asians constituted the majority of legal immigrants to the United States in the 1970's and 1980's, an increase in immigrants from Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic has been noted by immigration authorities and reported in the popular press.

Refugees

With the increase of armed conflicts in different parts of the world, the United States has become the final destination for many refugees. Most noted among these refugees are the Cubans, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodians and most recently the Nicaraguans. In the last several years, an influx of people from Central America has also been recorded (NCAS, 1988).

While these refugees have sought sanctuary in the United States, they often feel displaced in their new-found country. The following quote from the ethnography illustrates:

I cannot tell you if I like Garden City or not. I have no impressions. Garden City, New York, California. It is all the same. It is not my homeland, not my home and so I have no feelings about it. This is only the place where I live, but Viet Nam is my home. I will act like an American while I am living here but in my heart. I will always be Viet-

name. You cannot change what is in your heart and in your mind.

Coupled with the ambivalence many refugees feel upon their resettlement in the United States is their struggle to contend with the memories of the past. Chinn and Plata (1986) observe that many refugees endured incredible hardships, and were deprived of food, shelter, and education. Likewise, the children suffered. Some children endured traumas of semi-starvation and relocation camps and witnessed the killing of parents and other family members. Chinn and Plata indicate that without question, some children carry with them the emotional scarring which could have a profound effect on their behavior.

Undocumented Workers

The number of undocumented workers in the United States fluctuates between two million and five million. The majority of undocumented workers are from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Internal Migrants

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (1986) reports that the population of the United States is geographically mobile. The mobile population which migrates within U.S. borders are termed internal migrants. The last three decennial censuses indicate that about 50% of children 5 to 14 years old have changed residence in the five years preceding the census. These moves would not be disruptive if the child moved within the same school district. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (1986) reports that many moves involve a different school district, with all the disruptive consequences of losing old friends and adjusting to new surroundings, both in and out of school.

... many moves involve a different school district with all the disruptive consequences of losing old friends and adjusting to new surroundings, both in and out of school.

Sub-categories of Internal Migrant Populations

The migrant population can be divided into sub-categories. These sub-categories can be defined by location or ethnic background.

Urban Migrants

Many persons have moved into large industrial areas and have become urban migrants. In the early 1900's, industrialization and mechanization of farm work prompted mass urban migration. Two trends in early



rural areas to large industrial centers. The second trend is migration from the South to northern urban centers. As the economy changed in the early 1960's, these trends declined. However, after the Vietnam conflict a large number of refugees populated urban centers. Urban migrants undergo adjustment problems upon relocation. These problems include, depression, isolation, and loss of self-esteem.

Rural Migrants

While millions of internal migrants moved into populated urban centers, about two million people lacking technical skills have become rural migrants. Early migrant populations in the United States moved from Southern states to Northern states. Most recently the moves have not been as clear-cut. One thing is certain, the Northern states are losing population while large numbers of internal migrants have moved from one urban center to another.

The main source of sustenance for rural migrants is agricultural work. There are no exact figures as to the number of migrant farm workers. However, the estimates range from one to five million. The Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) currently maintains records of 469,016 children.

The early migrant farm workers on the West Coast were Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and Mexicans. A second group was composed of Blacks on the East Coast. The third group were Spanish-speaking migrants from Puerto Rico and Texas. This latter group moved into the Mid-section of the country. By 1966 there were migrants from each of the ethno-linguistic groups in all the states. These major ethno-linguistic groups are discussed below.

Blacks

In the first decade of this country, Blacks, primarily from Florida, moved to the Northeast. The predominant place of their resettlement was New York. Later Blacks from other Southern states moved to industrial centers in the North.

During the 1930's, the cultivation of winter vegetables in Florida attracted Black workers from other Southern states to Florida (Young 00, 1968). Migrant Blacks became a significant part of the farm labor force in the South. In subsequent years, this work force moved to the Northern states. The pattern continues today, although a marked decrease of Black migrant workers has been noted.

The Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) currently maintains records of 469,016 children.

Mexican-Americans

Mexican-American migrants are predominantly from Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California. The Mexican-Americans comprise the largest group of Hispanics in the United States. There are approximately 13 million Mexican-Americans. There exists no reasonable estimate of the percentage of Mexican-Americans who are migrants. However, the MSRTS reports that about 60% of all migrant children accounted for by the system are Mexican-American.

Puerto Rican Americans

Puerto Ricans comprise the second largest Hispanic group in the United States. Their migration to the mainland began after World War II and constitutes the first airborne migration to the United States. They settled in the Northeastern states, as well as in Illinois and Michigan.

Anglos

About 20% of migrant farm workers are Anglo of European extraction. They are located predominantly in the Northern states (Washington, Idaho, Montana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Maine). This population works primarily on dairy farms or on farms where they pick crops.

An example of this Anglo migrant population is a group of bikers in Idaho. The following illustrates the lifestyle of one of these groups:

Recruiter: We have what I call "biker migrants" living over here (he pointed to a trailer park). They are Anglo, and the wives pick fruit. They are real young.

Ethnographer: What do the husbands do?

Recruiter: They work on their choppers. The families are real young and very supportive of education.

Social and Educational Background of Migrants

Migrant groups differ in social and educational background. Wallace (1986) found that while many Asian and Hispanic American migrants have some knowledge of English, recent arrivals are not literate in any language. For some, this condition is a result of their social and economic status. For others, illiteracy results from the disruption of education caused by frequent moves or political turmoil. Other reasons for illiteracy include origin in countries where there is a strong oral tradition of language learning or cultural

... migrant children upon arrival to new sites are at a disadvantage compared to children who have spent their entire school life in one school system.

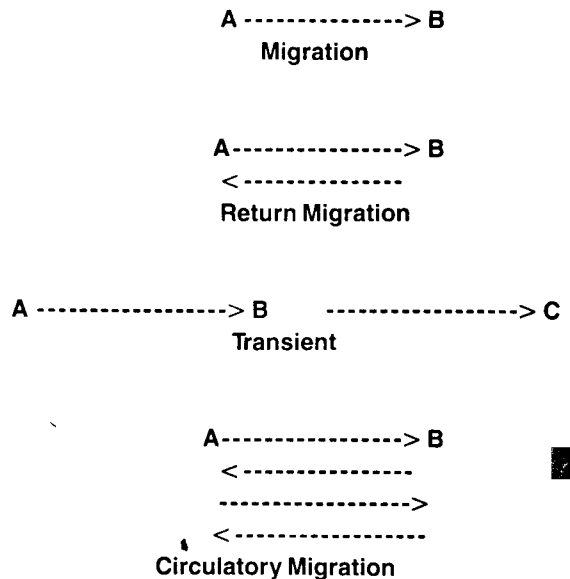
that possess no written language. Haiti, Khmer and Hmong are three examples of these groups.

The social and educational background of migrants results in school-related problems for their children. Jobu (1988) reports that Vietnamese and Mexican-American students undergo similar processes in their adjustment to the U.S. schools. The problems encountered by these students include ignorance of the school system, difficulties in language learning, and adjustment to the school and community environments.

Although migrant children do adjust to the educational system, this adjustment is not without complications. The NCAS (1988) suggests that migrant children upon arrival to new sites are at a disadvantage compared to children who have spent their entire school life in one school system. Language, culture shock, strange environment, advanced age in the grade level and involuntary migration are factors that adversely affect migrant children.

Patterns of Migration: Three Streams

Migration, return migration, transient migration and circulatory migration are the four prevalent patterns of migration that exist in the United States. In order to comprehend these patterns of migration, it is important to understand the terminology associated with the move.



"Migration" refers to a move from one region or part of the country to another.

"Return migration" refers to the return to the region or place of origin (home-base) after the first move.

"Transient migration" refers to the movement to a second or subsequent locations.

"Circulatory migration" refers to the continuous back and forth movement from place of origin (home-base) to other locations.

The following experts from the ethnography illustrate the migratory patterns previously defined.

Migration

My husband was working as a bank teller in Mexico. We made enough money to pay for our food but there was no future for our children. We decided to come to California to pick crops because we can make more money here. The children are learning English in school, and they will be better off. This is the first time we came over here.

Return Migration

I came from Puerto Rico with my husband and the children. At first I didn't like it here, but the farmer has given my husband the opportunity to drive a tractor. So we are going to Puerto Rico for the winter and return here next year.

Transient migration

Ethnographer: Why do you have to move back and forth?

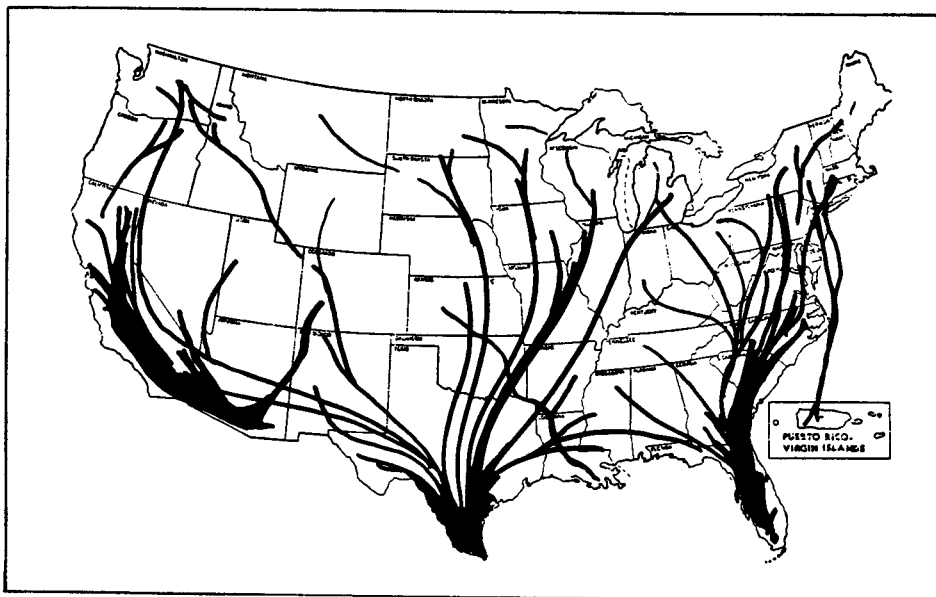
Ans: It was my father's idea. He got tired of one job and went to another, got tired of that and went somewhere else. He took us to different farms, I guess he wanted to try them all.

Circulatory migration

Well, we've been migrants, well since grandfather used to be a migrant in 1948. We have been going to S, NE, like I said since my grandfather started. And they said that they used to carry me, you know, ever since I used to be a baby. And then I went with my own family, dad and mom, you know, and then they quit going so I started going with my own family, going over there and working and everything. But I guess we been doing that most of our lives, huh?

Migrant Streams

Not only are there four prevalent patterns of migration but King-Stoops (1980) identifies three distinct streams of movement of migrant farm workers: the Eastern stream, the Mid-continent stream and the West Coast stream. The map below illustrates the traditional migrant streams identified by King-Stoops.



Map 1: Shows the traditional pattern of migration identified by the U.S. Government

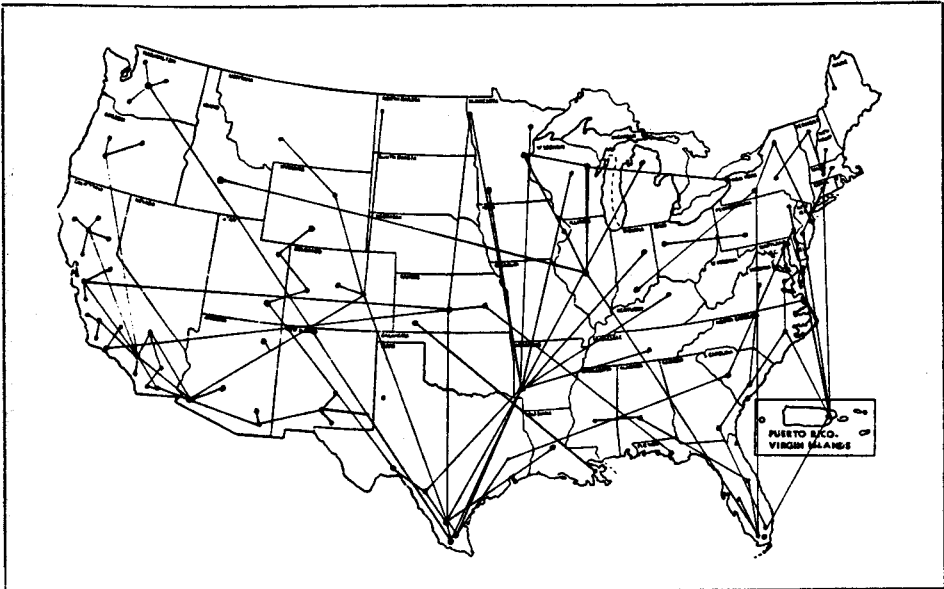
The current study has identified the emergence of new migration patterns.

The Eastern stream is made up of Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Anglos, Canadian Indians, and Blacks. This stream flows up and down the region east of the Appalachian Mountains.

The Mid-continent stream traverses the Mississippi River basin. This group is primarily composed of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, Blacks and most recently Vietnamese and Cambodians. These migrants move in all directions to and from regions in Texas.

The West Coast stream is a great migrant movement extending from California and Arizona to Oregon and Washington. This stream is comprised primarily of documented and undocumented Mexicans, Central Americans, Vietnamese and Filipinos and other Western Pacific immigrants. The current study has identified the emergence of new migration patterns.

As the map below indicates, these new patterns are not as distinctly defined as the patterns within the traditional streams.



Map 2: Shows the current patterns of migration identified by the ethnographic data

In the study reported herein three states from each of the streams were utilized: the Eastern stream (Florida, Massachusetts, and New York); the Mid-continent stream (Texas, Kansas and Illinois); in the West Coast stream (Arizona, California and Idaho).

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the migratory nature of the United States. Migratory movement is clarified, and a background is provided regarding the national origin of the migrant population currently involved in farming or fishing activities. While most migrant children are Hispanics, there are large numbers of Blacks and Asian-Pacific Americans. About 20% of the migrants are Whites. The majority of migrant workers are American citizens and therefore are eligible for all the services provided in the home-base as well as upstream.

The majority of migrant workers are American citizens and therefore are eligible for all the services provided in the home-base as well as upstream.

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