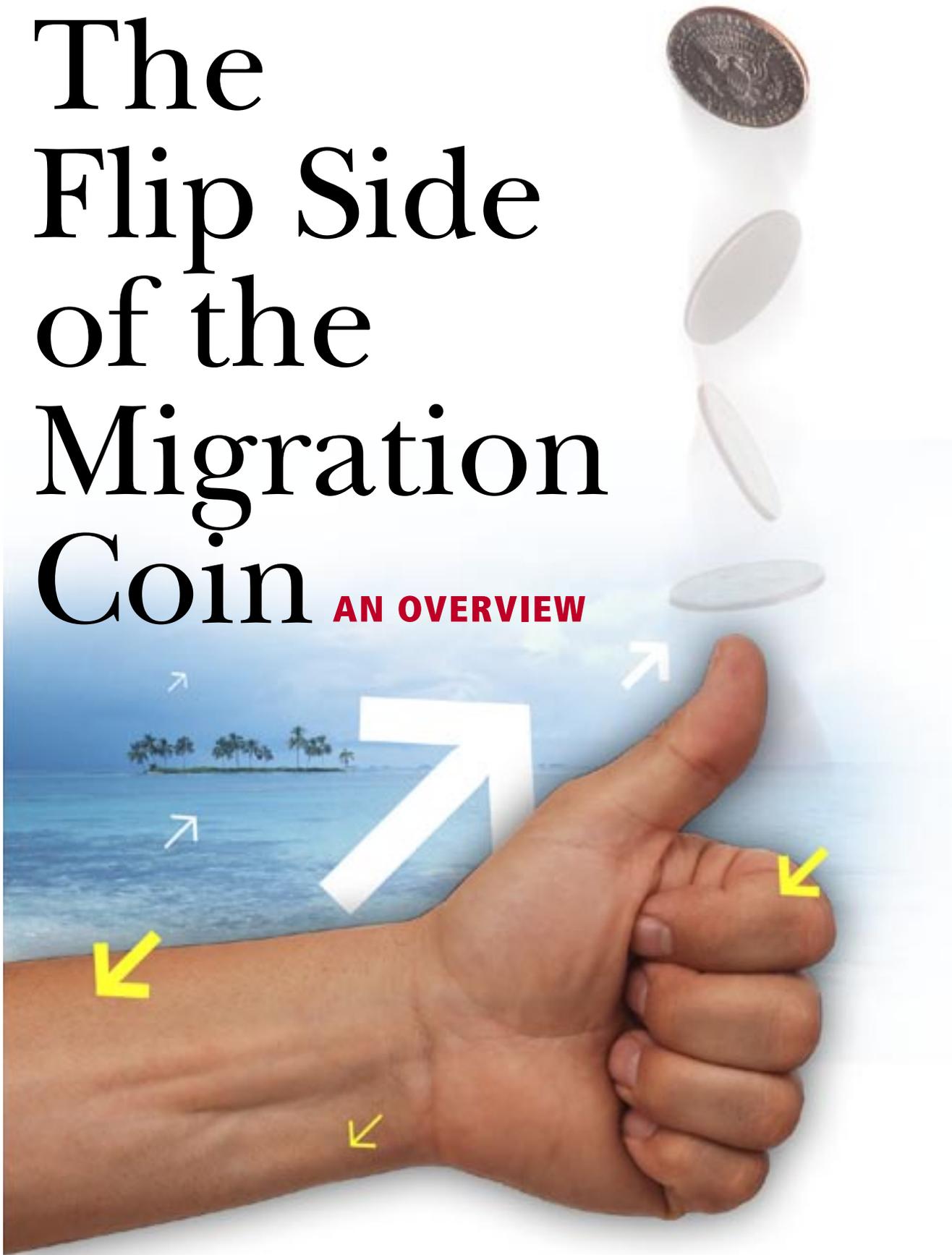


# The Flip Side of the Migration Coin

**AN OVERVIEW**





# INTRODUCTION

A friend once told me, quite seriously, “Don’t bother writing introductions. Nobody reads them anyhow.” That may be a mistake in this case, but that is for you to decide.

One thing seems quite clear. We have put together a variety of survey data, interviews, and observations that is unique. Using a word like “unique” is a very dangerous thing to do in today’s world, but if there is equivalent research out there, we have not been able to find it. The subject can be called “reverse migration”, but that is a misnomer. It is simply an aspect of global migration that has been given little attention, but deserves more. For reasons that should be clear by the time you have finished this informal overview of our research, we trust you will agree.

Our voyage into this uncharted territory began quite innocently and rather personally. I had decided to look for a second home outside the US. Based on my professional experience and following considerable research, I decided to visit Panama. For me, that turned out to be as close to a “perfect fit” as I could have expected. Whether that would be true for someone else is immaterial. It simply was the first leg of this new voyage or, if you prefer, the seed that fell on fertile ground.

As is true of some other nations, if not always so dramatically, Panama is exploding with migration-driven activity. When I raised the topic with Panamanians and expatriates alike, I heard story after story of the increasing significance of immigration **to** Panama, not emigration **from** Panama. The pile of anecdotal evidence continued to grow, but it was all anecdotal. As my Panamanian friends got tired of hearing me say, “The problem in Panama is that everyone has an opinion on this subject, but no one has any facts”. I decided to do something about that.

So it was that my firm, New Global Initiatives Inc., began its study of the “flip side” of the migration coin: the migration from “wealthier” countries to emerging markets, the flip side of the migration issue that dominates the news in North America, Europe, and elsewhere. We had to focus and we chose Americans retiring to Central America and the Caribbean. Why? Both because the region is the closest to the US and the popular press was full of stories of retiring “baby boomers” headed south, the one aspect of American emigration receiving attention. It seemed logical. We had no idea that we were opening a subject far more complex than simply retirement emigration.

When we approached experts in global migration with our questions regarding the migration of retirees from the US, we found that they were as surprised by the question as anyone. No one was aware of any studies on the topic. Finding that hard to accept, our first step was to hire the non-profit Migration Policy Institute (MPI) to undertake a quick desk study of available information. They found a few bits and pieces, but nothing of any substance.

Our second step was to contract with MPI to do an original study. We focused on Americans retiring to Mexico and Panama. A thorough search of any and all documentation on the subject including the Mexican and Panamanian censuses, focus groups with Americans residing in both nations, and discussions with government and business leaders in both nations was completed in 2006. The resulting report is freely available at [www.ngiweb.com/americanemigrants.pdf](http://www.ngiweb.com/americanemigrants.pdf).

MPI did an excellent job, but the report was unsatisfying. The data that was available was out-of-date, very incomplete, and thus very misleading. The focus groups could only provide us with comments from those who had already

relocated and small numbers of them at that. There simply was no data out there on what was currently going through the minds of Americans on this subject and thus any estimate of the future had nothing solid to support it.

So it was that we turned to a professional opinion research firm. We looked at several, tried a couple, and finally settled on Zogby International, a large, well-known and well-respected American firm specializing in opinion surveys. Their professional support in survey design was critical to our effort and was well-appreciated.

We have completed six Zogby surveys of the American people conducted from June of 2005 through December of 2006. As is typical of surveys, Zogby normally polls from 1,000 to 1,200 Americans on any given topic. Our smallest survey was of 7,967 respondents and our largest included 24,645 respondents. In the opinion survey business, this survey size is normally unnecessary. However, if we were to get sufficiently large sub-samples to better understand migrants to specific global regions and, to the extent possible, specific nations, we required a larger total sample.

I'll leave it at that for the moment as the major portion of this overview will present some of our primary survey findings. However, there is one more rather unusual source of information unique to our study that I should mention briefly.

In 2004, prior to the beginning of our study, I personally set up a simple non-profit information website called [Retirement Wave](#) that included some general essays on the subject of overseas retirement and specific information on my new home, Panama. In my own search for information on the Internet, I had trouble finding any site that provided good information without a commercial agenda. Lacking paid promotion, search engines and

“word of modem” from satisfied visitors were its only advertising.

Tens of thousands of visitors and 2400 members later, I spend a surprising amount of my spare time just dealing with member emails. In addition, I offer to visit with them, both our schedules providing, when they visit Panama. As of this writing, I have had more than 150 informal meetings with more than 250 members here in Panama and have exchanged from one to more than a dozen emails with hundreds more. Despite the site's name and content, nearly 20% of the membership is between 21 and 49, uninterested in retirement, but very interested in relocation to or investment in a nation like Panama.

It may seem very odd to mention this personal effort in a corporate report such as this. Retirement Wave certainly hasn't provided me with a “scientific” sampling of American emigrants, but it is an example of the interest in emigration and, as I will stress again in the final Commentary section of this overview, statistics only take you so far. As important and personal as the decision to “pull up stakes” and move to a new nation is, these statistics represent real people with real hopes and expectations.

This experience has provided me and my firm with deeper insight into the very human reality behind the poll numbers. So it is that I take a moment to thank all those Retirement Wave members and visitors for helping us gain a more profound understanding of the “flip side of the migration coin”.

If you have made it through the Introduction to this point, thank you for helping to prove my friend wrong! Now, let's move on to the surveys.

Bob Adams  
President/CEO  
New Global Initiatives, Inc.



# A SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The purpose of this informal report is to provide a brief overview of some of the results of our opinion research surveys. It is not meant to be exhaustive. Our surveys include all nations which Americans are considering for relocation. Ranging from France to Uzbekistan and beyond, we have collected information from people considering relocation to every corner of the earth.

A total of 103,645 adult Americans were surveyed in six polls conducted from September of 2005 through December of 2006. The margins of error range from roughly six-tenths of one percent to one percent. Because the words “migration” and “migrant” have different meanings to different people, we chose to use the words “relocation” and “relocator”. Results shown below are from our most recent December 2006 survey of more than 21,000 Americans, unless otherwise noted in the text.

Surveys of this sort begin with one “gateway” question and a set of responses that divides respondents into categories before moving on to more specific questions suitable to each category. Our “gateway” question was as follows:

*Are you planning to relocate to another nation for more than two years for reasons other than the requirements of the military, the government or your job?*

This was intended to narrow our results to those who were voluntarily relocating. Our responses were as follows:

Yes, I plan to relocate

I am very seriously considering it and am likely to do it

I am somewhat seriously considering it and may do it

No, I do not plan to relocate full-time, but I am seriously considering buying a vacation home or other property outside the US

No, I have considered it and decided against it

No, I do not plan to relocate

Not sure

The December 2006 results were well in line with prior results, with one exception. The “no, but possibly a vacation home/other property” question was a new addition.

Yes, I plan to relocate	<b>1.4</b>
Very seriously considering it and am likely to do it	<b>1.3</b>
Somewhat seriously considering it and may do it	<b>6.1</b>
No, but may buy property outside the US	<b>2.8</b>
No, have considered and decided against it	<b>3.6</b>
No, do not plan to relocate	<b>82.1</b>
Not Sure	<b>2.6</b>

If each respondent represents a household, it is inappropriate to apply these percentages to the total population without knowing the household size of the potential relocators. When we asked that, the response was:

One	<b>20.8%</b>
Two	<b>50.1%</b>
Three or more	<b>21.3%</b>
Not sure	<b>2.8%</b>

On that basis, we assume a household size of 2, as opposed to the US average household size of 2.6.

Using 115,000,000 US households as a base and multiplying that against our positive response percentages, we get the following rounded numbers of households:

Yes	<b>1,610,000</b>
Very Serious	<b>1,495,000</b>
Somewhat Serious	<b>7,015,000</b>
No, But Plan to Buy Property	<b>3,220,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,340,000</b>

Given our average household size of 2, double those numbers and you get an estimate of the number of Americans involved.

People who comment on American relocation often seem to believe that retirees are the primary factor or at least are a disproportionate percentage of America's emigrants. Although results vary from one global destination to another, the simple answer is "No." The table below answers that question eloquently. The leading age group is highlighted in each category:

By Age Group	18-24	25-34	35-54	55-69	70+
<b>Yes</b>	0.4	<b>3.6</b>	1.1	0.9	0.5
<b>Very Serious</b>	<b>2.6</b>	1.4	1.5	1.1	0.2
<b>Somewhat Serious</b>	<b>12.2</b>	9.5	6.0	3.7	1.6
<b>No, But May Buy</b>	2.7	<b>3.8</b>	2.9	2.3	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>TOTAL "Somewhat"</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>

The leading position of the 25-34 age group came as a surprise. Traditionally, this has been the age group thought to be concerned with beginning a career, marriage, and a family. Although they might find a global relocation interesting, we had not ex-

pected them to be so dominant among those actually planning to relocate. So much for our prior assumptions.

Where are these people interested in relocating? Due to the small number of responses from people over 70, the figures are provided for the total sample and the four other age groups:

	Total	18-24	25-34	35-54	55-69
<b>Central America</b>	<b>11.9</b>	1.5	7.9	12.8	20.2
<b>South America</b>	<b>5.3</b>	11.0	1.5	6.4	7.5
<b>Europe</b>	<b>42.8</b>	57.1	64.9	30.5	30.1
<b>Canada</b>	<b>14.1</b>	10.8	7.8	20.1	13.1
<b>Africa</b>	<b>1.9</b>	3.3	0.5	2.3	2.8
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>2.6</b>	5.0	2.0	2.8	2.2
<b>Asia/Australia/NZ</b>	<b>13.0</b>	9.6	12.1	14.7	11.5
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>8.4</b>	1.8	3.3	10.5	12.6

Europe is clearly the most popular choice in each age group, but different regions attract different proportions within each age group and the age groups differ significantly from each other.

While the results are instructive, these percentages can be misleading in terms of actual numbers of people. For example, the 35-54 age group is roughly twice the size of the 55-69 age group and it is also more likely to include relocators. When these factors are taken into account, the actual number of those 35-54 interested in Central America is roughly twice those 55-69. In like manner, because the number of adults 25-34 interested in relocation is so very high, despite the low percentage interested in Central America, they are nearly as numerous as those 55-69. Yes, retirees are attracted to Central America, but they are not the largest age group and are a distinct minority of the total market.

Does household annual income influence the choice of a destination? First, let's see how income relates to interest in relocation.

	<25K	25-35K	35-50K	50-75K	75-100K	100K+
<b>Yes</b>	1.9	1.8	1.1	1.4	1.0	2.2
<b>Very Serious</b>	3.3	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.3
<b>Somewhat Serious</b>	8.5	6.6	6.6	6.0	4.6	6.8
<b>No, But May Buy</b>	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.6	5.1	4.1

We note that those with the least income and those with the most income are the most likely to plan to relocate, while those with the most income are most likely to consider buying a property outside the US without relocating.

The latter is hardly a surprise, although we point out that those at the \$75-100,000 level are more likely to substitute a purchase for actual relocation. The former indicates that the lure of a low-cost nation is also a powerful factor in the minds of those with limited incomes. Our experience and our statistics indicate that this is especially true of retirees, but others as well. In any event, interest in relocation is not limited to those with high incomes nor is there a simple correlation between income and relocation interest.

Now let's take a look at the regional preferences of the different income levels.

	<25K	25-35K	35-50K	50-75K	75-100K	100K+
<b>Central America</b>	12.7	10.2	16.1	10.3	9.8	13.8
<b>South America</b>	4.6	5.6	11.7	5.6	4.4	4.6
<b>Europe</b>	35.1	43.3	31.9	40	43.8	53.4
<b>Canada</b>	21.7	14.4	15.1	17	10.3	9.7
<b>Africa</b>	1.0	3.1	1.3	0.2	6.4	0.2
<b>Middle East</b>	2.3	3.9	3.8	3.1	2.5	1.5
<b>Asia/Australia/NZ</b>	9.8	12.7	11.2	14.4	19.2	9.1
<b>Not Sure</b>	12.8	6.8	8.9	9.5	3.6	7.6

Interpreting any single set of statistics can be misleading or confusing. Why do households with \$35-50,000 income markedly more interested in Central and South America? Part of the reason may be associated with the higher percentage of Spanish-speaking Americans at that income level who may prefer moving to nations where they are already fluent in the local language. Or perhaps they are returning to their family's original homeland. Over 7% of potential relocators listed "I am returning to my homeland" as a reason for relocation. Why do low-income respondents tend toward Canada? Beyond the obvious fact that Canada borders on the US and is cheaply visited, we have to keep in mind those young adults who naturally have lower incomes, but whose incomes are likely to rise to higher categories in coming years, disproportionately favor Canada.

Do relocators intend to buy or build a home on arrival?

Buy or build	<b>25.5</b>
Rent first, buy or build later	<b>47.2</b>
Rent only	<b>14.5</b>
Not sure	<b>12.8</b>

How much do they expect to spend when they do buy or build?

Less than \$100,000	<b>10.3</b>
\$100,000 - \$199,999	<b>18.9</b>
\$200,000 - \$299,999	<b>16.3</b>
\$300,000 - \$399,000	<b>4.8</b>
\$400,000 - \$499,999	<b>8.6</b>
\$500,00 or more	<b>7.2</b>
I do not plan to buy or build	<b>17.4</b>
Not sure	<b>17.6</b>

Both of the above factors are deeply influenced by income level, the region of interest (Europe is seen as more expensive), whether the home is intended for short-term visits (a vacation home, for example) or for relocation and so forth.

Do relocators expect to sell their homes in the US as a result of relocation?

It's very important, we need money to purchase a home	<b>25.9</b>
It's important	<b>9.1</b>
We hope to sell	<b>12.2</b>
We do not intend to sell our house in the US	<b>25.6</b>
Not sure	<b>27.2</b>

We had anticipated a higher percentage would need to sell their homes and a smaller percentage would not intend to sell. We were wrong.

Given a "softer" real estate market in the US, do those who expect to sell feel they will have problems selling their US homes?

Extremely difficult, local real estate market very slow	<b>12.3</b>
Difficult, but we expect to be able to sell	<b>19.7</b>
Neither difficult nor easy, expect to be able to sell	<b>38.5</b>
Fairly easy	<b>20.7</b>
Very easy	<b>4.5</b>
Not sure	<b>4.2</b>

Once they have settled into their new nation, how much do they expect to spend to support themselves on a monthly basis?

Less than \$2000	<b>27.7</b>
\$2000 - 2999	<b>22.9</b>
\$3000 - 3999	<b>13.2</b>
\$4000 - 4900	<b>5.9</b>
\$5000 - 5999	<b>3.7</b>
\$6000 - 6999	<b>4.4</b>
\$7000 or more	<b>2.5</b>
Not sure	<b>19.8</b>

It should be clear that respondents were doing their best to respond without actually knowing the reality they would encounter when they relocated or sought a property outside the US for any reason. How accurate are their estimates? There is no simple way to answer this question, but there is one factor that might give us a hint. You may be assuming that these folks have never done this before. For the majority, that is true, but not for all.

How many of our "positive" respondents have **already** lived outside the US for two years or more? 28% have done this at least once before. Of course, this group includes some people originally born outside the US and many others who have lived outside the US for reasons associated with their civilian or military employment. In the latter case, this is not their reason for relocating now, given our "gateway" question, but their experience is certainly a factor in their decision. In any case, these respondents may be expected to be more realistic in their estimates, based on prior experience. This does not answer our original question, but it is a good reminder that there are substantial numbers of Americans who are not new to living outside the US, for whatever reason.

We also looked into the type of people who are interested in relocation as opposed to those who are not. Are there any personality characteristics that separate the two groups? In April of 2006, we conducted a special

survey of 7,967 adult Americans. This gave us a sample that included a thousand respondents who were either planning to relocate or considering it to compare with the remaining seven thousand who were not. We posed special questions that required more thought than the normal survey question. Here are two of those questions that demonstrated differences between the two groups.

### 1 - If you had to choose between these two job opportunities, which would you choose?

1. A job where your responsibilities, the work environment, and the people you would work with were regularly changing.
2. A job where your responsibilities, the work environment, and the people you would work with were stable and unlikely to change.
3. Not sure

Here are the results for those who were **not** considering relocation:

The job likely to change	<b>28.6</b>
The job unlikely to change	<b>58.9</b>
Not sure	<b>12.5</b>

Here are the results for those considering relocation:

The job likely to change	<b>43.9</b>
The job unlikely to change	<b>38.0</b>
Not sure	<b>18.2</b>

### 2 - You have the opportunity to travel to an exotic tropical nation where people live a very different lifestyle than you. Do you stay in the "safe" areas where tourists are welcome or do you visit areas where tourists rarely are seen?

1. I wouldn't visit an exotic nation, I prefer to travel near my home, if at all.
2. I would stick to the areas that the guidebooks said were best for tourists.
3. I would set out on my own to visit any area that looked interesting.
4. Not sure

Here are the results for those who were **not** considering relocation:

Wouldn't visit	<b>16.5</b>
Stick to guidebooks	<b>38.2</b>
Set out on my own	<b>38.0</b>
Not sure	<b>7.4</b>

Here are the results for those considering relocation:

Wouldn't visit	<b>5.6</b>
Stick to guidebooks	<b>18.3</b>
Set out on my own	<b>70.3</b>
Not sure	<b>4.5</b>

There was a clear difference in the way the two groups responded to an uncertain or changing environment. However, when considering whether statements described themselves ("If I take a risk and fail, I can handle the consequences" and "I feel uneasy when I have to make a decision with an uncertain outcome"), the two groups answered almost identically. When focused on themselves, they respond similarly, but when focused on their environment, they respond differently.

Perhaps the question of most interest to many readers will be a rather simple one, "Why do relocators want to relocate?" This type of question is difficult. We can provide a half-dozen household income levels and cover everyone in the sample accurately. This

is the case with most of the questions asked. But when you have to provide pre-determined answers to a question so profoundly personal, you may easily miss something important. However, the question needs to be asked and we asked it in two forms. In each case, we offered twenty different responses drawn from prior survey experience. In the first case, respondents could choose as few or as many responses as they liked. In the second case, they were asked to choose the one reason that was most important to them.

When given the opportunity to select as many factors as they liked, relocators responded as follows:

I want to live in a less stressful environment	<b>49.6</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>49.0</b>
I want change, adventure, new challenges	<b>47.9</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>42.0</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>39.9</b>
I want to escape from a culture of greed	<b>39.8</b>
I am looking for a simpler life	<b>33.9</b>
I like the family culture of other countries	<b>26.7</b>
I am looking for a lower cost of living	<b>26.1</b>
I am looking for the best retirement location	<b>19.1</b>
I want to stretch my scarce resources	<b>17.5</b>
I want to live in a warmer climate	<b>17.4</b>
I want to get away from overcrowding in my home area	<b>11.3</b>
I want to invest outside the US	<b>9.8</b>
I want to live in a country with financial privacy	<b>9.0</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the left	<b>8.2</b>
I am returning to my homeland	<b>7.1</b>
I want to avoid future terrorist attacks	<b>5.1</b>
I want to establish a business	<b>4.5</b>
I want to find a tax haven/shelter	<b>3.8</b>

When asked to choose the single most important reason from those offered, they responded as follows:

I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>26.5</b>
I want change, adventure, new challenges	<b>20.9</b>
I want to live in a less stressful environment	<b>6.8</b>
I want to escape from a culture of greed	<b>6.6</b>
I am looking for the best retirement location	<b>5.4</b>
I am looking for a lower cost of living	<b>5.2</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>4.9</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the left	<b>4.2</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>3.5</b>
I am looking for a simpler life	<b>3.3</b>
I want to live in a warmer climate	<b>2.6</b>
I like the family culture of other countries	<b>2.6</b>
I am returning to my homeland	<b>1.5</b>
I want to stretch my scarce resources	<b>1.2</b>
I want to establish a business	<b>1.1</b>
I want to invest outside the US	<b>0.8</b>
I want to avoid future terrorist attacks	<b>0.4</b>
I want to find a tax haven/shelter	<b>0.2</b>
I want to live in a country with financial privacy	<b>0.2</b>
I want to get away from overcrowding in my home area	<b>0.1</b>

These statistics are for the total sample. If you divide the sample by income, education, region of interest and so forth, the results will differ among groups. For this overview, we will share the differences for four age groups.

Below are the four most-chosen reasons for each age group when allowed to select as many reasons as they liked.

**18-24**

I want changes, adventure	<b>65.9</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>49.2</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>45.8</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>41.5</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>39.3</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>36.9</b>

**25-34**

I want changes, adventure	<b>66.5</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>59.2</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>54.6</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>46.6</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>44.3</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>41.8</b>

**35-54**

I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>46.2</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>45.0</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>42.5</b>
I want changes, adventure	<b>38.7</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>37.1</b>
I am looking for a simpler life	<b>36.8</b>

**55-69**

I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>50.4</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>45.6</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>43.3</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>40.3</b>
I am looking for a simpler life	<b>38.7</b>
I am looking for the best retirement location	<b>37.7</b>

In the following tables, we will include the six reasons most frequently chosen as “most important” by each group when required to choose only one, with an exception. For those aged 18 to 24, there were only five reasons chosen by more than 2%.

**18-24**

I want changes, adventure	<b>46.1</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>17.5</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>17.4</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>6.9</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>5.0</b>

**25-34**

I want changes, adventure	<b>31.7</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>31.4</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>8.9</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>5.9</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>4.4</b>
I want to live in a warmer climate	<b>3.2</b>

**35-54**

I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>26.6</b>
I want changes, adventure	<b>14.8</b>
I am looking for a lower cost of living	<b>9.8</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>6.6</b>
I am looking for the best retirement location	<b>6.5</b>
I think the US is moving too far to the left	<b>5.7</b>

**55-69**

I think the US is moving too far to the right	<b>23.6</b>
I am looking for the best retirement location	<b>11.7</b>
I want to escape a culture of greed	<b>9.9</b>
I want a less stressful environment	<b>6.1</b>
I feel my privacy is threatened in the US	<b>5.8</b>
I want to live in a country with affordable health care	<b>5.8</b>

Combined with viewing responses from any of several other views (income, education, etc.) the impression left is of three groups. One group finds its primary of motivation in a political viewpoint. Another seeks adventure. The third is a large, but amorphous, group whose members divide over their specific reasons for relocating, but who all seek a significant change from their current circumstances.



# COMMENTARY

As mentioned near the outset of this presentation, statistics only take you so far. Understanding human behavior requires more than mathematical skills. Our historical study, our focus groups, and our correspondence and interviews with individual potential relocators and those who have already relocated provide depth to our understanding of the statistics. In the context of this overview, we will not provide a detailed analysis, but will offer seven statements that we believe are supported both by our opinion research and our discussions with those directly involved.

## **This is nothing new.**

Americans have been relocating to other nations throughout US history. When the US State Department asked its embassies and consulates to make their best estimate of Americans resident in their respective nations in 1999, the total exceeded four million. Although only a rough estimate, this and other reports are clear indications that relocation is not a new or even recent phenomenon.

## **The numbers of American relocating are growing.**

Given the lack of solid statistics from former years, this also is an estimate. However, the amount of anecdotal evidence demonstrating an increase is overwhelming. The lack of similar evidence relocation is diminishing only further supports this assumption.

## **The most significant reason why the number of Americans relocating is increasing is simple.**

Both the historical record and common sense indicate that the single most important answer to the question, “Why are more Americans relocating?” is because they can. Improved transportation and communication (the Internet being the primary platform) not only makes it cheaper and easier to physically move, it also makes it easier to emotionally move. Relocators can remain in touch with family and friends back home and with events in the US in ways that were simply not available to most Americans twenty or even ten years ago. The decision to relocate is not as dramatic a decision to “separate” from the US as it once was. To a lesser extent, but still very important, this also influences the decision to purchase a vacation home or other property outside the US without full relocation.

## **“Pull” factors are of growing significance.**

There have always been and always will be factors that “push” Americans to relocate to other nations, but “pull” factors are increasingly important. The dramatic rise in affluence of the “emerging markets” in recent years means that Americans now find familiar goods and services in many more nations than was the case in past decades. While the new nation may be “exotic” in some respects, it is “familiar” in other respects, providing both a feeling of adventure and stability at the same time.

## **Relocation is a trend, not a fad.**

Every indication is that the factors mentioned above and others that encourage relocation are only going to strengthen in the future. Although an unexpected global disaster may interrupt the trend, even reverse it temporarily, we see no reason to expect a voluntary reversal.

## It is not just about “Boomers”.

Despite the sheer size of the “baby boom” in the US, they do not dominate the trend to relocation. In fact, they are often outnumbered by younger relocators, even in nations considered “retirement havens”. This is also true of those who only purchase property outside the US without relocating.

## It’s not just about Americans.

Migration is a global phenomenon. For one example, as another [recent study](#) demonstrated, nearly 10% of Britain’s population has already relocated outside the UK. Although we focus on Americans relocating outside the US, we remind readers that focus should not become tunnel vision. The trend in the US should always be considered in the context of the global trend. We believe that we are witnessing the literal arrival of a “global community”, not by government directive or for altruistic reasons, but as a result of tens of millions of independent decisions. Future generations may look back on the first decades of the 21st century as the “age of migration”. As a result, when considering the social and economic consequences of American relocation/migration, we must also consider the migration of others. As the British study referenced above indicates, some 678,000 Britons live in the United States alone. There is nothing “uni-directional” about global migration. Likewise, the consequences of global migration are not uni-directional.

relocation. There will be some readers who see these results as highly positive while others will see them as highly negative. At NGI, we see this willingness to relocate to other nations as a perfectly logical stage in a historical process that goes back to the beginnings of human society. Above all, we emphasize that this migration is the result of the freedom to choose and the widening availability of the means to so choose. Whether the observer likes or dislikes this trend, the decision is not the observer’s to make.

Regardless of political, theological, or philosophical differences, relocators tend to be very independent in their thinking and in their willingness to make a decision and act on it. Although it may be somewhat easier today, the decision to “pull up stakes” and move to another nation for a period of years remains one of the most significant decisions an American or any other person will make in their lifetimes. The freedom to live where they choose to live is critical and fundamental to those who relocate outside the US, as it is to tens of millions who do not. Any attempt to deny this freedom to Americans will fail. Indeed, it is likely to only increase the attractiveness of relocation.

Global migration is an important factor today and will grow in importance in years to come. The participation of Americans in global migration is one aspect that has gone without receiving attention, as is true of many of the traditional “wealthy” nations who also participate in this global process without receiving more than passing notice. It may be the “flip side” of the migration coin, but it is still part of the same coin.



New Global Initiatives, Inc. is pleased to offer this informal overview of our studies to anyone interested in American emigration or



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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*Mr. Adams is available for interviews, public speaking, and professional consultations on the subject of American emigration. He can be contacted at the address and phone number above or by email at [emigration@ngiweb.com](mailto:emigration@ngiweb.com).*