

UNDERSTANDING CONTRASTS IN LATER LIFE MIGRATION PATTERNS: GERMANY, BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES¹⁾

With 2 figures and 4 tables

KLAUS FRIEDRICH and ANTHONY M. WARNES

Zusammenfassung: Annäherungen an unterschiedliche Migrationsmuster im höheren Erwachsenenalter in Deutschland, Großbritannien und den Vereinigten Staaten

In diesem Beitrag werden Erklärungen für die Unterschiede zwischen den Migrationsmustern älterer Menschen innerhalb moderner Gesellschaften vorgelegt. Er behandelt die zunehmenden Fern- und Ruhesitzwanderungen in attraktive Regionen. Die Aussagen stützen sich auf neuere Analysen aus elf OECD-Ländern sowie aktuelle Forschungsergebnisse der Autoren. Dabei werden vorrangig zwei Einflusssbereiche für die zunehmende Bedeutung von Ruhesitz-Fernwanderungen älterer Menschen betrachtet: zum einen kulturelle und Stadt-Land-Gegensätze ihrer räumlichen Identität und zum anderen das Angebotspektrum attraktiver Zielgebiete. Daneben wird die Gültigkeit der Konvergenzhypothese diskutiert, wonach derzeit in den USA beobachtete Migrationscharakteristika künftig mit Zeitverzug in Europa auftreten werden. Nach dieser Hypothese würden sich ältere Europäer in Zukunft stärker an Fern- und Ruhesitzwanderungen beteiligen. Der Beitrag belegt deutliche Unterschiede in der Standortverbundenheit älterer Deutscher und Amerikaner. Es zeigen sich aber auch Zusammenhänge zwischen Migrationen über längere Distanzen und (a) dem Vorhandensein von landschaftlich attraktiven Zielgebieten bei Binnenwanderungen sowie (b) der Existenz signifikanter familiärer Netzwerke bei internationalen Wanderungen. Die Autoren kommen zu dem Schluß, daß die Entwicklung der Altenmigration und die beobachteten Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Ländern sowohl von kulturspezifischen als auch von historischen und räumlichen Rahmenbedingungen beeinflusst werden. Sie lassen sich somit nicht auf einen einzelnen Entwicklungspfad zurückführen.

Summary: The paper proposes explanations for the strong contrasts among highly developed nations in the migration patterns of older people. It focuses on the relative prevalence of long-distance moves and of migrations to high amenity areas. The argument of the paper draws on recently published analyses of elderly migration in eleven OECD-nations and from the findings of recent studies by the authors. It focuses on two sets of influences upon the relative prevalence of long distance 'amenity-seeking' migrations by older people: cultural and urban-rural differences in people's 'place identity', and the 'opportunity sets' of environmentally attractive destinations within and accessible to each nation. As a subsidiary theme, it examines a convergence hypothesis about the evolution of migration among older people, that features now found in North America represent a later stage along a path that Europe has not yet reached but will attain. Under this hypothesis, the much higher rate of long distance mobility and of amenity-seeking moves in North America will be adopted by Europeans. The paper demonstrates substantial differences in 'attachment to place' among older people in Germany compared to the United States. Associations are also shown between the prevalence of internal long distance retirement moves and (a) the availability of environmentally attractive destinations *within* a country, and (b) the distribution *in other countries* of close family members. It is concluded that the factors influencing the development of elderly migration and the patterns observed in each country are partly cultural, partly historical and partly environmental, and that there is unlikely to be a single developmental path for migration in later life.

1 Introduction

Recent observations of the migration behaviour of older citizens in western societies reveal substantial differences from the patterns of previous decades. The stereotypical picture, of older people staying where they had lived for most of their adult lives, does not describe contemporary reality. Migration streams of

seniors are crossing the borders of villages, cities, counties and countries throughout North America and western Europe. A more recent generalisation has formed, that older migrants are predominantly a highly-active, innovative and competent subgroup, who seek new homes for retirement in 'amenity-rich' areas far away from their previous homes. The mobile home parks and retirement communities of the American sunbelt are popularly linked with if unrepresentative of the type.

The aim of this paper is to understand the differences in the migration patterns of older people in Germany, Great Britain and the United States with particular reference to long distance 'amenity-seeking'

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Table 1: Types of residential moves within and into North Wales, 1979–1995

Migrationstypen nach und innerhalb North Wales 1979–1995		
Type	Characteristics of move and movers	Prevalence (%)
Long distance for amenity	>50 miles, high/average income, homeowners, <75 years, married couples	6
Long distance, for assistance	>50 miles, all incomes, owners and renters, moves to near relatives, >75 years, widows	16
Local, for amenity	<50 miles, high/average income, renters, <75 years, married couples	30
Local, for low levels of assistance	<50 miles, low income, owners and renters, <75 years, married couples	35
Local, for high levels of assistance	<50 miles, high/average income, move into institutions or to live with carer, >75 years, single or widowed	13

Source: BURHOLT (1998), data from the Bangor Longitudinal Study of Ageing

moves within and to other countries. The first section reviews the actual and prospective redistribution of the older population within Germany, partly by comparing its internal migration patterns with those of the USA. The second part presents insights from a recent study of the international retirement of British citizens to Mediterranean regions and draws from new evidence on the world-wide distribution of British retirement migrants. The concluding section considers the implications of both the changing patterns of redistribution as well as the changing causes and motivations of migrations in later life. We argue that the internal pattern of a country's migrations by older people can be understood partly by reference to their external migrations, and *vice versa*.

2 Types of migration in later life

Studies of migration and residential mobility in later life now emphasise the heterogeneity of moves by older people (LONGINO 1996; ROGERS et al. 1992). Both the 'age-propensity schedules' as calibrated and interpreted by ROGERS and CASTRO (1986; ROGERS 1988), and the typologies of moves (very often based on survey evidence of motivations and the characteristics of destination households), as developed by LITWAK and LONGINO (1987) or WISEMAN (1980), essentially identify three types of moves. First, there are those motivated by positive 'environmental preference' and 'lifestyle' reasons. These are differentiated from both moves for 'housing and location adjustment' reasons, i. e. moves to more convenient, lower cost or manageable dwellings and locations, and from those made to access social or nursing support and care, some of which are into specialised care homes and other institutions, and

many of which are to live near or with a close relative or carer. The typology may be elaborated by reference to the characteristic ages at which different types of moves are made, to the social, income and housing characteristics of the movers, to the modal distances of each type of move, and to the characteristic destinations. It has already been implied that disproportionate attention is given to the relatively infrequent 'amenity-related' and 'care-seeking' moves, and too little to the intermediate category of 'housing-adjustment' moves.

In valuable doctoral research, V. BURHOLT (1998) has used latent class analysis to classify older people's moves into North Wales during 1979–1995 into five types (Tab. 1). These associate the younger elderly age groups and above-median income groups with moves for environmental preference reasons, and the older age groups with moves for 'high levels of assistance'. Moves to more convenient locations (housing adjustments) merge imperceptibly with moves for low levels of assistance, and they tend to be made by all age groups of older people and by all income groups, with an over-representation of unmarried and widowed people. It is the combination of moves for both high and low levels of assistance that produces the rising propensity to move after the age of 75 years, which ROGERS (1988) called the 'late age slope'.

Another hypothesis is that national differences in the availability of different types of migrations by older people are a consequence of two sets of demand and supply influences. First, there are 'demand' factors which are most strongly related to the relative affluence of the retiree population and the prevalence of well-resourced early retirement. There are few overseas migrations for retirement from Bulgaria or the Ukraine, mainly because levels of affluence do not permit them. Secondly there are 'opportunity' variations

produced by two sets of factors: a country's internal topography or environmental opportunities, and the composition of extra-national opportunities to settle with family members or in enclaves of fellow nationals. These last have been created over many decades by the history of colonial settlement and economic migrations. They give, for example, the Greek, Irish and Italians exceptionally numerous family connections in North America and Australia. There are other controls, such as emigration restrictions. This paper successively focuses on the cultural differences in the 'use of local space' throughout the life course and its expression in preferences for retirement residence, and differences in the national 'opportunity sets' of highly attractive environmental destinations within and outside a country.

3 Internal migration patterns of German older people and comparisons with the USA

A cross-cultural comparison of the residential and migration behaviour of older people was undertaken by studying California's Silicon Valley and the Rhine-Main agglomeration in Germany (FRIEDRICH 1995). These areas are at different stages of the post-industrial transformation of affluent but ageing societies. Both have experienced considerable economic and population growth in recent years and both offer a relatively high quality of life. Personal interviews with 1200 independently living older people in the USA and Germany constituted the primary data base for this study. Additionally, recent migration files of all 16 federal states (Länder) were examined consisting of more than 230,000 individual migration cases annually (>60 years) within the unified Germany (FRIEDRICH 1996). The central question examined was whether the most recent types of migration in America have been replicated in Germany and, if so, with what time lag.

3.1 The spatial configuration of the migration process

There are several similarities in the spatial patterns, motivations and regional consequences of older people's migration behaviour in Germany and the USA (SEROW et al. 1996). The annual rate of migration by older people in both countries is only about one-third that of the entire population, a differential that has been stable over decades. Another similarity is the preference for southern destinations revealed by net migration flows. The two clear contrasts are that the American movers show less sensitivity to distance, more variation by destination region, and their migration

rates are three times the German level. In other words, the destinations of American older people's migrations show much more selectivity according to environmental attractiveness. No part of Germany has the strong retirement-age peak inflows of Florida and Arizona. Instead, as an analysis of regional destinations shows, more than two-thirds of German older migrants move within the same state (26% same county, 44% other county), and only 30% cross state borders (inter-Länder). Some of the latter are short distance moves in urbanised regions. Two-thirds of all migrations are less than 50 km. Incidentally, similar contrasts were found between Great Britain, in which there is a relatively large number of long distance moves to favoured areas on the south coast of England, and The Netherlands, which has a lower intensity of relocations that are predominantly short distance and to destinations that are widely scattered across the country (VERGOOSEN a. WARNES 1989).

A third contrast is the temporal trend in long distance migrations among older people. Whereas since 1970 these have doubled in the USA and fluctuated but shown no overall trend in Great Britain, in Germany they have declined by 50%. It is clear that internal long distance migrations are comparatively rare among older people in Germany. Examining the inter-regional flows between the 16 German Länder in 1995 (Fig. 1), it was found that:

- short distance migration is much more important than inter-state migration;
- there have been low net gains (in-movements) for northern and southern destinations, whereas the central Länder (North Rhine Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and the three urban states) experienced losses;
- the post-unification net movement from the former East Germany to West Germany has been reduced and Baden-Württemberg has lost its former attractiveness as a preferred destination;
- there are distinctive net flows around Berlin. The pre-unification outflow to West Germany has been replaced by 'suburbanisation' or decentralisation movements to surrounding Brandenburg.

The general pattern is one of urban deconcentration and net shifts of people 'down' the metropolitan hierarchy. Gains in suburban communities complement losses from the urban cores. Within West Germany, this deconcentration and ageing-in-place are responsible for the rising shares of older populations in the suburban fringes. In these areas the capacity of services and facilities for older people will have to expand. In East Germany, however, projections suggest a rapid concentration of older people within towns and cities.

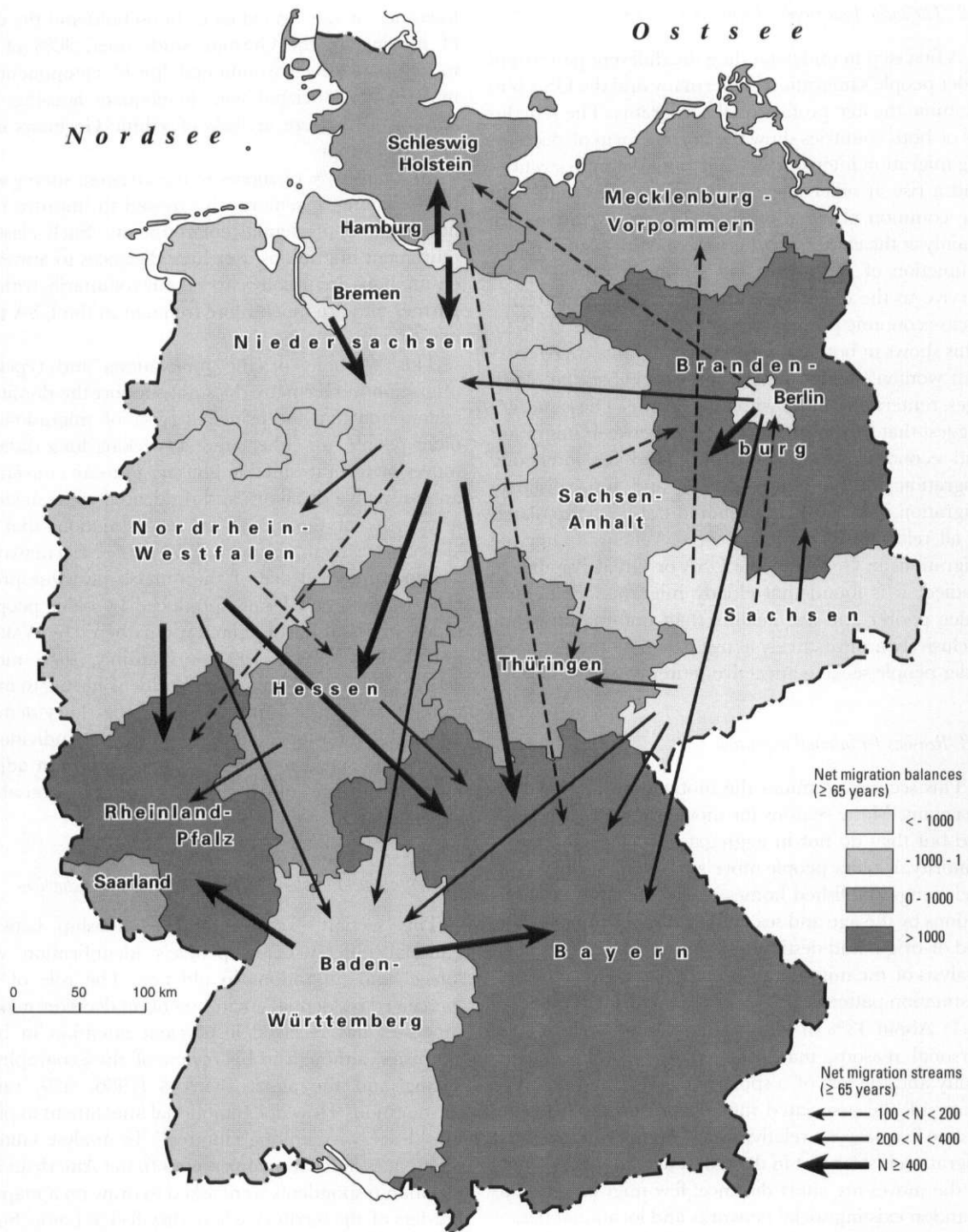


Fig. 1: Elderly migration between German federal states, 1995
 Binnenwanderung älterer Menschen in Deutschland 1995

3.2 *The socio-demographic profile of the migrants*

A first step in understanding the different patterns of older people's migration in Germany and the USA is to examine the age profiles of the migrants. The schedules of both countries show the normal form of decreasing migration intensity with age until the mid-seventies and a rise at older ages. This form is consistent with the common observation that old-age migrations are mainly at the earlier ages because the prevalence is also a function of the decreasing number of people who survive to the older ages. One may also compare the socio-economic profiles of movers and stayers (Tab. 2). This shows in both countries that migrants over-represent women, singles, never-married people, the oldest ages, renters and those with low income. These profiles suggest that the positive correlation between migration and economic status which is found for inter-state migration in the United States and long distance migration in Great Britain should not be extrapolated to all relocations of older people. When all later life migrations in Germany, the USA or Great Britain are studied, it is found that elderly migrants are neither older, poorer and less healthy than non-migrants nor exclusively a distinctively active group of the youngest older people seeking attractive retirement places.

3.3 *Reasons for internal migration*

This section examines the motivations of moves in Germany. Many reasons for moving have been identified but they do not in aggregate explain why only a minority of older people move and the majority stay in their long-established homes. A classification of motivations by the age and sex composition of the migrants and of origin and destination households, as well as an analysis of the migrant group types by regional origin-destination patterns, produces the following typology:

(1) About 43% of all internal migrants relocate for personal reasons, many related to health problems, frailty and the loss of a spouse or other close relatives. Many of the associated moves are motivated by the wish to live nearer a relative. Such kin network-oriented migration is strongest in the oldest age groups. As most of the moves are short distance, few migrants have to abandon existing social networks and locational ties.

(2) Neighbourhood-change or 'environmental press' reasons for migration affect a greater proportion of older people in the Silicon Valley of California than in Germany, for the Americans more often experience and react to pressures induced by rapid urban sprawl. Such 'impelled' changes of residence occur when the perceived environmental degradation exceeds the

tolerance of the individual or household and the costs of moving. In the German study area, 30% of the moves had an environmental 'push' component, in most cases associated with inadequate housing, and another 10% were arrivals of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe.

(3) Only 17% of moves in the German survey were by the youngest seniors who moved to improve their housing and residential environments. Such classical retirement migrations over long distances to attractive destinations are usually carried out voluntarily with the partner and are much more frequent in the USA than in Germany.

This synthesis of the motivations and types of migration in Germany does not support the dominant assumption that the principal types of migrations by older people are either amenity-seeking long distance moves or from unsuitable housing to more convenient and attractive dwellings and residential areas. Instead, a majority of the moves are to destinations that are closer to key members of the migrants' social networks. Comparable evidence of the remarkably close proximity to children's homes produced by older people's moves in South East England was gathered by WARNES and FORD (1995 a, 1995 b). Plausibly, such moves reflect a strategy to minimise the risk of having to move in the future into an institutional home. They demonstrate the interdependence between the individual's family and social networks as also a common adjustment to old age and reduced personal or household capacities.

3.4 *Attachment to place: a paradigm of spatial behaviour*

This section examines the relationship between national differences in people's identification with 'place' and migrations in old age. The role of the 'perceived residential environment' in decision-making processes has received insufficient attention in both countries, although in his review of the geography of ageing and the aged, ROWLES (1986, 529) raised the question, 'How does emotional attachment to place in old age vary among cultures?' To analyse cultural differences in locational perception, the American and German respondents were asked to draw on a map the borders of the territory where they feel at home. Some 889 cognitive maps were standardised (using standard deviational ellipses) and generalised by converting the information into distance-units and drawing isolines of identity (FRIEDRICH 1995, 181 f). The results show there are strong differences among the urban, suburban and rural sub-regions of Germany but *not* among those of California. For German older people

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of older movers and stayers in Germany and California (1985/86)

	Rhine-Main area, Germany		Silicon Valley, California	
	Stayer	Mover	Stayer	Mover
<i>Demographic structure:</i>				
Female percentage	54,9	63,1	65,0	59,4
≥ 75 years (%)	22,5	61,2	19,6	43,1
Married (%)	67,8	44,1	57,6	40,1
Widowed (%)	26,5	43,2	30,9	37,6
<i>Household characteristics:</i>				
Living alone (%)	23,5	35,5	31,14	6,9
With partner (%)	68,2	50,0	58,5	39,2
With children (%)	17,5	14,5	12,4	10,8
Persons per household	2,1	1,9	1,9	1,8
<i>Socioeconomic structure</i>				
Home-owners (%)	65,7	40,5	83,1	46,4
High professional status (%)	8,5	10,2	7,7	8,1
≥1500 DM/US\$ Income per month	41,3	34,2	19,6	10,4
Poor health condition (%)	14,7	21,8	9,0	14,3
<i>Valid cases</i>	637	111	243	197

Notes: age at migration ≥ 60 years

Source: Data from comparative senior citizens survey, see FRIEDRICH (1995, 109)

in rural areas, their attachment to a 'home district' is delineated by a well-defined area, very often a concentric, restricted zone around a long-established settlement. In contrast, town and city dwellers describe a more extensive and irregular home area, often with salients to attractive, leisure-oriented locations (Fig. 2). The migration evidence suggests that the residential behaviour of German older people in general is strongly influenced by these spatial affiliations. Attachment to a locality is a component of many older Germans' self-identity and it appears to restrain the migratory tendency even when other factors would normally induce a move. If an involuntary relocation into an institutional home or away from the familiar home area becomes necessary, a 'grief reaction' is common.

In contrast, the majority of the American older interviewees demonstrated weak place identity and locational flexibility. If they perceived incompatibility between their residential preferences and the quality of the neighbourhood, the desire to move quickly formed and was often fulfilled. Many moves did not greatly change their spatial orientation or daily activities (for their most important social relationships were rarely within the neighbourhood). Because their area of identification – their spatial affiliation – was usually limited to the immediate residential neighbourhood rather than a more complex, multi-faceted and unique 'place', the move involved few losses and allowed them to lead essentially unchanged lives in the new location where

they formed replacement spatial affiliations. Even long distance relocation is accepted, not seen as exceptional, and readily adjusted to.

Neither the rural-urban differentiation of German seniors' attachment to place nor the local *versus* regional contrast between the American and the German respondents are inconsistent with a progressive convergence in residential choices and migration behaviour in Germany and the USA. A transition from traditional (rural or 'Fordist-industrial') to post-modern patterns of spatial behaviour may be occurring in all highly developed countries. The strong country differences suggest, however, that a single evolutionary path for elderly migration is unlikely. The current American patterns are as likely to be culturally specific as the 'later stages' of a nomothetic progression, driven by modernising socio-economic forces along which Europe and America are at different points.

4 The complementarity of the internal and extra-national patterns of older people's migrations

This section of the paper examines the association between the patterns of migration by older people in a country and the relative importance and destinations of international moves (or emigrations). Comparisons are made between the migration preferences and behaviour of British, German and American retirees,

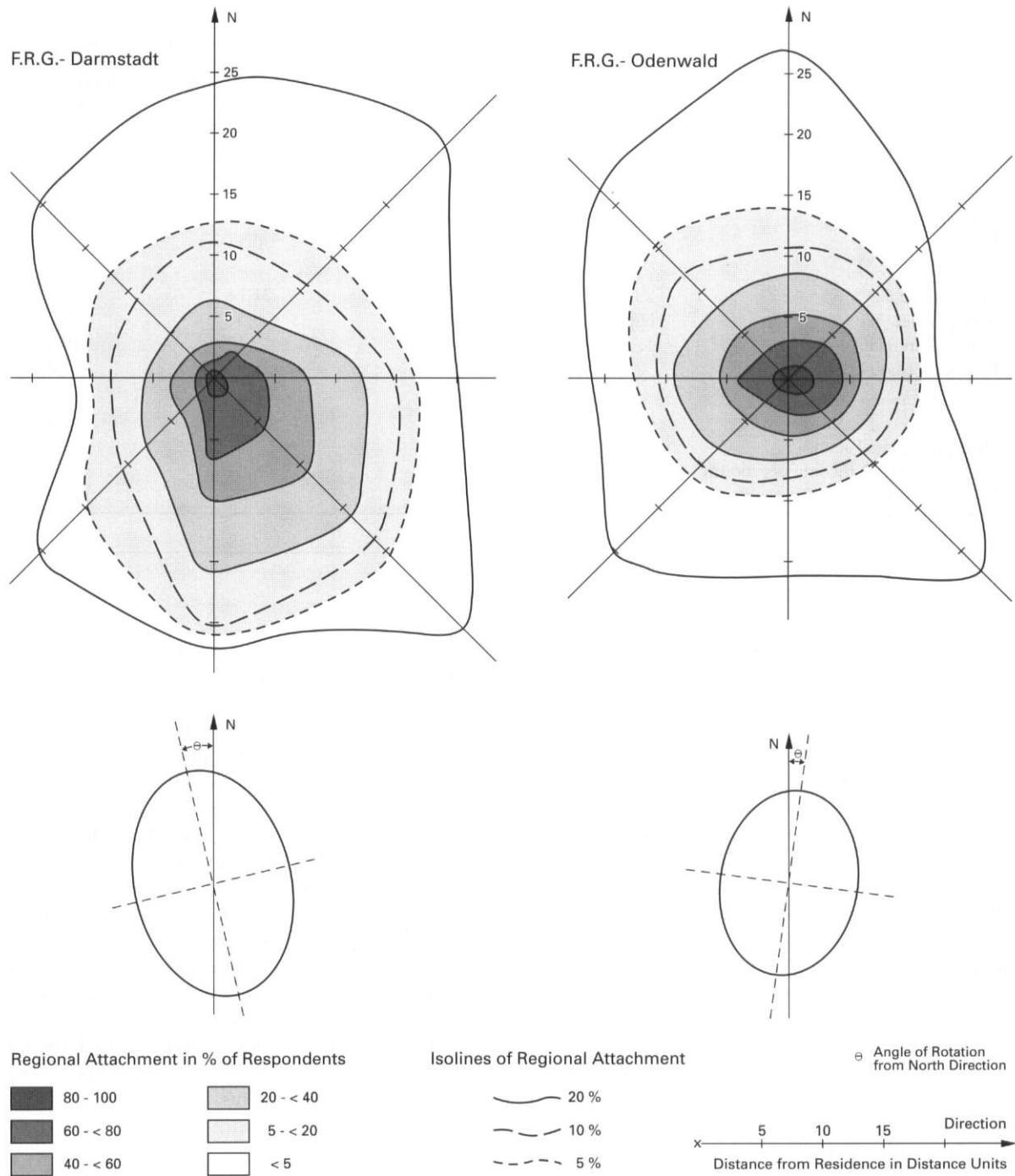


Fig. 2: Rural and urban contrasts in the cognitive maps of regional attachment, Odenwald and Darmstadt, 1995
 Reichweite regionaler Verbundenheit, Odenwald und Darmstadt, 1995

using (a) the understanding of internal migration types, motivations and determinants which has been built up

through British, German and American studies of their own national cases, as in the above account of the

latest findings from Germany, (b) new insights into the processes of international retirement migration that have been acquired through a study of migrant retirees in Tuscany, Malta, the Costa del Sol and the Algarve,²⁾ and (c) new data on overseas pension payments for the UK and Germany³⁾ (WARNES 1996).

There is clear evidence that environmental preference migrations by older people have increased in number and impact over the last quarter of a century in North America, but also that their relative prevalence and rates of growth vary considerably by nation. If processes of convergence are operating, then the high prevalence of long distance retirement migrations in North America will be reproduced in Europe. Even if this occurs, long distance amenity-led migrations need not be confined within a nation. In Europe, the probable consequence would be a further increase of north-to-south international migrations they have grown strongly over the last two decades. There are indeed growing concentrations of retirees in favoured 'sunbelt' locations on four continents: in Florida, Arizona and California in North America; on the Iberian coast and various Mediterranean and Atlantic islands of Europe and North West Africa; and on the Gold Coast of Queensland in Australia (LONGINO 1996; KING et al. 2000; NEYLAND a. KENDING 1996). The rapid growth of tourism/retirement resorts and coastal urban strips is, however, only the most visible manifestation of a much more extensive international redistribution of older people, not all of which is novel or motivated principally by 'environmental attractions'. The British evidence suggests that for most of the second half of the twentieth century, a substantial number of older people have emigrated either to return to areas of birthplace or childhood, or to live near to children or other relatives who some years before migrated overseas.

4.1 Pathways to retirement residence in Malta by British citizens

Some of the diversity of the longer established forms of international moves by older people is shown by the settlement of British retirees on the islands of Malta. This has taken place in four distinct ways (WARNES

a. PATTERSON 1998). The first pathway is that of the retirees (mostly men) who were once stationed on the islands or worked in the dockyard or other maintenance and engineering establishments. They formed an affinity with the country which has echoed in their retirement settlement. From a survey question on 'previous connections', around one-fifth of British households with persons aged 50+ years come into the 'Worked in Malta' category. A few married Maltese, and some never left the islands and have 'aged-in-place'. The second pathway has developed around inter-communal marriages. The predominant pattern originated in the labour migration of Maltese young men to Britain (and occasionally to Australia). The flow was substantial during the 1950s and until 1972 and has continued at lower levels. Although a proportion of the emigrants returned after two years 'to find Maltese wives', the majority were not early return migrants and many married British women. In this way, British natives have joined Maltese family networks, into which some have retired. Instances were encountered of a British man or woman meeting their future Maltese spouse while on holiday, most often when the holiday included visits to friends or (extended) relatives, so the predisposing factors are shared with the first pathway. An analysis of household composition data and the reports of previous connections showed that around 25-30 per cent of the British households containing retired people had marital or other family connections in Malta. The prevalence is markedly higher in the youngest cohort of older people.

The third pathway characterised the pathways of British citizens who led expatriate lives, often in Southern or East Africa and the Middle East. Acquaintance with Malta was in many instances forged through work connections (e. g. in marine engineering), on business or through holidays, acquaintances or family. Not all had prior connections, for some have been attracted by Malta's favourable personal taxation, political stability and the vestiges of the colonial society. The respondents' reports of previous areas of residence suggests that this group comprises 20-25 per cent of British retired households. The fourth, simplest and most prevalent pathway is the 'clean break' move from the United Kingdom around retirement age, which was described by just over 40 per cent of the sample. They reported only holiday connections with the islands, and most came directly from work and residence confined to the United Kingdom. It is emphasised that there are many individuals (and even more households) whose pathways to Malta are described by more than one of the four pathways. Overlaps among the first three are most common.

²⁾ This study was funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (Grant R000235688) and carried out by Russell King, Tony Warnes and Allan Williams (KING et al. 1998, 2000; WILLIAMS et al. 1997).

³⁾ The data on German pension payments has recently been acquired and is being analyzed by the authors and CLAUDIA KAISER of the University of Halle-Wittenberg.

Table 3: *Types of long distance migration by older people among affluent countries*

Migrationstypen älterer Menschen aus wohlhabenden Ländern

Country	Environmental opportunities within the country		External migration opportunities through migration or colonial histories	Relative prevalence of long-distance environmental preference migrations	
	Has warm winter climate regions	Has high amenity rural/mountain area		Internal	External
Australia	Yes	No	M	High	Low
Belgium	No	No	Low	Low	High (S + M)
Canada	No	No	Low	Low	High (S)
Denmark	No	No	M	Low	High (S + M)
England	Yes, relatively	Yes	M + C	High	High (M + C + S)
Finland	No	No	M	Low	High (S + M)
France	Yes	Yes	M + C	High	Some (M + C + S)
Germany	No	Yes	M	Some	High (S + M)
Italy	Yes	Yes	M	Low	Some (M + S)
Netherlands	No	No	M + Low C	Low	High (S + M)
Scotland	No	Yes	M + C	Low	High (M + C + S)
United States	Yes	Yes	Low	High	Low

Notes: S – Sunbelt or amenity-seeking moves. M – prior labour migrations established family network destination opportunities. C – former colonial connections established family network destination opportunities

4.2 *The opportunity sets for international and internal long distance retirement moves*

It is now possible to review the contrasting types and distances of older people's moves in eleven European and Anglophone countries. There are detailed research reports from Australia, Belgium (POULAIN 1988), Canada, France (CRIBIER a. KYCH 1993), Germany, Italy (BONAGUIDI a. ABRAMI 1992), the Netherlands (FOKKEMA 1996), Norway (MYKLEBOST 1989), Spain (GONZÁLEZ a. PUEBLA 1996), the United Kingdom and the United States. The most evident features of the internal and external migration opportunities presenting to people of retirement age for a sample of these countries are displayed on Table 3.

It is clear that long-distance amenity-seeking retirement moves are a relatively substantial component of today's migration patterns *within* Australia, France, the UK and the USA, and that there are relatively numerous emigrations of early retirees and older people *from* Canada, Norway and the UK. Evidence from Tuscany, the Costa del Sol, the Algarve and Malta suggests a relatively large immigration of British, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Irish, Norwegian and Swedish retirees: some of these flows have only recently been established (RODRÍGUEZ et al. 1998). On the other hand, there are few long distance amenity-led migrations and little evidence of concentrations in favoured destinations *within* Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Nether-

lands and Norway. Several of the contrasts are readily explained by the presence or absence of either favourable climate zones or areas of high landscape quality. The 'pull' of the United States sunbelt for Canadian retirees is replicated in Europe by the permanent relocations and seasonal migrations of Nordic retirees to southern Europe. One reason why many Dutch retirees purchase retirement homes in rural France must be the limited opportunities for comparable relocations within their own country.

As argued above, however, the full understanding of the patterns of elderly migration requires attention not only to amenity-led moves but also to those motivated by the locations of the most significant members of people's social and family networks. When attention is turned to the 'opportunity set' of destinations for such migrations, another dimension of international variation becomes apparent, the international distribution of close relatives (and friends) which is the legacy of a country's imperial history, trading connections, and past 'economic or labour emigration'. Many European nations experienced very high rates of emigration to North America during earlier decades of this century, and the flows from for example Ireland and Italy have been sustained at relatively high levels, while there have been exceptional migrant flows from Britain to Australia, New Zealand and South East Africa. On the other hand, the rate of emigration from Australia and the United States has been relatively low. It is conclud-

Table 4: UK pensioners overseas 1997: largest absolute increases and exceptional decreases, 1994–1997

Britische Pensionäre im Ausland 1997: größte Zunahmen und Abnahmen 1994–1997

Country of residence	Beneficiaries in 1997		Change 1994-1997		
	Number	Share (%)	Number	% ¹⁾	Share (%) ²⁾
United States of America	102,251	13.5	15,287	17.6	29.6
Australia	180,252	23.8	8,790	5.1	17.0
Irish Republic	82,156	10.8	7,794	10.5	15.1
Spain (+ Balearics/Canaries)	34,225	4.5	6,128	1.8	11.9
Italy	24,536	3.2	5,132	26.4	9.9
Jamaica	22,405	3.0	2,940	15.1	5.7
Germany	23,005	3.0	2,940	14.7	5.7
France	14,089	1.9	2,359	20.1	4.6
Canada	125,788	16.6	2,227	1.8	4.3
Barbados	3,120	0.4	860	38.1	1.7
Cyprus	6,049	0.8	857	16.5	1.7
Netherlands	5,357	0.7	783	17.1	1.5
Portugal (including Azores)	3,801	0.5	593	18.5	1.1
Austria	4,224	0.6	440	11.6	0.9
Switzerland	2,990	0.4	371	14.2	0.7
Sweden	728	0.1	301	70.5	0.6
Israel	3,365	0.4	253	8.1	0.5
Jersey	7,510	1.0	237	3.3	0.5
Denmark	882	0.1	233	35.9	0.5
Zimbabwe	5,100	0.7	-258	-4.8	-0.5
Bangladesh	3,259	0.4	-814	-20.0	-1.6
Pakistan	6,226	0.8	-818	-11.6	-1.6
Poland	1,303	0.2	-857	-39.7	-1.7
South Africa	32,084	4.2	-1,404	-4.2	-2.7
New Zealand	28,889	3.8	-3,332	-10.3	-6.4
Total	762,932	100.0	51,667	7.3	100.0

Notes: Inclusion criteria for a country are either a change of at least ± 200 beneficiaries 1994–1997, or at least 0.5% of the total number of beneficiaries in 1997. Newly created states in the former Soviet Union are not included.

¹⁾ Percentage increase or decrease in number of beneficiaries, 1994–1997.

²⁾ Share of increase of overseas beneficiaries during 1994–1997.

ed that further understanding of both the current national contrasts in elderly migration patterns and the likely evolution of the favoured destinations requires attention to not only amenity-led or environmental preference moves but also to those conditioned by 'returns to regions of origin' and to 'international family dispersal' moves.

4.3 British pensioners overseas: growth trends 1988–1997

There is valuable new data on the world-wide distribution of British pensioners overseas. In 1997, 843,000 British pensioners received their state benefits in more than 300 countries. The total is around 8% of the estimated mid-year population of pensioners (men aged at least 65 years, and women aged at least 60 years). Of the 843,000, some 763,000 were receiving Retirement Pensions and Widows Benefits, and of these, one-quarter

were in Australia, and at least 11% in each of the United States, the Irish Republic and Canada (Tab. 4). These four countries accounted for two-thirds (65%) of the total. In comparison, there were relatively small numbers in Mediterranean countries, with 34,225 (4.5%) in Spain, two-thirds that number in Italy, and even fewer in countries without large commercial cities where the majority of the beneficiaries must be in resort and 'high amenity' rural areas. There were 6,049 (0.8% of the total) in Cyprus, 3,801 (0.5%) in Portugal and 2,365 (0.3%) in Malta.

The 1990s saw a substantial increase in the number of British pensioners who draw their benefits overseas. In 1988 there were just 503,000 overseas pensioners, so the subsequent overall growth rate has been just under 6% per year. Although the growth rate fell during the 1990s, this may be a temporary decline, for the very high growth rate of 10% in 1988/89 coincided with a

period of exceptional UK house price inflation which undoubtedly fuelled an unusually high rate of overseas property purchases, and very high price increases returned in 1999. The highest rates of growth have been in five regional groups of countries. The very highest have surprisingly been in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, with annual increases in excess of 10% throughout the 1990s. Among the more common destinations, the United States had by far the highest rate of growth during the early 1990s: it has both a large number of UK immigrants scattered throughout its territory which attract 'joining' retirees (similar to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa), and high amenity 'sunbelt' environments in Florida, California and Arizona. These destinations directly compete with alternative destinations for environmental-preference migrants in Spain, Portugal and parts of Italy and France. These European countries form the third group of nations with high rates of growth of UK pensioners, and by the second half of the 1990s, the annual increase in these four countries exceeded that of the United States.

The fourth category of nations with unusually high increases were some Caribbean islands (Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada, Dominican Republic) which are probably experiencing a combination of amenity-seeking retirement migrations and the return migrations of native labour migrants (analogous to the combination of older British migrant flows to Malta). The fifth category are European countries neighbouring the UK which have strong economic, social and migration links. The largest flow by far is to the Republic of Ireland: nearly one-fifth of that country's older population receives a UK pension. But there are faster rates of increase in Netherlands and Germany, although in Belgium the number is decreasing.

The growth rate for a country is subject to the vagaries of political change and instability and in some cases reflects its colonial or migration history. Recent years have seen relatively rapid declines in the number of British pensioners in Poland, which may be related to the country's current economic difficulties but may also be a cohort effect: the strong connections forged during the Second World War between the Polish and British armed forces will have affected birth groups that are now rapidly depleting. Figures for other parts of central and eastern Europe are impossible to compare before and after 1989. There have also been relatively rapid declines in South Africa, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. Political changes will have played a role for the first two, while cohort changes are probably most responsible for the last. Although significant reductions in welfare entitlements in New Zealand have recently

reduced the country's attractiveness, the low growth rate of British pensioners in Canada also supports a hypothesis that a cohort change in the relative importance of 'family joining' and 'amenity-led' moves is taking place. There have also been decreases in the number of British pensioners in the Indian sub-continent. This trend reflects a fall in the British-origin population of the sub-continent (traders, professionals and those formerly employed by the British colonial authorities).

5 Conclusions

The authors have interpreted the changing patterns of internal and external migration among older people in Germany, Britain and the United States with reference not only to temporal (and cohort) change in the residential preferences and resources of older people but also to the contrasting place attachments of the nationalities and the 'opportunity-sets' of migration destinations to which they have access. Specialists in migration and residential mobility are aware that increased affluence, higher levels of education, and the spread of white-collar and professional occupations are influencing residential choices, and that the general effect is to stimulate more frequent and longer distance moves. Similarly, both social geographers and social gerontologists are aware that the spread of improved pensions and earlier retirement is changing the nature of later life, and that there is a growing population of generally healthy and prosperous people in their fifties and sixties who have a positive, developmental outlook for their immediate futures. It is widely assumed in North America that this will involve a growing number of 'amenity-led' moves for retirement. As the latest birth cohorts to reach retirement have had far more experience of overseas travel and holidays than their predecessors, it is also expected that a rising number will consider retirement abroad.

The socio-economic forces underlying these changes in old age, retirement and housing choices are shared among all the highly developed, free-market economies. The similarities encourage both hypotheses of homogeneous processes, convergence and equifinality, and the neglect of their continuing historical, cultural and social differences. The authors have carefully examined the tendency to describe a uniform 'evolutionary' model for later life residential mobility in the developed world, and identified three pronounced differences among western countries that strongly influence the residential choices and decisions of their older people: the localisation of distinctive place

idealities and variations in people's attachment to unique places; the availability and character of environmentally attractive (or high amenity) regions favoured for retirement; and the nation's connections through earlier migration, colonisation or commercial relations with regions in other countries that are perceived as highly suitable for residence in later life.

These three spatial influences profoundly modify the frequency, distance and spatial organisation of the older population's residential moves, and directly control several defining features: the relative prevalence of internal long-distance moves, the clustering of their destinations, the relative frequency of internal and international moves, and the shares of all moves that are motivated by (a) environmental preferences, (b) the need for enhanced support and care, (c) the desire for increased proximity to family members, and (d) the wish to return to (or remain in) a place or region of life-long familiarity which is integral to the mover's identity. None of the three influences, not even the contrasting levels of regional differentiation, can be demonstrated to have diminishing effect; for even if the absolute level of place differentiation is decreasing, if the process is occurring in all countries, the relative intensities between two countries can remain. More obviously the contrasting topographies of different countries will not change in pertinent ways, although people's evaluations of different environments do alter over time. The authors believe that it will probably always be true that different countries create contrasting patterns of internal place affiliation and external migration, so that their destination opportunities for retirement settlement will never completely converge.

Geographical and spatial factors in the development and pattern of older people's migration are therefore of great importance. When comparing Germany and the USA, the authors especially emphasise the contrast in people's identification with a particular 'home region'. 'Place association' today has both traditional and contemporary modes of spatial perception and interaction, ranging from attachment to a well defined, historical settlement in rural areas, to a more diffuse neighbourhood affinity in urban areas. These cultural differences in attachment to both place and extended family interact with contemporary social, housing and labour market conditions to mould the association between life course stage and the propensity to undertake different types of migrations.

At a different spatial scale we can begin to understand the strong differences between older people's migrations in the United States, Germany and Britain by comparing the demand for and supply of environmentally attractive migration destinations within and

outside each country. Those within are clearly conditioned by topography, climate regions, settlement densities and landscape quality. Less obviously, the opportunities outside a nation are also to some extent specific to it, for they are conditioned by generations of previous settlement. The creation of a large pool of family connections in North America for most Western European nationals, and in Australia and Southern and Eastern Africa for some, is an important influence on the relative importance of internal as opposed to external migrations by older people.

Retirement migration is much more complex than the concentration of nationals in diversifying tourist resorts, whether within or beyond a country's borders. The current empirical and theoretical understanding of older people's residential decisions and migration patterns is over-burdened with simplicities and presumed but inaccurate generalisations. The authors' hope that the observations of this paper have demonstrated the growing importance of migration in later life and the fascinating research agenda by which more sophisticated knowledge can be acquired.

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