

## American Mobility

# Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

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## American Mobility

### Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?

By D'Vera Cohn and Rich Morin, Pew Research Center

#### Executive Summary

Americans are settling down: Only 11.9% of the U.S. population changed residences between 2007 and 2008, the lowest share since the Census Bureau began to publish statistics on this topic in the late 1940s. A new national survey of 2,260 adults by the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends project explores the social and economic dimensions of geographic mobility in the United States. Its main findings:

#### Moving or Staying

- More than six-in-ten adults (63%) have moved to a new community at least once in their lives, while 37% have never left their hometowns.
- Most adults (57%) have not lived outside their current home state in the U.S. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 15% have lived in four or more states.

#### Where's Home?

- More than one-in-five U.S.-born adults (23%) say the place they consider home in their heart isn't where they're living now. And among those who have lived in two or more communities, fully 38% say they aren't living in their "heart home" now.
- The most common reasons people identify some other place as home are that it's where they were born or raised (26%); where they lived the longest (18%); or where their family is from (15%). Just 4% say it's where they went to high school.
- Blacks are more likely than whites to say the place they're living now isn't their "heart home." Among adults who have lived in at least two communities, 54% of blacks and just 35% of whites say they identify most with a former hometown. Hispanics fall in the middle; 40% say they identify most with a former hometown.
- Can you go home again? Yes, but not everyone wants to. Just four-in-ten of those who identify someplace else as home want to go back and live there. But about half stay in close touch with family and friends back home, either by visiting several times a year (45%), or by phoning (53%) or emailing (46%) at least once a week.

### **Who Moves and Who Stays Put?**

- The Midwest is the most rooted region: 46% of adult residents there say they have spent their entire life in one community. The least rooted is the West, where only 30% of adult residents have stayed in their hometown. Residents of the South (36%) and East (38%) fall in between.
- College education is a key marker of the likelihood to move: Three-quarters of college graduates (77%) have changed communities at least once, compared with just over half (56%) of those with a high school diploma or less. College graduates also are more likely to have lived in multiple states.
- Americans who have never left their hometowns have a greater number of extended family members who live within an hour's drive of them than do Americans who no longer live in their hometowns—a median of nearly eight vs. about three.

### **Why Do People Move or Stay?**

- Asked why they have not left their hometown, “stayers” cite major reasons such as the tug of family ties (74%), the desire to remain where they grew up (69%) and their belief that their communities are good places to raise children (59%). Fewer than half (40%) say a major reason for staying put is a job or business opportunities.
- The most frequently cited major reason that movers give for choosing their current community is job or business opportunities (44%). Somewhat smaller shares of movers say they relocated to where they now live because their new community is a good place to raise children (36%) or because they have family ties there (35%).
- Westerners are more likely than residents of other regions to choose amenities—climate and recreation—as major reasons for living where they do. This is true for those who were born there and never left, as well as for those who have moved there.
- Levels of community satisfaction do not appear to be correlated with people's past mobility patterns. Equal shares of movers and stayers—about six-in-ten—rate their current community as good or excellent.

### **Going Anywhere?**

- Four-in-ten Americans say they are very likely or somewhat likely to move within five years. Among those especially likely to say so are younger people, unmarried Americans and the foreign born.
- Movers are more likely than stayers to say there is a good chance that they will move in the next five years. Not surprisingly, only a third of those who rate their current communities highly predict they'll move within five years, compared with half of those who give their current communities a poor rating.

## Overview

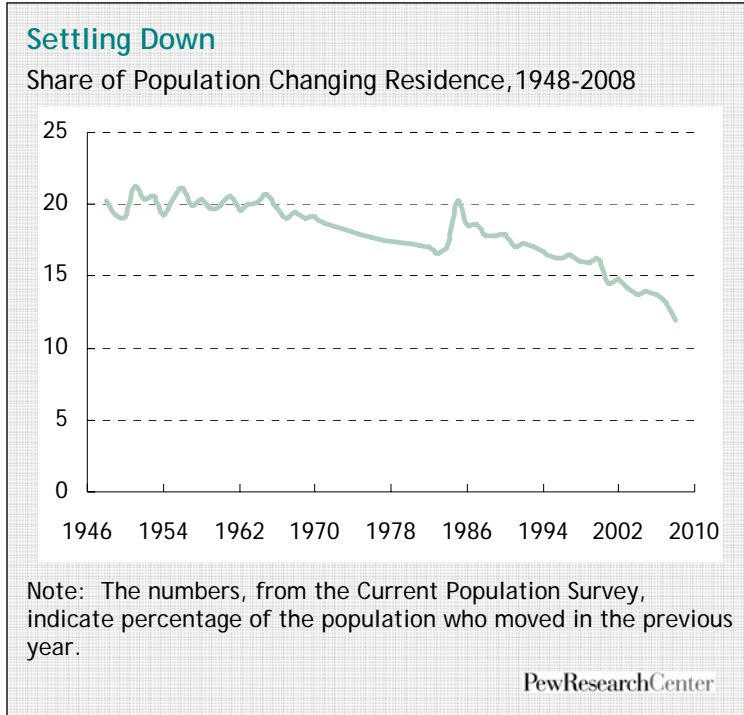
As a nation, the United States is often portrayed as restless and rootless. Census data, though, indicate that Americans are settling down. Only 11.9% of Americans changed residences between 2007 and 2008, the smallest share since the government began tracking this trend in the late 1940s.

A new Pew Social & Demographic Trends survey finds that most Americans have moved to a new community at least once in their lives, although a notable number—nearly four-in-ten—have never left the place in which they were born.<sup>1</sup> Asked why they live where they do, movers most often cite the pull of economic opportunity. Stayers most often cite the tug of family and connections.

Both the survey and Census data indicate that the biggest differences in the characteristics of movers and stayers revolve around geography and education. In the Midwest, nearly half of adult residents say they have spent their entire lives in their hometown. That compares with fewer than a third of those who live in Western states. Cities, suburbs and small towns have more movers than stayers, while rural areas are more evenly split. Three-quarters of college graduates have moved at least once, compared with just over half of Americans with no more than a high school diploma. College graduates also move longer distances—and move more often—than Americans with a high school diploma or less, and employment plays a greater role in their decisions about where to live. By income group, the most affluent Americans are the most likely to have moved.

The Census Bureau's Current Population Survey indicates that the number of people who moved between 2007 and 2008, 34 million, was the lowest since 1959-60, when the population of the U.S. was 41% smaller than it is now. The annual migration rate, which held at about 20% through the mid-1960s, has drifted downward since then to its current low of 11.9%.

Analysts say the long-term decline in migration has occurred because the U.S. population is getting older and most moves are made when people are young. Another brake on moving is the rise of two-career couples, because it is more difficult to coordinate a relocation when two jobs are involved. On top of these long term



<sup>1</sup> The Pew survey defines a mover as someone who has changed communities, while the Census Bureau uses a broader definition that also includes people who moved to a new home in the same community.

trends, the current economic downturn has led to a further decline in migration, because jobs are typically one of the key magnets that induce people to move.

The Pew Social & Demographic Trends survey of 2,260 adults, which was conducted Oct. 3-19, 2008, asked respondents why they have stayed in their hometowns or have moved to their current community. This report combines the survey findings with Census Bureau data on migration patterns between states and regions.

The survey also posed questions to U.S.-born movers about the “place in your heart you consider to be home,” and to foreign-born respondents about “the country in your heart you consider to be home.”

Home means different things to different people. Among U.S.-born adults who have lived in more than one community, nearly four-in-ten (38%) say the place they consider home isn’t where they’re living now. But there’s a wide range of definitions of “home” among Americans who have lived in at least one place besides their original hometown: 26% say it’s where they were born or raised; 22% say it’s where they live now; 18% say it’s where they have lived the longest; 15% say it’s where their family comes from; and 4% say it’s where they went to high school.

As for foreign-born adults, a majority say that the U.S. is home, while nearly four-in-ten reserve that designation for their country of birth. Not surprisingly, the longer an immigrant lives in this country, the more likely the U.S. is considered “home.”

Among all respondents to the Pew Research Center survey, 57% say they have not lived in the U.S. outside their current state: 37% have never left their hometown and 20% have left their hometown (or native country) but not lived outside their current state.

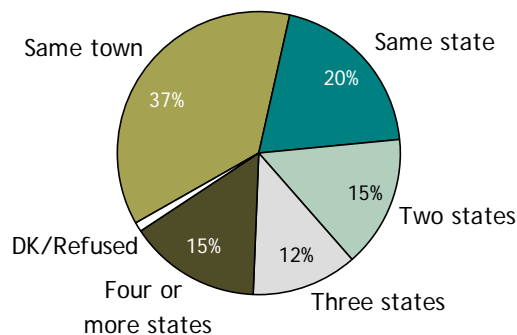
## About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of 2,260 adults living in the continental United States. A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. A total of 1,502 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 758 from those contacted on their cellular phone. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States.

- Interviews conducted Oct. 3-19, 2008
- 2,260 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.
- Note on terminology: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews conducted in English or Spanish.

## How Many Places Have You Lived?



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The Pew survey finds that stayers overwhelmingly say they remain because of family ties and because their hometowns are good places to raise children. Their life circumstances match those explanations. Most stayers say at least half a dozen members of their extended families live within an hour's drive; for 40%, more than 10 relatives live nearby. A majority of stayers also cite a feeling of belonging as a major reason for staying put.

Movers are far less likely to cite those kinds of ties. Fewer than four-in-ten say a major reason they moved to their current community has to do with family or child-rearing. Most movers have five or fewer extended-family members living within an hour's drive of them, and 26% have none. The most popular reason that movers choose a new community, selected by a 44% plurality, is job or business opportunities, according to the Pew survey. About the same share of stayers (40%) cite job or business opportunities as a major reason for staying, but far more stayers choose reasons related to family and friends.

Movers are more likely than stayers to say that it is likely they will move in the next five years. But despite those and other differences, equal shares of movers and stayers—about six-in-ten—rate their communities overall as good to excellent.

### Acknowledgments

We received valuable help from Paul Taylor, director of the Social & Demographic Trends project, and from Wendy Wang, research analyst. Other colleagues at the Pew Research Center also contributed to this report, including Andrew Kohut, president; Scott Keeter, director of survey research; and Jeffrey S. Passel, senior demographer at the Pew Hispanic Center. The maps that accompany this report were prepared by Michael Keegan and Stephen Rountree. Number-checking was done by Daniel Dockterman and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. Marcia Kramer copy-edited this report. We were assisted in survey design by Cary Funk, associate professor in the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.



## Characteristics of Movers and Stayers

### Who Stays and Who Moves?

Most adult Americans (63%) have moved at least once in their lives, but more than a third (37%) have never left their hometowns, except for college or military service, according to the Pew Social & Demographic Trends survey.

If a snapshot could capture the most prominent characteristics of movers, it would show a college graduate who now makes her home in a Western city. The stayer's photo would portray a high school graduate living in a Midwestern rural community.

The nation's most rooted region is the Midwest, where 46% of adult residents say they have spent their entire lives in their hometown. The most transient is the West, where only 30% have. The East (38%) and South (36%) fall in between.

Rural residents are the most rooted Americans. Only a third of the people living in U.S. urban neighborhoods and suburbs say they have spent their entire lives in the same place.<sup>2</sup> That compares with 48% of Americans living in rural areas.

The sharpest difference between movers and stayers is in their level of education. Americans who relocate are far more likely to hold college degrees. Three-quarters of college graduates (77%) have moved at least once, compared with just over half (56%) of Americans with a high school education or less. This likely reflects the greater demand for college graduates in the national job market, coupled with relatively few job opportunities for college graduates in some hometowns, especially those in rural areas.

Education and earnings often track each other, and a similar picture emerges when Pew survey data are examined through the prism of annual income. Only a quarter of the highest-income Americans—those with family incomes of

#### Characteristics of Movers and Stayers

	Movers	Stayers
	%	%
<b>Total</b>	63	37
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	60	40
Women	65	35
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	56	44
30-49	64	35
50-64	63	37
65+	62	37
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	61	39
Black	68	32
Hispanic	66	34
<b>Education</b>		
College grad+	77	23
HS grad or less	56	43
<b>Family Income</b>		
\$75,000+	66	34
\$50K-74K	58	42
\$30K-49K	62	38
LT \$30K	61	38
<b>Area</b>		
East	62	38
Midwest	54	46
South	64	36
West	70	30
<b>Type of Community</b>		
Urban	65	35
Suburban	66	33
Small town	62	37
Rural	52	48

Note: Stayer numbers include people who say they lived in the same town except during college or active military duty.

<sup>2</sup> Stayers are defined as people who say they have lived in the same town except during college or active military duty.

\$100,000-plus—have lived in one community for their entire lives.

Analysis by age group produces a seemingly contradictory finding: Young people, the most restless generation, include a higher share of stayers than older cohorts. Among adults 18-29, 44% have never left their hometowns, compared with 37% of Americans ages 50 and older. There is an explanation for this: Many young adults have not yet made their first move. Asked whether they are likely to move within five years, most young stayers say yes, while most older stayers say no.

The likelihood of being a stayer or mover does not differ by race or ethnicity, but there is somewhat of a difference by gender: 40% of men are stayers, compared with 35% of women.

Americans who stay in their hometowns also are more likely than those who have moved to say they have many local friends—33% compared with 24% for movers. Movers are somewhat more likely (26%) to say they have a below-average number of local friends, compared with stayers (18%).

The flip side of the question about local friends is this: A larger share of movers than stayers (27% vs. 18%) say they have many friends in places other than their own community. Movers are less likely than stayers to say they have only a few friends in other areas (23% vs. 35%).

Movers (52%) are slightly more likely than stayers (47%) to say they are very involved or somewhat involved in their communities.

Among movers, most (56%) have lived in their communities for a decade or more, including a third (32%) who have resided there for 20 years or more. Americans who moved within the past five years account for 33% of movers.

## What Do Census Data Say About Moving?

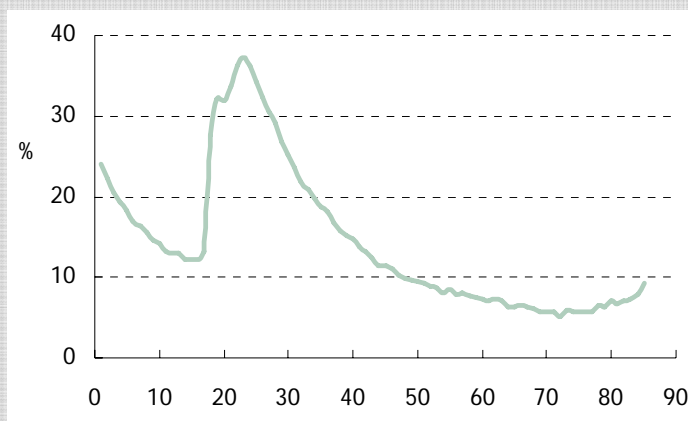
Despite the decline in annual migration rates, other government data show that a rising share of Americans do not live in their place of birth. Two-thirds of U.S.-born Americans (67%) now live in the state in which they were born, according to Census Bureau data. The share has declined gradually for decades; it was 77% in 1940.

The nation's slowing annual migration rate and increasing lifetime mobility reflect different social forces. The annual rate has declined because of recent trends, such as the aging of the population and the rise of two-earner couples, that make people less likely to pull up stakes. Economic hard times also reduce the annual migration rate. The shrinking share of Americans who live in their state of birth is a reflection of long-term social and demographic trends that promote mobility—for example, the growing share of Americans with college degrees, a group that is more likely to move long distances than are Americans with a high school diploma or less.

Over these same decades, immigration has increased as well: Foreign-born residents make up 13% of the U.S. population, compared with 6% in 1980.

### Young People Move More

% who moved in 2006-2007, by age



Note: The numbers are from the 2007 American Community Survey.

Generally, Census Bureau figures complement those from the Pew survey. Among the overall findings: People move when they are young. The median age of the U.S. population is 37.1 years, according to the 2007 American Community Survey, but the median age of people who moved within the past year is the late 20s. Census data also indicate, as do the Pew survey findings, that residents of Western states are more mobile than residents of Midwest and Rust Belt states.

Most Americans who move relocate within the same county, according to Census Bureau surveys. About half of all moves are for housing-related reasons, such as buying a new house or moving to a better neighborhood. A quarter cite family-related reasons such as getting married or divorced, or setting up a new household. Work-related reasons, from taking a new job to retiring, account for 16% of moves.

Note: The Census figures for people who now live in their birth state include people of all ages, including those who may have lived in other states. That is why they differ somewhat from the Pew survey figures for adults who have never lived away from their birth state.

## Living in Birth State

Among U.S.-born adults, a majority (56%) have never lived outside their state of birth, including those who have never left their hometowns, according to the Pew survey. High school graduates are less likely to have left their birth state than those with more education. Among the regions, the Midwest has the highest share of adult residents who have never lived outside their birth state. This echoes findings about people who have never left their hometown.

Among Midwestern adults, 64% say they have never left their state of birth. That is about the same as the share of adults living in the East (60%) and is higher than the share living in the West (56%) or South (53%).

Data from the American Community Survey, covering the period 2005 through 2007, offer more detailed state-by-state estimates on two related questions: What share of current adult residents of a given state were born in another state? And what share of residents born in a state are still living in that state as adults?

States with a high share of adults who were born in another state might be referred to as “magnet” states. Nevada tops this list; fully 86% of adults currently residing in Nevada were born in another state – reflecting the fact that this is a state with a relatively small population base that has been growing rapidly in recent years, largely through immigration from other states. Next on the ranking of “magnet” states are Arizona (72%), Alaska (71%) and Florida (70%). Aside from Nevada, these are the only states where at least seven-in-ten adults were born in another state. At the bottom of this list are New York, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Michigan. In each of these states, fewer than a quarter of current adult residents were born in some other state.

Another way to look at state migration patterns is to explore what share of people born in a particular state still live there now as adults. By that measure, Texas is the “stickiest” state in the nation – fully 76% of people born in Texas still live there as adults. Meantime, Nevada, which tops the list of “magnet” states, ranks well down the list of “sticky” states; it holds on to fewer than half of its natives (48%); placing it 44<sup>th</sup> on this list. Like Nevada, Alaska is a premier magnet state (it ranks third) but a poor sticky state – it holds on to barely a quarter (28%) of people who were born there and ranks dead last among the 50 states in this category.

Not all states rank high in one category and low in the other. Florida, for example, is the nation’s fourth leading magnet state and its 11<sup>th</sup> leading sticky state. It has attracted many newcomers in recent years, but at the same time, its natives are inclined to stick around.

At the other end of the spectrum, some states attract relatively few migrants and a large share of their natives have moved elsewhere. Only 40% of adults born in North Dakota still live there. In South Dakota, 43% do. Yet in both states, more than 60% of the current population was born in the state. West Virginia also ranks low on both lists. Fewer than half (49%) of adults born there still live there; and more than 70% of the current population was born in that state.

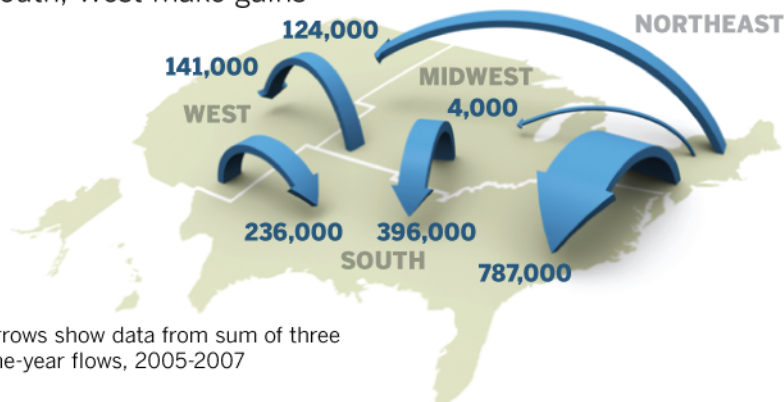
College graduates are far less likely than high school graduates to live in their birth state, according to Pew survey data. Less than half of college graduates – 40% – say they have lived in only one state. Among Americans with no more than a high school diploma, two-thirds (66%) have lived in only one state, the survey found.

Two-thirds of young adults, ages 18-29, have not lived outside their state of birth, but – as noted elsewhere – they also are the most likely to say that they probably will move within five years. Among all older age groups, about 55% have never lived outside their birth state. There are no differences in this regard between the genders or between blacks and whites. But U.S.-born Hispanic adults are markedly more likely than other Americans to have lived in only one state –72% do.

Among religious groups, a notably low share of Hispanic Catholics (22%) live outside their birth state. At the other extreme, most Americans who say they are religiously unaffiliated (53%) live outside the state in which they were born.

### Net Regional U.S. Migration, 2007

South, West make gains



Source: Pew Research Center tabulations from American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series

## How to Read This Chart

The columns below look at state migration patterns in two different ways. The 'Magnet' State column ranks states by the share of their current adult residents who were born in other states. The 'Sticky' State column ranks states by the share of residents born there who are still living there as adults. For example, Nevada is the nation's leading 'magnet' state: fully 86% of its current adult residents were born in another state. But it is not a very 'sticky' state: only 49% of people born in Nevada are still living there as adults.



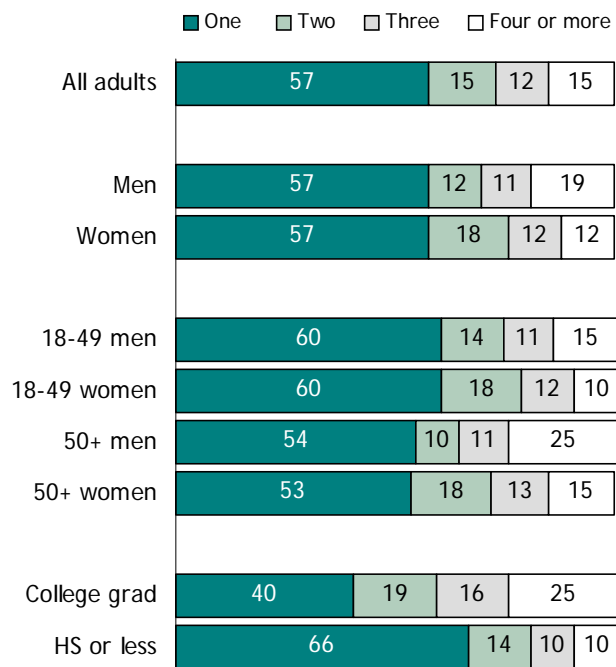
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of U.S.-born population from American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series

## Different States

Among all American adults, 57% have lived in only one state in the U.S. The remainder is split among those who have lived in two different states (15%), three states (12%) or four or more states (15%). But those statistics hide considerable variation by gender, age and education.

Men have moved around more than women. Women are more likely to have lived in two states (18%) than four (12%). Men are more likely to have lived in four states (19%) than in two (12%). Older Americans are more likely than younger ones to have lived in four or more states. Looking at the combined impact of age and gender, a quarter of men ages 50 and older (25%) say they have lived in four or more states.

### Characteristics of People by How Many States They Have Lived In



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

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## Why Do Movers Move and Stayers Stay?

Movers are more likely to say they live where they do for job or business reasons than for family reasons, but no one factor is chosen by a majority of movers. Most stayers say they stay for reasons that evoke their family connections and roots, while a much smaller share selects economic causes.

For movers, the most-cited major reason for living where they do is job or business opportunities; 44% cite this. A somewhat lower proportion say it is because their current community is a good place to raise children (36%) or because they have family ties there (35%). Education or schooling also is selected by three-in-ten (29%), many of them in their college years.

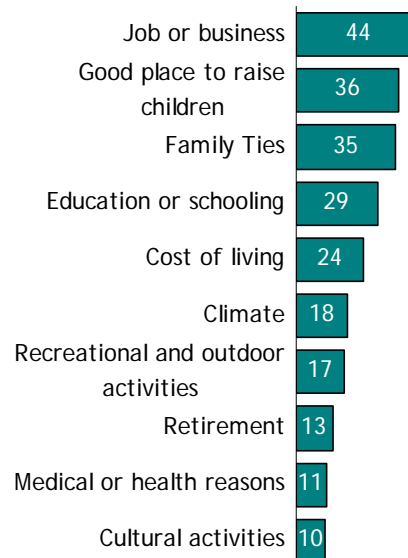
Lesser shares of movers choose climate, recreation, culture or retirement as major reasons. Medical or health reasons are cited by only a small share of movers or stayers.

Three-quarters of stayers (74%) say that family ties are a major reason they have lived in their hometowns for their entire lives, and nearly as many (69%) say it is because they grew up there. Most stayers (59%) also say a major reason for not leaving their hometown is that it is a good place to raise children, and that they feel they belong there (58%). About half (49%) cite connections to friends as a major reason. A smaller share (35%) say they have no desire to live anywhere else.

Stayers are less likely to cite economic reasons than living close to family and friends in their decision to live where they do: 40% choose job or business opportunities as a major reason for staying, and 29% mention the cost of living.

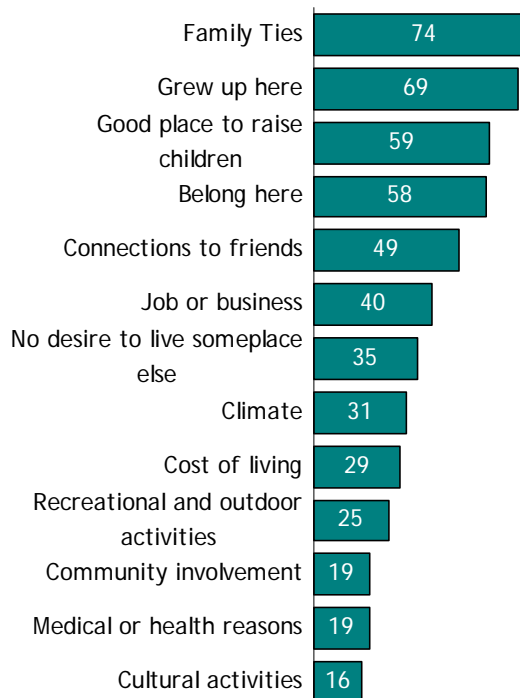
### Why Do Movers Move?

% saying this is a "major reason"



### Why Do Stayers Stay?

% saying this is a "major reason"





While not their top reasons, climate and the outdoors are more important to stayers than to movers. Three-in-ten stayers say climate is a major reason for them; 25% cite recreation and outdoor activities.

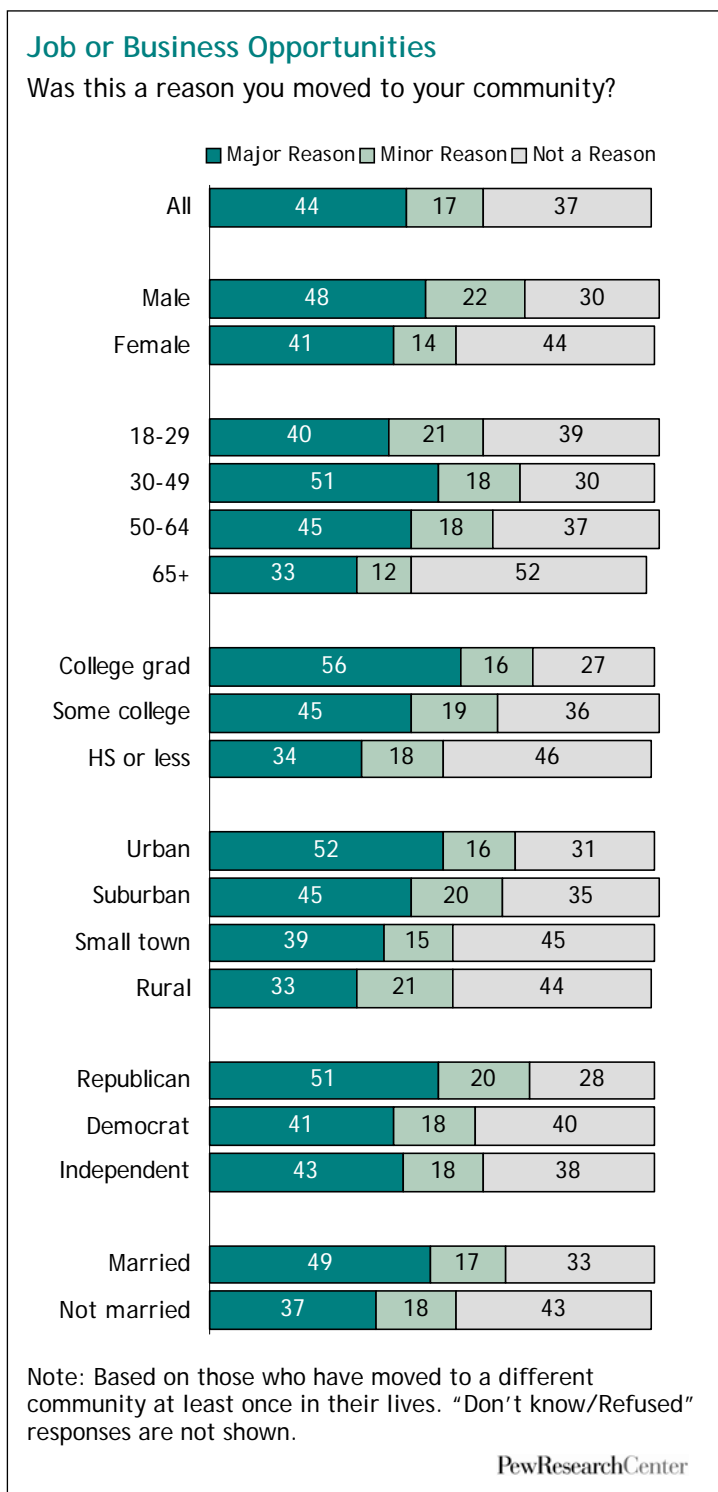
### Movers: Who Moves for Which Reasons?

More than six-in-ten adults have changed communities at least once in their lives, and their reasons for doing so vary with their demographic circumstances, according to the Pew survey. Job or business reasons are most likely to be cited by men, college graduates and people with high incomes. Family ties are cited most frequently by high school graduates or Americans with moderate to low incomes.

Other reasons that are chosen less frequently by movers overall are cited by some subgroups in notable numbers—for example, climate and outdoor recreation by residents of the West, education by people in their college years, and retirement by Americans ages 65 and older.

About half of men (48%) cite jobs or business opportunities as a major reason for locating where they now live, compared with four-in-ten (41%) women. This may be at least in part because women are less likely to hold a job than men and those who do are less likely than men to work full-time. Age plays a role, too: About half of all Americans ages 30-49 (51%) say job or business opportunities are a major reason they moved. Most Americans ages 65 and older (52%) say that was not a reason. Whites (46%) are more likely than blacks (34%) to say jobs were a major reason for their move.

College graduates, who are more likely to have changed communities than Americans with less education, are the most likely to say they moved for job or business reasons: 56% say that is a major reason. Among Americans



with a high school education or less, only a third (34%) say a major reason for moving was a job or business opportunities. Americans with some college education fall between the two: 45% say this is a major reason.

Among income groups, most Americans with household incomes of at least \$75,000 (56%) say a major reason for their move was a job or business opportunities. Only a third of movers with incomes under \$30,000 (33%) cite this as a major reason.

Married people are more likely than Americans who are not married to cite job reasons for moving. There also are differences when responses are analyzed by stage of life, which combines age, marital status and presence of minor children. Looked at that way, the most likely group to say a job was a major reason for moving (58%) are Americans who are married, middle-aged (35-59) and with minor children. That is higher than for younger singles (44%), middle-aged singles (40%), middle-aged married people without children (48%), older singles (30%) and older married people (42%).

### Did You Move Because of the Cost of Living?

The cost of living is cited by a smaller share of movers than jobs or business opportunities, but some groups are more likely to cite it than others. Among Americans with a high school education or less, 27% say the cost of living is a major reason they moved to their current community, compared with 20% of college graduates. Among Americans with incomes of less than \$30,000 a year, 34% say the cost of living is a major reason, compared with 20% of Americans with incomes of at least \$75,000.

There is little difference among age groups in the share that cite cost of living as a major reason for moving. But among those who say that retirement was a major reason for their move, half (50%) say that the cost of living also was a major factor in choosing their locale.

## Did You Move for Family Reasons?

Two family-related reasons for moving were offered in the Pew survey, and they were chosen by somewhat different groups. Ethnicity, nativity and religiosity play a role in whether people are likely to say they moved because their community is a good place to raise children. Income, education and marital status make a difference in whether Americans say family ties are a major reason they moved where they did.

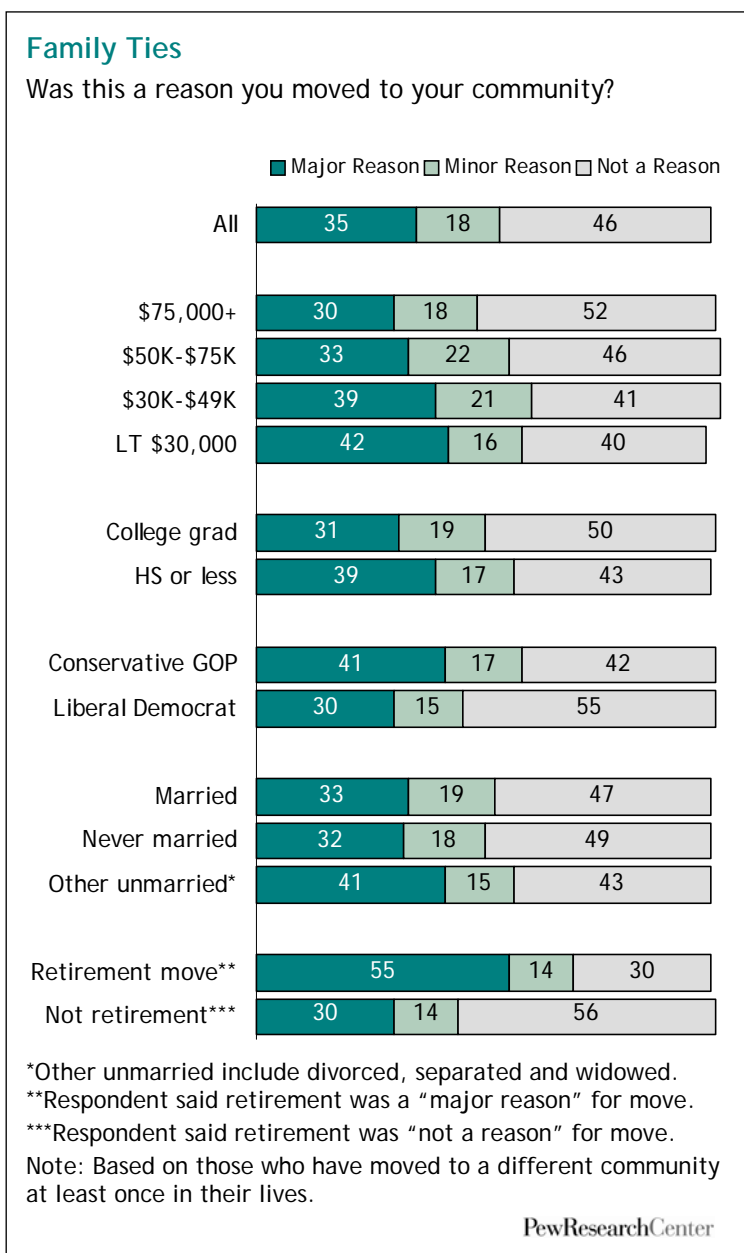
About half (48%) of Hispanics say that they moved because their community is a good place to raise children, compared with just over a third of whites (35%) and blacks (36%).

Parents, as well as all Americans in their 30s and 40s, are among the most likely groups to say that a major reason they moved to their local community is that it is a good place to raise children. Half or more of married couples with children under 18 say that is a major reason they moved—48% for young couples and 57% for middle-aged couples.

Americans who attend religious services at least weekly are more likely to cite living in a good place to raise children than are those who say they attend services seldom or never (41% vs. 31%).

But those same groups do not necessarily choose family ties as a major reason for moving where they did. On this response, there are no differences by religiosity, race, age or nativity.

Instead, income plays a role: Americans with family incomes of less than \$30,000 a year are more likely than those with higher incomes to say family ties were a major reason for moving. Four-in-ten of the lowest-income group say so, compared with 30% of those with incomes of \$75,000 or more. Income and education levels often track each other, as they do on this question: Americans with a high school diploma or less are more likely than college graduates to cite family ties as a major reason for moving.



One notable finding is that among people who say retirement was a major reason for moving, half also say that family ties were a major reason, perhaps because they want to be closer to children and grandchildren. Among those who say retirement played no role in their move, only 30% say family ties were a major reason for moving.

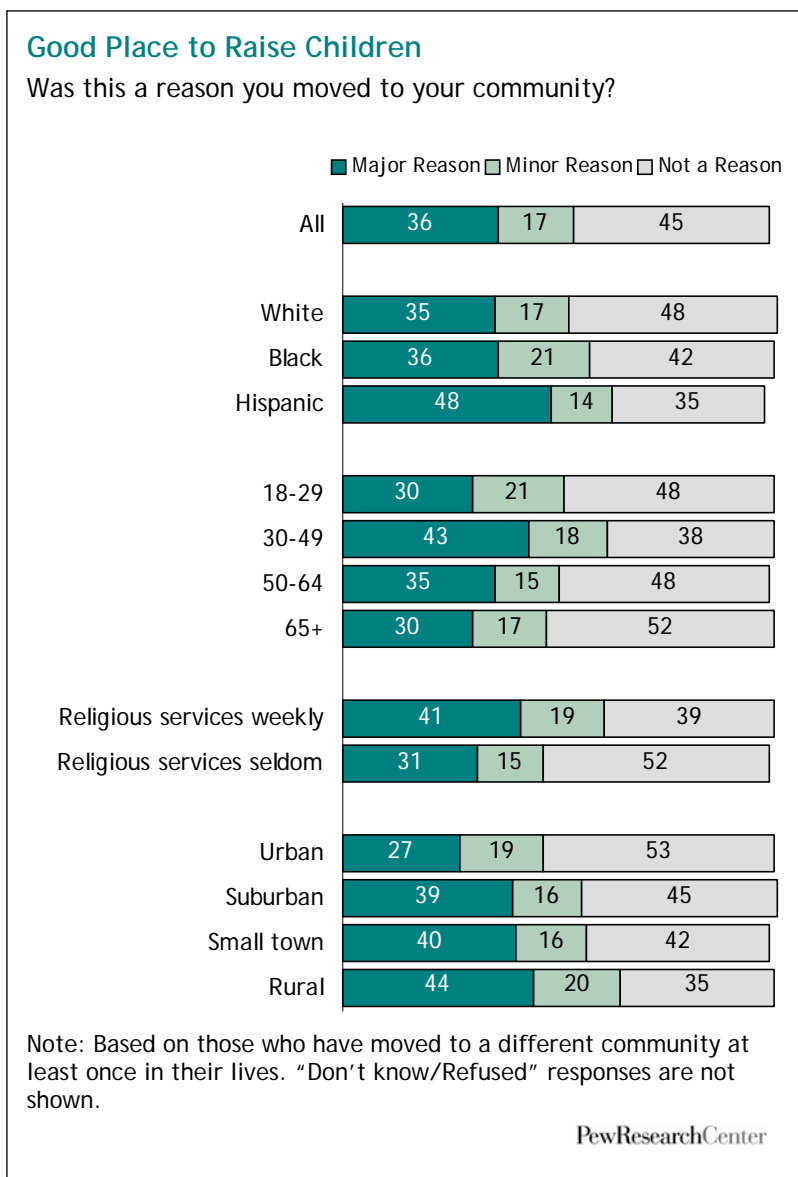
### What about Education, Climate or Activities?

Education or schooling is cited as a major reason for moving by only three-in-ten Americans, but among some subgroups, half or more choose this. They include young people ages 18-22 (51%) and the foreign-born (47%). Education or schooling also is chosen as a major reason by 41% of Hispanics.

Climate and outdoor recreation are chosen by fewer than one-in-five Americans as a major reason, but those two amenities have particular appeal to some groups. Americans living in the West choose climate (29%) and recreation or outdoor activities (25%) as major reasons more often than do other adults. So do people who say retirement was a major reason for their move: 43% say climate also is a major reason, and 36% say the outdoors is a major reason.

Not surprisingly, the likelihood of citing retirement as a major reason for moving rises with age; fully a third of Americans ages 65 and older say retirement was a major reason for their last move. Even in the “pre-retirement” years of 50-64, only 15% say so. Retirement reasons are cited by a higher share of Americans living in the West or South than in the East or Midwest.

Medical or health reasons are chosen by only one-in-nine Americans, but they are selected as a major factor for moving by one-in-five Americans ages 65 and older and by the same proportion of those with annual incomes under \$30,000. One-in-five Hispanics (22%) say medical or health reasons are a major explanation for their last move, compared with 8% of whites.



Just 10% of movers say that cultural activities were a major reason they chose their current community. But among those who say retirement is a major reason they moved, 22% also say they moved for cultural activities.

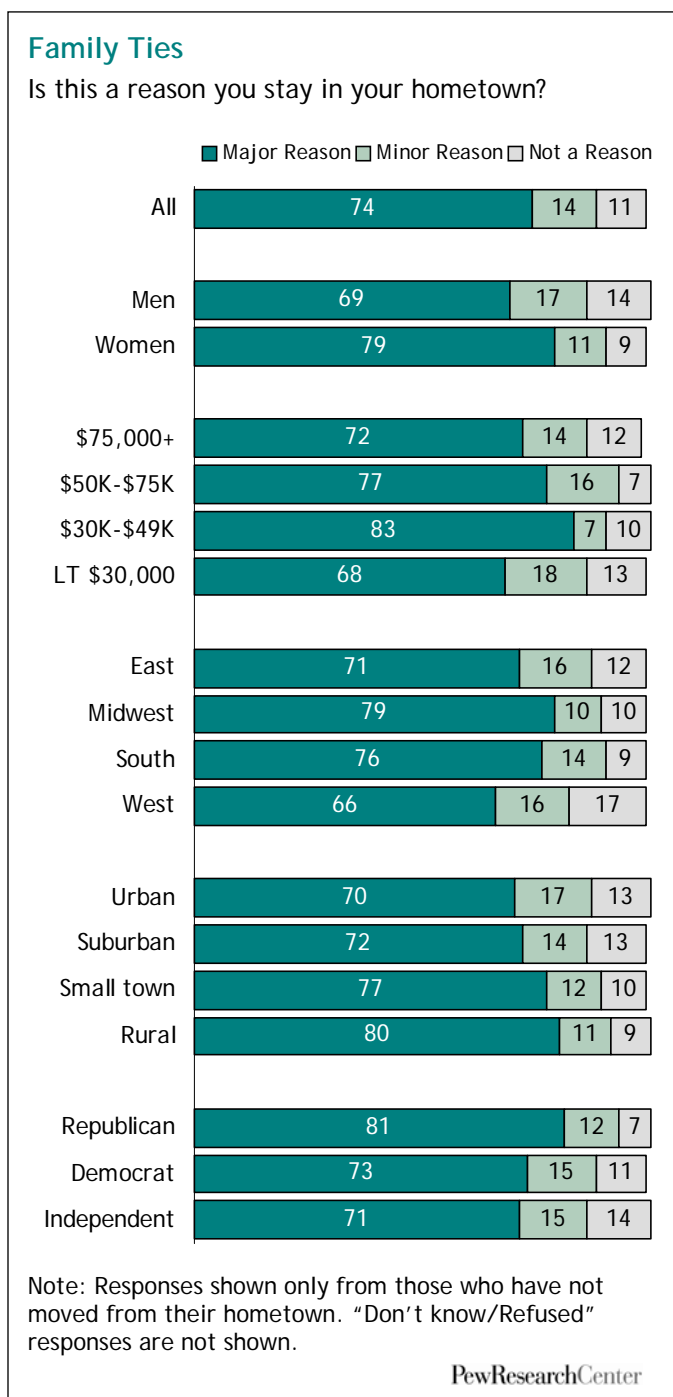
## Stayers: Who Stays for Which Reasons?

Nearly four-in-ten American adults have lived in one community for their entire life, and their most often-mentioned reasons for doing so revolve around family, place or friends. In general, these reasons are more likely to be cited by women than men, by middle-aged or older people rather than younger ones and by Americans with moderate household incomes rather than by those with high or low incomes.

Three reasons that reflect relationships and roots are particularly important to women, according to the Pew survey. Eight-in-ten women, compared with seven-in-ten men, say family ties are a major reason they have not left. Asked whether they stay because their community is a good place to raise children, 64% of women say this is a major reason, compared with 54% of men. Likewise, 63% of women and 53% of men say that a major reason, for them, is, “I belong here.”

Looking at income groups, family ties are a major reason given by 83% of Americans with moderate annual family incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000, compared with 72% among Americans with incomes of \$75,000 or more. It also compares with 68% among Americans with incomes of less than \$30,000 a year. Americans with moderate incomes also are most likely (83%) to say that “I grew up here” is a major reason they stay in their hometowns.

Different age groups of stayers tend to cite different reasons that express their connectedness to their hometown. Americans ages 30-49 and 50-64 are more likely to choose “I grew up here” as a major reason for staying (73% each) than are those who are older or younger. Stayers who are ages 50 and older are



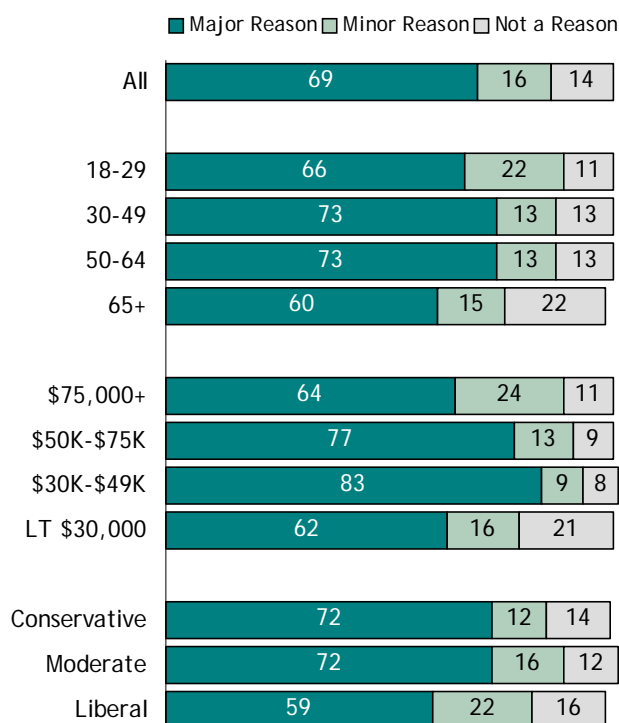
more likely to say, “I just feel I belong here” (69% say it is a major reason) than those who are younger (51%). These older stayers also are more likely to say they have no desire to live elsewhere than younger stayers (45% vs. 28%).

Life stage makes a difference in likelihood to cite some reasons. Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) middle-aged parents of children under 18 say that a major reason they stay is that their community is a good place to raise children. Overall, 59% of stayers say that.

About half of stayers choose connections to friends as a major reason for staying, but this reason is more important to college graduates (60%) than to others.

## Grew Up Here

Is this a reason you stay in your hometown?



Note: Responses shown only from those who have not moved from their hometown. “Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.

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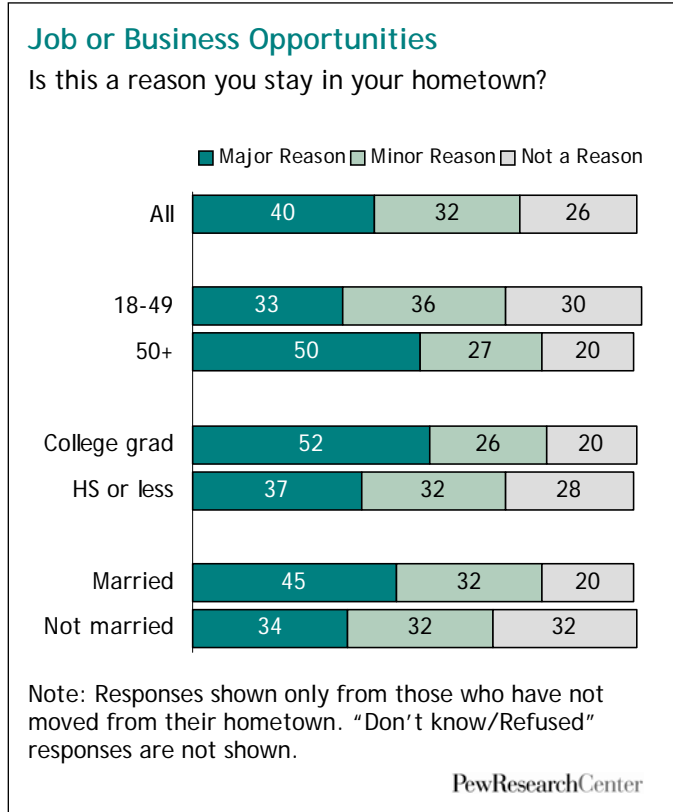
## What about Economic Reasons?

Compared with the overwhelming majorities who say that family and community are major reasons for staying, four-in-ten stayers say a major factor in where they live is job or business opportunities. This reason is most popular with older stayers, college graduates and people with higher incomes.

Half of stayers ages 50 and older say a job or business opportunity is a major reason they stay, compared with a third of those who are younger than that. College graduates (52%) are more likely to cite job or business reasons as a major factor for them, compared with those with a high school education or less (37%).

Climate and recreation or outdoor activities are less often chosen than other reasons for staying. But a clear pattern emerges of regional preference: Westerners are more likely to cite these reasons than are residents of other parts of the country: 43% say climate is a major reason they stay, and 34% say recreation and outdoor activities are a major reason.

Medical or health reasons also are not chosen by a large share of stayers overall. But among Americans ages 65 and older, nearly four-in-ten say that is a major reason they continue to live in their hometown.



## Multiple Movers, Recent Movers and Likely Movers

### Multiple Movers

In their characteristics and reasons for living where they do, Americans who have moved around a lot—defined as living in four or more states—are extreme versions of all movers. These multiple movers account for 36% of Americans who have lived in more than one state and 15% of adult Americans.

Multiple movers are even more likely than all movers to say they moved for job reasons and even less likely to say they moved for family reasons. That heightens their differences from stayers.

Half of multiple movers (51%) say job or business opportunities are a major reason they moved to their current community. That is higher than the share of all movers (44%) or stayers (40%) who say so. Only a quarter of multiple movers (27%) say that a major reason for their move is that their neighborhood is a good place to raise children—lower than the share of all movers (36%) or stayers (59%).

These reasons are in sync with the demographics of multiple movers, including the high levels of income and education that are tied to the likelihood of moving for job reasons. One in four multiple movers has a family income of \$100,000 or more, compared with 11% of Americans who still live in their hometown. Completing the picture, 45% of multiple movers are college graduates, compared with 17% of stayers.

Multiple movers may not be choosing communities on the basis of whether they are good places to raise children because most of them have adult children (57%), a higher share than hometown residents (46%). They tend to be an older group than stayers.

Even more so than all movers, multiple movers often have few family members nearby. A third (32%) have no extended family within an hour's drive, and 71% have five or fewer relatives nearby. Most stayers, as noted earlier, have six or more extended family members in the area.

Still, multiple movers do not necessarily feel detached from their communities. Most of them (56%) say they are somewhat or very involved in local community or neighborhood activities, compared with just under half (47%) of hometown residents. More than half (57%) have lived in their local communities for at least 10 years, about the same proportion as for all movers.

Lastly, many multiple movers say it is likely they will move again. About half (48%) say another move is likely within five years, compared with only 31% of hometown residents who say so, and not much different from the 44% of all movers who say so.



## Who Moved Most Recently?

One-in-three Americans who have moved at least once did so within the past five years. These Americans are much younger and less likely to be white than movers who relocated longer ago. Their circumstances are less established, and they are less family-focused in their reasons for moving.

Two-thirds of movers ages 18-29, the prime moving years, say they have relocated within the past five years. That is double the share of recent movers among Americans ages 30-49 and more than triple the share of recent movers among Americans ages 50-64.

Among the major race and ethnic groups, non-Hispanic whites are the least likely to be recent movers and Hispanics are the most likely. These differences by race, ethnicity and age are due in part to the fact that the nation's black and Hispanic residents are on average younger than its white population, and older people are more likely to be settled down. The median age of the nation's non-Hispanic whites in 2007 was 40.8 years, compared with 31.1 years for blacks and 27.6 years for Hispanics, according to Census Bureau estimates.

Reflecting its high proportion of young people, the recent mover group includes many people who are not fully established or settled down in other ways. They have lower incomes than other Americans and are less likely to own their homes. Only a quarter of married adults are recent movers.

These recent movers are not deeply rooted in their current communities. Six-in-ten (63%) say they are somewhat or very likely to move again within five years. That figure includes 39% who say they are very likely to move, which is about the same proportion of all Americans who say it is very or somewhat likely they will relocate within five years.

These recent arrivals in their communities have fewer friends and family around them than other movers. Nearly three-fourths (73%) have five or fewer members of their extended family close by. A third (34%) say they have fewer local friends than most people.

When it comes to their reasons for moving where they did, recent arrivals do not differ much from other movers. They are somewhat more likely, though, to say that family ties or wanting to live in a good community to raise children were not reasons for their move.

### Recent vs. Earlier Movers

Time since last move

	5 Years or less	20+ Years
<b>Total</b>	33	32
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Whites	27	38
Blacks	43	26
Hispanics	48	14
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	65	5
30-49	33	23
50-64	20	49
65+	15	57
<b>Area</b>		
East	32	35
Midwest	28	40
South	34	28
West	34	30
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	26	36
Not married	41	27

Note: Based on those who have moved to a different community at least once in their lives. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

## Who Might Move in Five Years?

Looking ahead five years, four-in-ten Americans say they are very likely or somewhat likely to move. This mobile group includes half or more of younger people, unmarried Americans and the foreign-born.

Americans who have already moved are more likely to say they are likely to move again: 45% of movers say so, compared with 31% of Americans who have never left their hometowns.

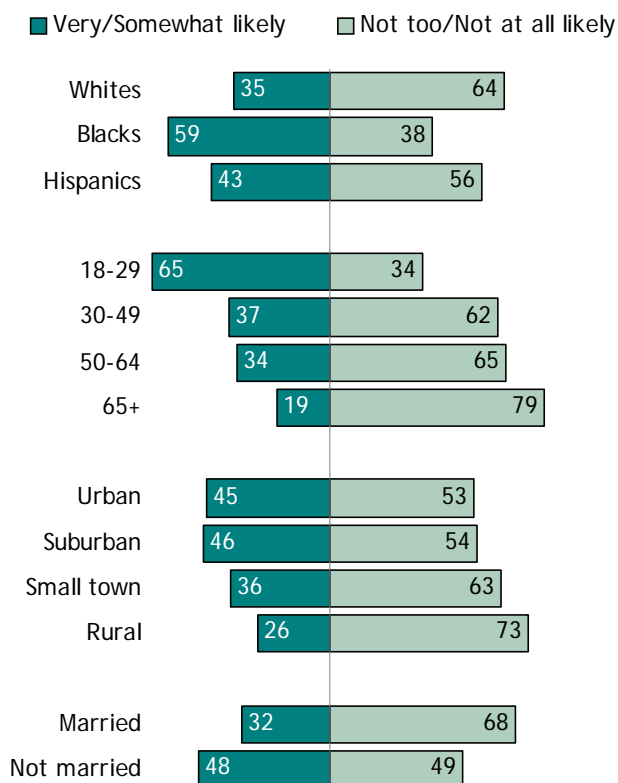
But even among stayers, the pull of moving is strong for younger people, ages 18-29. A majority of stayers in that age group (53%) say they are likely to move in the next five years. The share of likely movers among young people who already have relocated at least once is even higher: 75%.

Looking at education levels, college and high school graduates who already have moved are equally likely to say they probably will move again in five years. Among stayers, though, college graduates or those with some college are more likely than those with less education to say they probably will be living elsewhere within five years.

Looking at the role of community satisfaction, Americans who rate their communities highly are far less likely (33%) to predict they will move within five years than those who give their communities a low rating (56%).

### Going Anywhere?

Looking ahead five years, how likely is it that you will move away from the community where you are living now?



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

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## The Many Definitions of Home

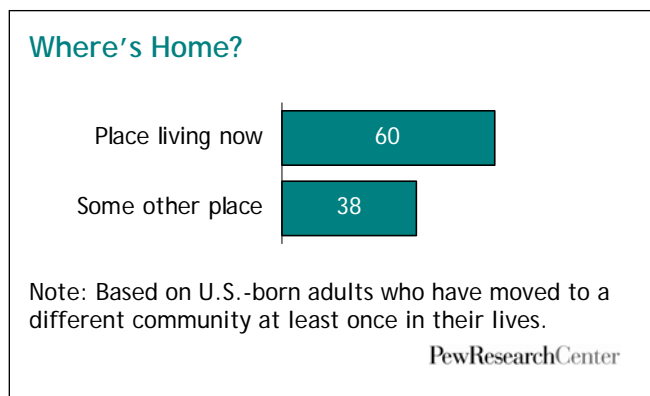
Home is a place in the heart as well as a place on the map—and for more than one-in-five Americans, these are different places.

Some 23% of all adults born in the United States say the place they consider home isn't the community where they're living now. Among those who have lived in more than one place at some point in their lives, fully 38% say their “heart home” isn't where they're living now. And a third (32%) of adults who have moved say there's someplace other than where they live now that they identify with almost as much as their current home.

What makes these mobile Americans think of a place as their “heart home”? There's a wide range of reasons.

About a quarter say it's the place they were born or raised, while about one-in-five say it's where they live now and another one-in-five say it's where they have lived the longest. Also, some 15% say it's where their family is from. Just 4% say it's where they went to high school.

Meantime, nearly four-in-ten U.S.-born adults have no reason to be conflicted about where home is: They never left the communities where they were born.



The survey finds that notions of home are also complicated for immigrants, who make up about 13% of the total U.S. population. Among these new Americans, the tug and pull of current and former lives act differently on different people. Slightly more than half (54%) say they consider the United States to be their home, while 38% say their native country remains closest to their heart. The longer an immigrant has lived in this country, the more likely the U.S. is considered to be home.

Among many U.S.-born Americans, neither the passage of time nor the accumulation of multiple moves undoes the ties that bind them to the place they consider home. More than half of all Americans who moved to their current community at least 20 years ago still identify some other place as their “heart home” (21%) or say somewhere else is nearly as special to them as their current home (37%).

The good news for U.S.-born movers who strongly identify with some other community is that you *can* go home again, especially to visit. Fully 45% say they visit their “heart home” at least several times a year, while just 7% say they never go back. In addition, more than half say they call family or friends in their other hometown at least once a week and send email or text messages to them nearly as often.

But would they want to return there to live? Here, opinion is divided. About four-in-10 whose heart is somewhere else say they'd like to go back “home” to live, while about half say they're glad to be living elsewhere.

## What Makes a Place Feel Like Home

“Home” means different things to different people. For about one-in-four movers, home is where they were born or raised. Nearly as many say home is where they currently live, while slightly fewer than one-in-five say it’s where they’ve lived the longest. Somewhat fewer identify the place where their family comes from as home, and just 4% cite where they went to high school.

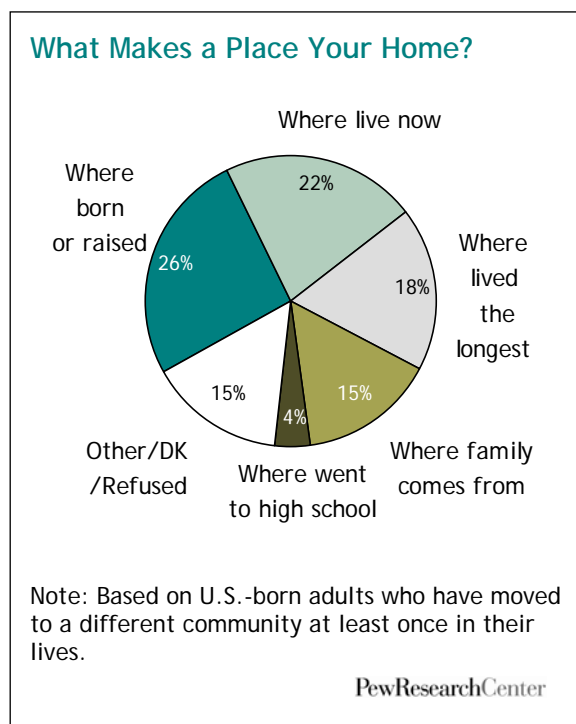
Different demographic and social groups give different definitions of home. Among movers, blacks are significantly more likely than whites to say they consider home to be where they were born or raised (35% vs. 25%). Whites, on the other hand, are about as likely to define their homes as where they currently live (23%) as they are to say it’s where they were born or grew up. And about a quarter of all Hispanics consider home to be where their family comes from, roughly double the proportion of whites or blacks who described home in the same way.

Not surprisingly, movers under the age of 30 are the most likely of any age group to say the place they were born or raised is their hometown. Fully a third (33%) of all young adults say home is where they were born or raised compared with only 19% of adults 65 or older. Correspondingly, these older Americans are twice as likely as young people to say the place they currently live is their home (30% vs. 15%).

What may be surprising is the degree to which older people who retire to another community embrace their new surroundings as their home. Among older adults who said a major reason they moved was to retire, fully 28% say their home is where they live now, while 25% identify their home as where they were born or raised and 17% say it is where they lived the longest.

The length of time someone has lived in a community and the type of community a person lives in also are associated with different definitions of home. Among movers who have lived in their present community 10 years or more, fully a quarter (25%) say home is where they live now—a view shared by just 16% of those who have lived in their current communities for less than 10 years. Suburbanites are more likely to identify their home as the place they were born or raised (31%), compared with people who live in small towns (23%) or rural areas (22%).

Social networks, attitudes toward one’s community and one’s overall outlook on life also have an impact on definitions of home. Fully 26% of those who rate their current community as “excellent” or “very good” say home is where they now live, compared with 10% of those who rate their towns as “only fair” or “poor” places to live. Similarly, those who say they have a lot of friends in their current community are nearly twice as likely to call it home than are those who say their number of friends they is fewer than average (24% vs. 14%). And



being a happy person is associated with warm feelings toward one's current community: Fully 25% of movers who describe themselves as "very happy" say their home is where they live now, compared with 17% who describe themselves as "not too happy."

## Where Mobile Americans Feel at Home

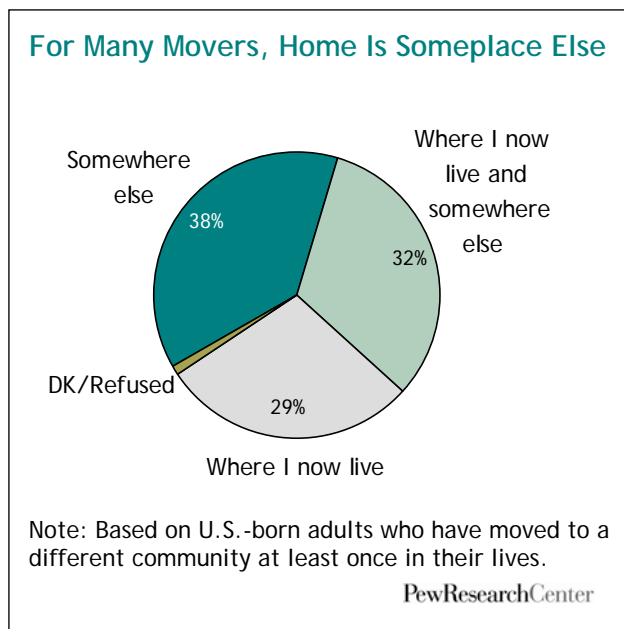
The "where's home?" question is easy for the 37% of Americans who never left the community where they were born. But for the 63% majority who have lived in two or more communities, the answer is less obvious. Among these mobile Americans, a 38% plurality say somewhere else feels like home to them. A third (32%) call two places home—their current community, and another place where they once lived. Only 29% of all movers say the community where they now live is the only place that feels like home to them.

The sharpest demographic differences are between movers who say their current community is home and those who identify some other place as their "real" home. Among the most striking difference between these two groups: Fully 54% of blacks but 35% of whites say they consider home to be somewhere other than their current community. Hispanics fall in the middle, with 40% saying someplace else was their home.

Other demographic differences are less striking. Young movers are the most likely to say their home is somewhere other than the community where they now live (55% vs. 22%). That's because people tend to move the most when they are younger, and because it takes time to become completely comfortable in a new community.

That pattern is reversed among older Americans who have made at least one move in their lives. About a third of all adults 65 and older say home is where they currently live, compared with 28% of those under the age of 65. A somewhat smaller proportion (29%) say somewhere else is home, compared with 40% of Americans younger than 65.

Those who say their current community is their home differ modestly in terms of income and education from those who identify some other place as their real home. Fewer than one-in-four Americans (23%) with family incomes of \$75,000 or more to say their current community is home, compared with about three-in-10 other movers. And fully a third (34%) of adults with a high school education or less say where they live now is home, compared with about a quarter of adults who have more than a high school diploma.



Americans who have made multiple long-distance moves or lived in more than two states also are more likely to say somewhere else is home. Among movers who have lived in two states, three-in-ten (30%) say somewhere else is home, compared with 43% of those who have lived in four or more states.

Regionally, more than four-in-10 residents of the South (44%) say their home is someplace other than where they are currently living. That compares with 33% of those living in the East and Midwest. Part of the reason is that the South claims the largest share of residents who moved there from somewhere else.

### 'Dual Loyalty' Movers

The 32% of adult movers who say there is a place they identify with almost as much as their current community are different from other Americans in one striking way: They're wealthier.

Fully four-in-ten adults with family incomes of \$75,000 or more identify their current community as their home but say there is another place they identify with nearly as much. For these "dual-loyalty" movers, the needlepoint on the mantle might read, "Home Sweet Homes."

In addition, Hispanic movers are more likely than are blacks to consider two places to be home (37% vs. 22%). The differences on this question between Hispanics and blacks, as well as between blacks and whites, is not statistically significant, in part because the relatively small numbers of Hispanics and blacks interviewed for this survey.

### Where's Home? Movers Are Torn

	Where live now	Another place	Here, other place
	%	%	%
<b>Total</b>	29	38	32
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	30	35	33
Women	27	40	31
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	31	35	32
Blacks	24	54	22
Hispanics	20	40	37
<b>Age</b>			
18-29	22	55	23
30-49	31	34	34
50-64	27	37	33
65+	33	29	34
<b>Education</b>			
College grad+	24	42	34
Some college	26	37	34
HS grad or less	34	36	28
<b>Family Income</b>			
\$75,000+	23	35	40
\$50-75k	31	41	28
\$30-50k	33	38	29
LT \$30k	28	42	28
<b>Region</b>			
East	33	33	32
Midwest	30	33	35
South	28	44	27
West	25	36	36

Note: Based on U.S.-born adults who have moved to a different community at least once in their lives. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

## Community Involvement and Sense of Home

Feeling that a community is your home doesn't appear to lead to more civic engagement. Among those who say their current community is their home, just 12% say they are "very involved" in civic life—virtually identical to the 11 percent of those who say their home is elsewhere.

Similarly, 47% of those who say where they now live is home report little or no involvement in community life, again almost identical to the proportion of people who say somewhere else is home to them.

People who consider two places to be their homes are more likely to be involved in civic affairs in their current community than are other residents. Nearly six-in-10 (59%) of these "dual-loyalty" Americans say they're involved in community activities, compared with 49% of those who say another community is their only home. People who consider two places to be their homes are more likely to be involved in civic affairs in their current community than are other residents. Nearly six-in-10 (59%) of these "dual-loyalty" Americans say they're involved in community activities, compared with 49% of those who say another community is their only home.

A new town becomes a hometown relatively slowly, these data suggest. Just 14% of movers who have lived in their communities fewer than five years have loosened the ties that bound them to other places and say their present community is their home, while four-in-10 say home is somewhere else. Even after 20 years in the same community, only 43% say their home is where they are living now. An additional 22% say there's another place that feels nearly as much like home, and 33% are still fully loyal to some other place.

### Where's Home? Depends on How Long You've Lived in Present Community

	Where live now	Another place	Here, other place
<i>Years lived in community</i>	%	%	%
LT 5	14	57	26
5-9	19	46	33
10-19	29	34	35
20+	43	22	33

Note: Based on U.S.-born adults who have moved to a different community at least once in their lives. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

## You Can Go Home Again—But Only about Half Want To

A majority of movers either say home is someplace other than where they currently live (38%) or say they have strong personal ties both to their current homes and to some other community (32%). However, only about half of these cross-pressured Americans say they would want to move back to their previous community.

Even among those who say their home is somewhere else, barely half (51%) say they would like to go back. In contrast, those who consider the place they live as well as some other place to be their homes say they would prefer to stay where they are, by a ratio of better than two-to-one.

Young people with ties to another community are the most likely to say they want to move back, a finding presumably explained by the fact that many young movers have yet to live in a new community long enough to put down roots. At the other end of the age spectrum, two-thirds of all adults 65 and older say they would prefer to remain in their current community, compared with 38% of all adults ages 18 to 29.

Among those with attachments to another place, there are other demographic differences between people who want to move back home and those who prefer to stay put. But these other differences tend to be closely associated with age. For example, singles are more likely than married people to want to move back to their hometown because they tend to be younger. Likewise, renters are more likely than homeowners to want to return, again reflecting the fact that renters tend to be younger than homeowners.

	Total	Someplace else	Current community, somewhere else
	%	%	%
Would like to return	40	51	28
Prefer to stay here	51	43	60
Neither/DK-ref.	9	7	13

Note: Based on U.S.-born adults who considered their home to be someplace other than where they were living or said there was someplace that they identified with as much as their current community.



## Visitors, Callers and Emailers—But Not Movers

Well under half of those with attachments to another place say they want to move back for good.

However, most find ways to stay in regular touch.

Nearly half (45%) say they go back to visit their second hometowns at least several times a year. A substantial majority also maintains regular contact with family members and close friends they left behind through frequent telephone calls, email or other forms of electronic communication. Women and young people are consistently more likely than other adults to keep in frequent touch.<sup>3</sup>

The most common way people keep up with friends and family in their old hometown is by telephone. More than half (53%) say they talk on the telephone with a family member or friend there at least once a week, and more than one-in-five say they call someone in their former hometown every day. Among those most likely to phone to make frequent calls to family or friends in their old community: young people (75%), blacks (70%) and women (58%). Fewer than half of all middle-aged and older adults phone home so regularly.

### Phoning, Emailing and Visiting Home

How people maintain contact with friends, family in old hometown

	Call at least once a week	Send email, text msg., etc. at least once a week*	Visit several times a year
	%	%	%
<b>Total</b>	53	46	45
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	47	42	40
Women	58	51	48
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	50	44	42
Blacks	70	50	53
Hispanics	60	57	53
<b>Age</b>			
18-29	75	68	62
30-49	53	52	47
50-64	43	38	37
65+	41	22	30
<b>Education</b>			
College grad+	52	50	49
Some college	56	50	41
HS grad/less	52	42	42
<b>Family Income</b>			
\$75,000+	50	54	43
\$50-75k	55	45	46
\$30-50k	56	46	47
LT \$30k	61	45	50

\*Question: About how often do you have contact with friends or family living there, through electronic devices such as email, text messages or Internet sites like Facebook: every day, once a week, once a month, several times a year, once a year or less?  
Note: Based on U.S.-born adults who considered their home to be someplace other than where they were living or said there was someplace that they identified with as much as their current community.

## Visiting Home

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the results for this and subsequent sections are based on the combined sample of those who considered their home to be someplace other than where they were currently living and those who said there was another community that they considered to be their home nearly as much.

Nearly one-in-five (18%) adults with a strong attachment to a place they no longer live say they go back to visit family or friends at least once a month, while an additional 27% say they make the trip several times a year. Significantly, only 7% of these movers say they never go back to their “heart home,” while nearly half report they visit just once a year or less frequently.

Women, young people, college graduates, Hispanics and blacks are the most likely to say they go back to a community they consider home, while whites, men and older adults are less likely to do so. About half of all women (48%) visit at least several times a year, and 19% say they make the trip at least once a month. Among men, four-in-ten say they go home at least several times a year.

Slightly more than four-in-10 whites frequently go back to a place they consider to be home, compared with a majority of Hispanics and blacks. Black women in particular say they often go back home: Nearly six-in-10 (57%) say they visit at least several times a year, compared with 45% of black men.

Overall, adults under the age of 30 are significantly more likely than other age groups to consider some other community to be home. Moreover, young adults are more likely to return to their other hometown. Fully 62% of adults younger than 30 but only 30% of those 65 and older say they make frequent visits to their former hometowns. Part of the reason is that younger people are more mobile generally than older Americans. Twenty-somethings also are more likely than older people to have family and close friends back in their former hometown.

## Keeping in Touch over the Internet

The generation gap opens wide between the young and old on how frequently people use the Internet to send messages or exchange information with friends and loved ones in their former hometown.

More than two-thirds of all adults younger than 30 regularly send emails, text messages or use Facebook or similar social networking sites to keep in touch. But among those 65 years old or older, barely one-in-five (22%) are cyber-active in these ways, and twice as many say they never go online to contact family or friends back home.

As a group, Hispanics are more likely than whites to use the Internet to stay current with loved ones and friends in their old home. Nearly six-in-ten Hispanics (57%) but just 44% of whites and half of blacks keep up this way.

## News from Home

Most Americans who closely identify with another community do more than dream of their former homes—they read the news from their old hometowns, either in print or

### Following the News from Back Home

	Total	Someplace else	Current community, somewhere else
	%	%	%
Every day	18	15	23
Once a week	22	24	19
Once a month	16	17	14
Several times a year	15	14	15
Once a year or less	20	19	20
Never	9	10	8

Q: About how often do you read about news and events there, either in print or online?

Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.

online.

Fully 40% of these Americans say they keep up weekly with news from their former communities, and nearly half of those read about events there every day. An additional 16% check the news about once a month while slightly more than four-in-ten do so less frequently.

What news are they following in their former hometowns? Perhaps out of habit or merely curiosity, 57% are checking the weather back home. Nearly as many are reading about people they know (54%), while nearly half are keeping up with local politics and governmental affairs. Smaller but still substantial proportions say they follow local sports (39%) or business news (36%).

The news agenda of these former residents varies by level of interest in local news. News about politics and government is the favorite topic among those who say they read news from their former communities every day: fully three-quarters (77%) of these former residents say they look for this type of local news in print or online. In contrast, those who follow events in their former hometowns no more than once a year are most interested in news about local people (46%) and the weather (38%), while fewer seek out political or governmental news (25%).

There are few differences between movers with a strong attachment to two communities and those who say another community exclusively is their “heart home.” Those who say there is a place that they identify nearly as much as their present home are slightly more likely to say they follow news from their former home every day (23%) than are those who say someplace else is their home (15%). This modest difference appears largely due to the demographic characteristics of the groups: Those who do not live in their home community are more likely to be under the age of 30, a group with relatively little interest in keeping up with the news.

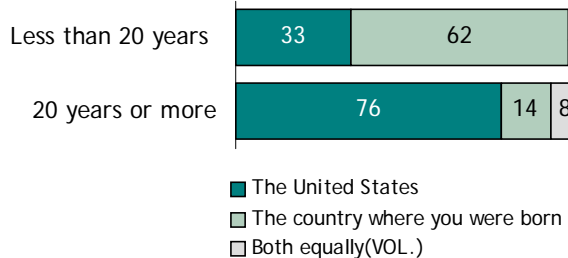
### When Home Is Another Country

The concept of home is complicated for the 13% of survey respondents who were born outside the United States. Slightly more than half (54%) say they consider the United States to be their home, while 38% say they still identify most with their native country.

The longer an immigrant lives in the United States, the more likely this country is thought of as home. Some 62% of foreign-born respondents who have lived in the United States less than 20 years identify most with their former country. But an even larger proportion (76%) of those who have lived in the U.S. 20 or more years say that the U.S. is their home.

#### Which Country Do Immigrants Consider Home?

*Years lived in the U.S.*



Note: Based on those born in a foreign country or U.S. territory (n=229). Don't know/Refused not shown.

PewResearchCenter

## Staying in Touch from Far Away

Fully 56% of all foreign-born Americans say they go back to their native country at least once every five years. Nearly a third of all foreign-born Americans say they return to their native country at least once a year while a quarter visits less often. Only 17% said they have never gone back. Men are somewhat more likely than women to go back at least once a year (38% vs. 26%).

A considerably larger share maintains contact in other ways with the people back in the country where they were born. Slightly more than four-in-ten say they call family or friends at least once a week and one-in-ten call every day, the same proportion that never phones home.

About half (48%) of all immigrants say they use email, text messaging or Internet sites like Facebook at

least once a month to keep in touch with people in the old country. In addition, nearly half (41%) say they follow events in the country where they were born, either in print or on the Internet, at least once a week. Nearly as many (36%) say they rarely or never read about news from their former home.

Again, men are more likely than women to say they call their native country at least once a week (49% vs. 36%). And just under half (46%) say they stay in touch via the Internet, about equal to the proportion of women (50%).

### Staying in Touch When Home Is Another Country

How foreign-born Americans maintain contact with friends, family in native country

	Call at least once a week	Send email, text msg., etc. at least once a month*	Visit at least once a year
<b>Total</b>	42	48	32
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	49	46	38
Women	36	50	26
<b>Age</b>			
18-40	51	57	32
41+	34	38	32
<b>Education</b>			
College grad	40	57	24
Not a grad	44	45	34
<b>Family Income</b>			
\$50,000+	47	58	28
LT \$50k	39	42	34

\*Question: About how often do you have contact with friends or family living in the country where you were born through electronic devices such as email, text messages or Internet sites like Facebook: every day, once a week, once a month, several times a year, once a year, or less often than that?

Note: Based on those born in a foreign country or U.S. territory.

**PEW SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS  
TOPLINE FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS**

Oct. 3-19, 2008, MOBILITY SURVEY

N=2,260

**NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (\*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS AND SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.**

Q.6 How involved are you in community and neighborhood activities where you live? (READ)

50	Involved <b>(NET)</b>
11	Very involved
39	Somewhat involved
49	Not involved <b>(NET)</b>
28	Not too involved
22	Not at all involved
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q.7 About how many members of your extended family live within an hour's drive of where you live now? (READ CHOICE CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY) IF ASKED WHAT IS MEANT BY "EXTENDED FAMILY": By extended family, I mean children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles.

54	Five or less <b>(NET)</b>
19	None
35	1 up to 5
46	Six or more <b>(NET)</b>
19	6 up to 10
13	11 up to 20
14	More than 20
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q.8 About how many members of your extended family live more than an hour's drive from you? (READ CHOICE CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY) IF ASKED WHAT IS MEANT BY "EXTENDED FAMILY": By extended family, I mean children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles.

43	Five or less <b>(NET)</b>
11	None
32	1 up to 5
56	Six or more <b>(NET)</b>
19	6 up to 10
15	11 up to 20
22	More than 20
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q.8a Would you describe yourself as someone who has a lot of friends in the community where you live, about an average number of friends or not that many friends?

27	Lot of friends
49	Average
23	Less than average <b>(NET)</b>
22	Not many friends
1	No friends <b>(VOL)</b>
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q.8b And what about friends in other places? Would you describe yourself as someone who has a lot of friends, about an average number of friends or not that many friends in other places?

23	Lot of friends
49	Average
27	Less than average( <b>NET</b> ) <sup>4</sup>
27	Not many friends
1	No friends ( <b>VOL</b> )
1	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )

Q.9 Have you lived in or near your local community your entire life, aside from the time you may have spent away in school or college, or have you lived in other places?

37	Yes ( <b>NET</b> )
37	Yes, entire life
1	Yes, except during active military duty ( <b>VOL.</b> )
63	Live in other places
*	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )

**ASK ALL MOVERS (Q9=2, n=1,472):**

Q.10 About how many years have you lived in your local community?

44	Less than 10 years ( <b>NET</b> )
28	0-4 years
16	5-9 years
55	10 or more years ( <b>NET</b> )
23	10-19 years
32	20+ years
*	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )

**ASK ALL MOVERS (Q9=2):**

Q.11 For each of the following, tell me if this was a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason that you moved to your local community. [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

READ IF NECESSARY: Was this a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason you moved to your local community?

	<u>Major</u> <u>reason</u>	<u>Minor</u> <u>reason</u>	<u>Not a</u> <u>reason</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u> <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. Job or business opportunities	44	17	37	1
b. Cost of living	24	26	48	1
c. Family ties	35	18	46	1
d. Education or schooling	29	17	53	1
e. Climate	18	24	58	1
g. A good place to raise children	36	17	45	1
h. Recreational and outdoor activities	17	27	55	1
i. Cultural activities	10	27	61	2
j. Medical or health reasons	11	18	70	*
k. Retirement	13	17	69	1

<sup>4</sup> NET results may vary slightly from the sum of the subcategories due to rounding.

**ASK ALL MOVERS (Q9=2:)**

Q12 Is there some other major reason you moved to your local community? [OPEN-END]

IF YES: (SPECIFY, RECORD VERBATIM)

34	Answer given
65	No other reason
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q13 Have you always lived in the same state, or have you lived in different states?

FOR MOVERS

32	Same state only
68	Different state
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

FOR ALL

37	Entire life in community
20	Same state only
43	Different state
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL MOVERS WHO HAVE LIVED IN DIFFERENT STATES (Q13=2, n=1,067):**

Q14 Thinking about all the places you have lived in the United States, how many different states have you lived in?

36	Two states
28	Three states
36	Four or more states
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Just to clarify.

USBORN1A Were you born in the United States or in another country?

87	Yes, born in U.S.
13	Foreign both (including Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories )
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Q15 For each of the following, tell me if this was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason you have lived there all your life. [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

READ IF NECESSARY: Is this a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason you have lived in or near your local community all your life?

	Major <u>reason</u>	Minor <u>reason</u>	Not a <u>reason</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u> <u>(VOL.)</u>
a. Job or business opportunities	40	32	26	2
b. Cost of living	29	39	31	2
c. Family ties	74	14	11	1
d. No desire to live someplace else	35	27	37	2
e. Climate	31	35	34	1
h. Connections to friends	49	30	20	*
i. Community involvement	19	39	41	1
j. I just feel I belong here	58	22	19	1
k. A good place to raise children	59	19	21	1
l. Recreational and outdoor activities	25	37	36	1
m. Medical or health reasons	19	27	54	*
n. Cultural activities	16	38	44	2
o. I grew up here	69	16	14	1

**IF EVER MOVED AND U.S. BORN (USBORN1A=1 & Q9=2, n=1,280):**

Q20 You mentioned that you have lived in other places. When you think about the place you identify with the most—that is, the place in your heart you consider to be home—is it the place you live now, or is it some other place?

60	Where you live now
38	Some other place
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**(IF Q20=1) ASK:**

Q21 Is there a place where you have lived that you identify with almost as much as where you live now?

52	Yes
47	No
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**IF SOME OTHER PLACE (Q20=2 OR Q21=1, n=887), ASK:**

Q23 About how often do you go back to visit there? (READ)

18	Once a month or more often
27	Several times a year
48	Once a year or less
7	Never (VOL)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)



**IF SOME OTHER PLACE (Q20=2 OR Q21=1), ASK:**

Q24 About how often do you talk on the telephone with friends or family living there? (READ)

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
|    | 22 | Every day                                   |
|    | 31 | Once a week                                 |
|    | 16 | Once a month                                |
|    | 14 | Several times a year                        |
| 11 |    | Once a year or less                         |
|    | 5  | Never <b>(VOL)</b>                          |
|    | 1  | No family/friends still there <b>(VOL.)</b> |
|    | 1  | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>            |

**(IF Q24=8, SKIP)**

Q25 About how often do you have contact with friends or family living there, through electronic devices such as email, text messages or Internet sites like Facebook? (READ)

- |  |    |                                  |
|--|----|----------------------------------|
|  | 21 | Every day                        |
|  | 25 | Once a week                      |
|  | 13 | Once a month                     |
|  | 8  | Several times a year             |
|  | 12 | Once a year or less              |
|  | 19 | Never <b>(VOL)</b>               |
|  | 1  | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b> |

**IF SOME OTHER PLACE (Q20=2 OR Q21=1), ASK:**

Q26 About how many members of your extended family live there? (READ CHOICE CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY) IF ASKED WHAT IS MEANT BY EXTENDED FAMILY: By extended family, I mean children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles.

- |    |    |                                  |
|----|----|----------------------------------|
|    | 54 | Five or less <b>(NET)</b>        |
|    | 22 | None                             |
|    | 32 | 1 up to 5                        |
|    | 45 | Six or more <b>(NET)</b>         |
| 16 |    | 6 up to 10                       |
|    | 11 | 11 up to 20                      |
|    | 18 | More than 20                     |
|    | 1  | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b> |

**ASK IF EVER MOVED AND U.S.-BORN (USBORN1A=1 & Q9=2):**

Q27 Thinking about the place you identify with MOST... Here are some reasons why people identify with a place. Which of these reasons is MOST important to you personally when you think about the place you identify with most? (READ)

- |  |    |                                       |
|--|----|---------------------------------------|
|  | 26 | It's where you were born or raised    |
|  | 4  | It's where you went to high school    |
|  | 15 | It's where your family comes from     |
|  | 18 | It's where you have lived the longest |
|  | 22 | It's where you live now               |
|  | 7  | Other <b>(VOL.)</b>                   |
|  | 8  | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>      |

**IF SOME OTHER PLACE (Q20=2 OR Q21=1), ASK:**

Q28 Which is of these comes closer to your feelings about living there even if neither is exactly right? (READ AND ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS)

- 40 I would like to go back there to live
- 51 I'm glad to be living elsewhere
- 6 Neither/Both
- 3 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q29 About how often do you read about news and events there, either in print or online? (READ)

- 18 Every day
- 22 Once a week
- 16 Once a month
- 15 Several times a year
- 20 Once a year or less
- 9 Never (VOL)
- 1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**(IF Q29 = 7 SKIP)**

Q30 When you read about news and events there, do you follow news about [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] or not? READ IF NECESSARY: Do you follow news about [INSERT ITEM] from that area or not?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Never read about news there</u>	<u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u>
a. Political figures and government affairs	47	44	9	*
b. Business and finance	36	55	9	*
c. Sports	39	51	9	*
d. The weather	57	34	9	*
e. People you know	54	36	9	1

**ASK IF FOREIGN-BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4, n=229):**

Q31 How many years have you lived in the (IF USBORN1A=3,4: continental) United States?

- 12 0-4 years
- 16 5-9 years
- 24 10-19 years
- 48 20+ years
- \* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF USBORN1A=2 (n=224):**

USBORN1B      What country were you born in? [OPEN-END; PRE-CODED]

3	Canada
1	China
*	Colombia
1	Cuba
1	Dominican Republic
1	El Salvador
1	Haiti
5	India
2	Jamaica
1	Korea
38	Mexico
1	Philippines
1	Pakistan
1	Russia
2	Vietnam
40	Other
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF FOREIGN BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4):**

Q32      When you think about the country you identify with the most—that is, the country in your heart you consider to be home—is it (READ AND ROTATE: the United States OR the country (IF USBORN1A=3,4: or territory)) where you were born?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS BOTH EQUALLY, PROBE ONCE: If you have to pick just ONE, which country do you identify with the most?

54	The United States
38	The country where you were born
5	Both equally (VOL.)
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF FOREIGN BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4):**

Q33      About how often do you visit the country (IF USBORN1A=3,4: or territory) where you were born? (READ)

2	Once a month or more often
7	Several times a year
23	Once a year
24	Every one to five years
26	Less often than that
17	Never (VOL.)
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF FOREIGN BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4):**

Q34      About how often do you talk on the telephone with friends or family living in the country (IF USBORN1A=3,4: or territory) where you were born? (READ)

10	Every day
32	Once a week
25	Once a month
9	Several times a year
5	Once a year
8	Less often than that
10	Never (VOL.)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF FOREIGN BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4):**

Q35 About how often do you have contact with friends or family living in the country (IF USBORN1A=3,4: or territory) where you were born through electronic devices such as email, text messages or Internet sites like Facebook? (READ)

- 20 Every day
- 17 Once a week
- 11 Once a month
- 7 Several times a year
- 2 Once a year
- 14 Less often than that
- 28 Never **(VOL)**
- 1 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK IF FOREIGN BORN (USBORN1A=2,3,4):**

Q36 About how often do you read about news and events, either in print or online, in the country (IF USBORN1A=3,4: or territory) where you were born? (READ)

- 21 Every day
- 20 Once a week
- 12 Once a month
- 6 Several times a year
- 3 Once a year
- 19 Less often than that
- 17 Never **(VOL)**
- 2 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK ALL:**

OWNRENT Do you own or rent your home?

- 66 Own
- 28 Rent
- 5 Other arrangement **(VOL.)**
- \* Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q44 Looking ahead FIVE YEARS from now, how likely is that you will move away from the local community where you are living now? Would you say it is very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

20	Very likely to move
20	Somewhat likely
24	Not too likely
34	Not at all likely to move
1	Will not move <b>(VOL)</b>
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

About how many members of your extended family live within an hour's drive of where you live now? (READ CHOICE CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY) IF ASKED WHAT IS MEANT BY "EXTENDED FAMILY": By extended family, I mean children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles.

54	Five or less <b>(NET)</b>
19	None
35	1 up to 5
46	Six or more <b>(NET)</b>
19	6 up to 10
13	11 up to 20
14	More than 20
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>