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## Feature Article: Migration Benefits Women Less Than Men

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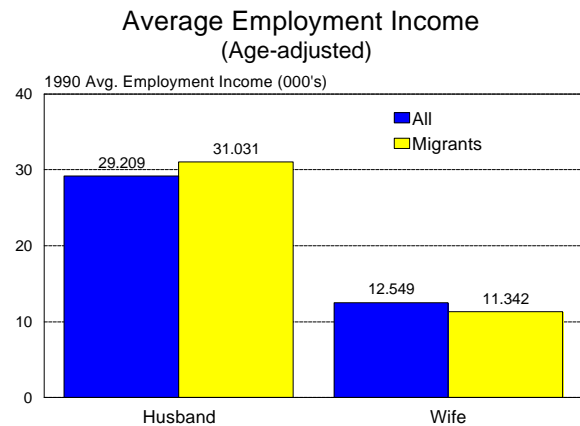
It is often postulated that migration between regions is motivated by the potential for gain. If the expected benefits of moving are greater than the costs, then the move will take place. These benefits and costs can be economic in nature such as the lure of a higher paying job, or non-economic such as being closer to family, friends and familiar surroundings.

While the true costs and benefits of migration can not be estimated precisely, some insight can be gained by studying the relationship between migration and income levels. If migration is thought to have a positive economic benefit for the individual, the rewards for migrating should be reflected in higher incomes for migrants compared to non-migrants. This aspect was recently studied by Statistics Canada using data from the 1991 Census.<sup>1</sup>

The findings indicated that there is an economic benefit to migrating, however, this benefit appears to accrue only to males. The age-adjusted average employment income of men aged 20 and over who had moved interprovincially within Canada between 1986 and 1991 was roughly 6% higher than that for all men. However, for women the figure was 4% lower than that for all women. The explanation given for the difference is that women are more likely to migrate to join or accompany their spouse at the expense of their employment.

The conclusion that interprovincial migration is economically less rewarding to women than to men is clearly revealed by examining employment incomes of husbands and wives separately. The age-adjusted average employment income of migrant husbands is 6% higher than that for all husbands, while

migrant wives show a 10% lower average employment income.



Migrants tend to have a higher level of education than non-migrants, which should result in better economic performance, and hence may explain why migrant husbands are better off than their non-migrant counterparts. When average employment income levels are adjusted for age and education, migrant husbands show a 1% lower average income than that for all husbands, and wives have an 18% lower average income. Thus, the average age/education adjusted employment family income is 5% lower for migrant families compared to all families.

Although it may appear from the statistics that there is an economic disadvantage to migration once age and education are accounted for, the Statistics Canada report cautions that the study is in no way conclusive since individual and family income both before and after migration are not known. It is possible that migrants had a very low family income prior to moving. However, the study does show that, relative to men, women tend to benefit less from migration.

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<sup>1</sup> Ram Bali, Y. Edward Shin, Michel Pouliot, **Canadians on the Move** (cat 96-309E), Statistics Canada and Prentice Hall, 1994.