



The Changing Structure of Australian Internal Migration: Regional and Cohort Dimensions

Dominic Brown*, **Salut Muhidin***, **Martin Bell*** & **Tom Wilson†**

(dominic.brown@uq.edu.au; s.muhammad@uq.edu.au; martin.bell@uq.edu.au,
tom.wilson@cdu.edu.au);

*Queensland Centre for Population Research, School of Geography, Planning and Architecture,
The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Queensland and †School for Social and Policy
Research, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Northern Territory

Internal migration consists of a complex mosaic of flows and counterflows between regions which shift over time in response to the changing national social and economic environment. These moves generate areas of population growth but lead to decline elsewhere, changing the pattern of human settlement. Research into internal migration in Australia to date has primarily adopted a cross sectional approach, focussing on patterns and characteristics during a single time interval, with few attempts at time series comparisons. The result has been a predilection for description rather than systematic analysis. Accordingly there have been few attempts to identify the underlying structure of internal migration flows over time. Recent analysis by Brown *et al.* (2006) has begun to address this issue with a focus on the system wide structure of migration. In this paper we advance this preliminary work and investigate the contributions of regional and cohort dimensions to the system-wide structure of migration in Australia. We achieve this by applying the battery of measures proposed by Bell *et al.* 2002 to the Australian Internal Migration database, a dataset containing information on migration flows between 69 temporally consistent regions for the five censuses between 1981 and 2001 disaggregated by age and sex. Results show marked changes over time in net migration probabilities by age as well as varying levels of connectivity between regions which combine to maintain, or in some cases radically alter, the structure of the system as a whole.