

Data

We used special U.S. Census county-to-county migration files for 1965-70, 1975-80, and 1985-90. For each migration interval, our variables were race (Black, non-Black), region, and 1993 metro status of origin and destination.¹ For 1985-90, we obtained education and poverty status as well, for the ending year.

We also used a custom tabulation of 1990-95 migration data from the March 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS). Although the CPS sample size makes it prudent to consider only aggregate metro-nonmetro and regional migration trends, the survey provided data on the post-1990 Census period in which Black regional migration trends appear to have accelerated.

Because of the 5-year migration data intervals, most of our tabulations are for persons age 5 years and older at the time of the Census or the CPS. Education data, however, are restricted to persons age 25 years and over, thereby excluding most people who have not yet completed their formal schooling.

¹ Although the special Census Bureau inter-county migration file for 1990 included data on both migrants and nonmigrants, the 1970 and 1980 files had data on migrants only. To derive the expected populations for migration rates for 1965-70 and 1975-80, it was necessary to estimate the nonmovers for 1970 and 1980 by subtracting movers from the appropriate total population age 5 and over by race and sex, as obtained from Census summary tape files.

Our basic data are migration streams, that is, the populations moving between various origins and destinations. Thus, we can consider both in- and outmigration as well as net movement, which is important for understanding processes of migration change.

We must be somewhat cautious in assessing the linkage of poverty or education with migration rates because we do not know what the levels of income and schooling were before migration. Impoverished persons may succeed in raising their income after they move and before the time of the Census. And some persons may complete college between the time of their move and the Census. So it is not entirely valid to assume that the post-migration poverty and education levels of movers would be the same had these individuals not moved. But it is informative to consider the degree of educational or poverty replacement experienced by a residence group through migration, that is, the extent to which the education or income poverty level already achieved or subsequently acquired by those who leave is replaced by those who come in (Voss and Fuguitt, 1991).

Because our major interest is in the more recent migration trends, we use a constant metro-nonmetro boundary delineation based on the 1990 Census. The results would be somewhat different had we used the non-metro delineation current at each time period. The major trends, however, should be the same (Fuguitt, Heaton, and Lichter, 1988).