

# Population Characteristics



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**Geographical  
Mobility:  
March 1975 to  
March 1976**

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## Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1976

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| Subject                                   | Detailed mobility | General mobility | Mobility for SMSA's             | Mobility for central cities of SMSA's | Regional mobility         |
|---|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>GENERAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS</b> |                   |                  |                                 |                                       |                           |
| Age:                                      |                   |                  |                                 |                                       |                           |
| Single years of age.....                  |                   | 5                |                                 |                                       |                           |
| Age groups.....                           | 4                 | 6,13,18,21,24    | 9,11,14,16,19,25,29,31,33,34,35 | 10,12,15,17,20,27,30                  | 6,7,31,33,37,38           |
| Race.....                                 | 1,32,36           | 2,3,40           | 2,3,8,22,26,31,33,34,35,40      | 23,28,39                              | 2,3,7,8,31,32,33,36,37,39 |
| Spanish origin.....                       | 1                 |                  | 22,26,34,35                     | 23,28                                 |                           |
| Years of school completed.....            |                   | 21               | 19,22,34,35                     | 20,23                                 | 37,38                     |
| Marital status.....                       |                   | 24               | 25,29                           | 30                                    |                           |
| Households and household relationship.... |                   |                  | 8,9                             | 10                                    | 8                         |
| Families.....                             | 32                | 13,18            | 11,14,16,31,33,34,35            | 12,15,17                              | 31,32,33,37,38            |
| By presence or ages of own children....   |                   | 18               | 14,16                           | 15,17                                 |                           |
| Unrelated individuals.....                |                   |                  | 33                              |                                       | 33                        |
| <b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS</b>           |                   |                  |                                 |                                       |                           |
| Employment status.....                    |                   | 24               | 25,26,34,35                     | 27,28                                 | 37,38                     |
| Occupation.....                           |                   |                  | 25,26                           | 27,28                                 | 37,38                     |
| Income in 1975:                           |                   |                  |                                 |                                       |                           |
| Persons.....                              |                   |                  | 29,34,35                        | 30                                    |                           |
| Families.....                             |                   | 18               | 16                              | 17                                    |                           |
| Receipt of public assistance.....         | 32                |                  | 31,34,35                        |                                       | 31,32                     |
| Above or below poverty level.....         |                   |                  | 33,34,35                        |                                       | 33,37,38                  |

# GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY: MARCH 1975 TO MARCH 1976

According to estimates from the Current Population Survey, 17.1 percent of the 208,069,000 persons 1 year old and over living in the United States in March 1976 were living at a different address 1 year earlier, in March 1975. This 17.1 percent represents 35,645,000 persons. An additional 1,148,000 persons moved to the United States during the 12 months prior to the survey.

Inclusion of the movers from abroad gives the United States a 1-year residential mobility rate of 17.7 percent for the 1975-76 period. Whether movers from abroad are included or excluded, the rate of residential mobility in the United States is high by international standards.<sup>1</sup> It is not increasing, however. There is evidence that the 1-year rate of residential mobility has been gradually declining in the United States.

Data on residential mobility over a 1-year period were first collected in 1948 and on an annual basis until 1971.<sup>2</sup> During this period the data showed few statistically significant year-to-year changes in the rate of moving. Combining the residential mobility data for several years increases the sample size sufficiently to produce statistically significant declines. For instance the average annual rate of residential mobility for the 4 years from 1968 to 1971 was less than the average annual rate of moving for the 4 years from 1958-61. The average annual rate of moving in 1958-61 was 20.1 percent, compared with 19.1 percent in 1968-71. The rate declined to 17.7 percent for the 12 months between March 1975 and March 1976. These rates include movers from abroad.

The decline in the rate of residential mobility appears to reflect very small declines in the rate of short-distance mobility and the rate of long-distance movement. The percent of population (1 year old and over) moving within counties was 10.8 in the 12-month period between March 1975 and March 1976, compared with 11.4 percent between March 1970 and March 1971.<sup>3</sup> The rate of interstate migration decreased from 3.4 percent to 3.0 percent between these two intervals.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry H. Long and Celia G. Boertlein, "The Geographical Mobility of Americans: An International Comparison," *Current Population Reports: Special Studies*, Series P-23, No. 64. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 235, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1971." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

These changes are small and represent very gradual processes at work. The failure of the interstate migration rate to increase is surprising. Since highly educated persons are more likely to move between States than persons with limited amounts of education and since the proportion of persons with high levels of education has been increasing, one would expect interstate migration rates to increase. In the past, rising levels of education have been associated with increases in the rate of interstate migration.

Between 1935-40 and 1955-60, interstate migration rates of men 25 to 34 years old increased nearly 81 percent. About 35 percent of this increase could be attributed to shifts in the educational distribution of this age group; that is, if the propensity to engage in interstate migration had not changed, the rate of interstate migration would still have risen between the late 1930's and the late 1950's simply because of an increase in the proportion of persons at upper educational levels. Most of the increase—65 percent—resulted from the fact that persons at each educational level were more likely to move between States in 1955-60 than in 1935-40.<sup>4</sup>

The tendency of rising levels of educational attainment to raise rates of long-distance migration has not been maintained in recent years. The relationship between educational level and propensity to engage in long-distance migration is changing somewhat (otherwise the rate of long-distance migration would be increasing). However, the sample size is not large enough to permit clear conclusions to be drawn about changes in the propensity to engage in long-distance migration on the part of persons at specific age and educational groups.

## METROPOLITAN AREAS

There is some evidence that in 1975-76 the nonmetropolitan parts of the country continued to gain population from metropolitan areas. The data from this survey indicate that between March 1975 and March 1976, 2,477,000 persons moved out of metropolitan areas of the United States and 2,081,000 moved into metropolitan areas, resulting in a net loss from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan areas of 396,000 persons 1 year old and over.

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<sup>4</sup> Larry H. Long, "Migration Differentials by Education and Occupation: Trends and Variations." *Demography* 10 (May 1973), pp. 243-258.

A net outmigration from metropolitan areas characterized the 1970-75 period but not the 1965-70 period. The migration report based on the March 1975 CPS compared mobility data for 1970-75 with data on mobility in 1965-70, collected in the 1970 census. That report contrasted the net immigration of 352,133 persons 5 years old and over experienced by metropolitan areas in 1965-70 with their net outmigration of 1,594,000 in 1970-75.<sup>5</sup> A large part of the net movement from metropolitan areas since 1970 represents continued urban development around the fringes of metropolitan areas.<sup>6</sup> Recent data have also indicated that many "rural" counties, particularly those with a large State university or a large proportion of older and retired persons or an especially attractive recreation area, have experienced net immigration from other parts of the United States in recent years.<sup>7</sup>

The data do not indicate a total population loss to metropolitan areas or a decline in urbanization. The above figures refer only to internal migration and do not include movement from abroad. The net outmigration from metropolitan areas in combination with changes in rates of natural increase and immigration, has brought about a lower rate of metropolitan growth in recent years,<sup>8</sup> but not a reversal of the longstanding trend toward increasing urbanization of the population of the United States. Even during the 1960's, migration from nonmetropolitan areas accounted for a relatively small amount of the population change in metropolitan areas. Between 1960 and 1970, only about one-ninth of the total population growth in metropolitan areas was the result of net immigration from nonmetropolitan parts of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 285, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1975." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> About 5/8 of the total net immigration to nonmetropolitan counties is to counties adjacent to metropolitan areas. See Calvin L. Beale, "The Revival of Population Growth in Nonmetropolitan America," ERS-605. Washington, D.C.: Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, June 1975.

<sup>7</sup> Calvin L. Beale, "A Further Look at Nonmetropolitan Population Growth Since 1970," paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, New York City, August 1976.

<sup>8</sup> For rates of population change in SMSA's for 1950-60 and 1960-70, see table 32 in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1970, Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1, U.S. Summary. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972. For estimated population change in SMSA's for 1970-73, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 537, "Estimates of the Population of Metropolitan Areas, 1972 and 1973, and Components of Change, Since 1970." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974. (Net migration figures in this report include movement from abroad by U.S. citizens and immigration.)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing: 1970, PHC(2)-1, General Demographic Trends for Metropolitan Areas, 1960 to 1970*, U.S. Summary. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

## CITIES AND SUBURBS

Central cities of metropolitan areas continued to experience net outmigration between 1975 and 1976, just as they had in the 1960's<sup>10</sup> and in the first 5 years of the 1970's.<sup>11</sup> Central cities lost 4,605,000 persons and gained only 2,650,000 persons through internal migration, for a net loss of 1,955,000. Of those leaving the central cities, three times as many went to the suburbs (3,499,000) as went to nonmetropolitan areas (1,106,000).

The balance of SMSA's (the mostly suburban part of metropolitan areas outside the central cities) continued to experience net immigration. These areas gained 4,753,000 persons from central cities and nonmetropolitan areas and lost 3,193,000 persons for a net gain of 1,560,000. Most migrants who left the suburbs (balances of SMSA's) went to the central cities, but large numbers also went to nonmetropolitan areas (1,822,000 as compared to 1,371,000).

Persons moving to the cities and suburbs of metropolitan areas more frequently moved to suburban areas than to the central cities. In fact, 50 percent more of those persons leaving nonmetropolitan areas went to the balance of SMSA's (1,254,000) than to central cities (828,000).

## MIGRATION DIFFERENTIALS

Data collected from the 1976 March Current Population Survey indicate that persons engaging in the different forms of residential mobility differ from persons who do not move in several ways. Typically, rates of residential mobility over a 1-year interval reach their peak at ages 20 to 24; at this age group the rate of moving within the United States in 1975-76 was 38.0 percent, compared with 17.1 percent for all persons 1 year old and over. Children 1 to 4 years of age also have high rates of moving, reflecting the high mobility of their young parents. After the peak is reached at ages 20 to 24, the rates of moving steadily decline with advancing age, until the mobility rates level off after age 55 to between 5 and 7 percent.

Migration patterns differ by race as well. Whites and Blacks have nearly the same percent movers (17.0 and 18.0 percent, respectively). Blacks, however, were more likely than Whites to move within the same SMSA and less likely than Whites to move between SMSA's.

A clear relationship between labor force status and mobility status is shown by the survey data. The mobility rates of both civilian males and females were decidedly higher for those persons currently unemployed than for

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, tables 11 and 11A.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 285, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1975." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

those employed. Persons not in the labor force had much lower mobility rates than either of these groups. Of the 914,000 persons in the Armed Forces, fully 43.2 percent had changed residence in the past year, continuing the trend for Armed Forces personnel to have the highest mobility rates of any of the labor force status groups. Labor force status refers to the time of the survey and therefore represents status at the end rather than the beginning of the 12-month mobility interval.

Occupation shows a somewhat less consistent relationship to mobility status. Among nonfarm workers, mobility rates are about the same across all occupations with the exception that professional workers have a higher mobility rate than managerial workers. Farm workers have, by far, the lowest mobility rates of any of the occupations. A limitation of the statistics is that occupation is measured at the end of the migration interval; for some persons occupation changed, but the data do not allow one to relate occupational and geographical mobility.

The survey data indicate that a person's educational attainment influences the likelihood of migration. College graduates are more likely to move between counties or States than high school graduates who, in turn, are more likely to move between counties or States than persons with only a grade school education.

The presence and ages of own children in a family influence the likelihood of moving. Among married men 14 to 34 years old living with their wives at the survey date, those with no own children under 18 were more residentially mobile than those with own children under 18. Also, the husband-wife families (husband 14 to 54 years old) whose children were all under 6 years of age were more residentially mobile than those with children 6 or older. Thus the presence of school-age children acts to reduce the geographical mobility of these families.

The data in this report are for individuals, and therefore, do not relate directly to the migration of families. For many purposes, the mobility of family heads can be used as an adequate indication of the mobility of families because usually family members have the same mobility status as the head. However, some families were formed during the migration interval, and others were dissolved. Still other families experienced change in composition as a result of persons joining the family or leaving it.

## REVISION OF PROCESSING PROCEDURES

As a result of the recent acquisition by the Bureau of more modern electronic data processing equipment and the technological improvements in processing methods, the Bureau found it necessary to restructure the system used in processing data from the March 1976 Current Population

Survey. This activity presented the Bureau with the opportunity for introducing more refined editing and imputation procedures into the processing phase.

Experience has shown, however, that when new procedures are introduced into a data processing system some changes in the eventual results must be expected. The major processing revisions affecting migration are discussed in the section below on "Nonresponses and Allocations." Revisions affecting household, family, and marital characteristics involved more definitive techniques for allocating missing ages of children and for identifying married couples within households. Under the new system there are 37,000 more own children under 18 in families; 50,000 more households; 100,000 more husband-wife families; and 100,000 fewer families with a male head who had no spouse present. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 296, "Households and Families by Type: March 1976," for a more complete discussion of these changes. Revision to the 1975 income and poverty data are due entirely to changes in the magnitude of the nonsampling error in the previous estimating procedure (i.e., certain response, enumeration, and processing errors). These revisions resulted in a slight increase in the estimate of median family income (\$66 in 1974) and a decrease in the estimate of the number of persons in poverty (from 24.3 to 23.4 million in 1974). See U.S. Bureau of the Census, **Current Population Reports**, Series P-60, No. 103, "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1975 and 1974 Revisions," for an extensive discussion of these changes and the imputation scheme used to provide income for nonrespondents.

## NONRESPONSES AND ALLOCATIONS

In the March 1976 CPS, no information was recorded for approximately 5 percent of the 49,000 households because no interview could be obtained during the week in which the enumeration was conducted. In order to account for these households, the weights assigned to other sample households of similar characteristics residing in the same areas were increased accordingly. In addition, complete mobility information was not reported for about 6 percent of all persons 14 years old and over and for all persons under 14 years of age. Overall, about 26 percent of all persons 1 year old and over who were in interviewed households did not report complete mobility information.

In these cases, missing mobility data are allocated by values obtained from other family members if available or from other active respondents with similar demographic characteristics. The previous residence assigned to a nonrespondent is that obtained for another person with similar demographic characteristics who did respond and who has been selected systematically in the order in which individual records are processed. Characteristics used in these allocations (when mobility data for other family members

are not available) are age, race, years of school completed, metropolitan status, and State of current residence. (State of previous residence is used instead of State of current residence if State but not place or county of previous residence is provided by the respondent.)

#### RELATED REPORTS

Statistics on the mobility of the population have been collected annually in the Current Population Survey since 1948. Tables similar to some of those in this report were published for the period 1970-75 in Series P-20, No. 285, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1975;" for the period 1970-74 in Series P-20, No. 273; and for the period 1970-73 in Series P-20, No. 262. Figures for 1970-71 were issued in Series P-20,

No. 235, and similar statistics were published in this series each year beginning with the report for 1947-48.

Statistics on geographic mobility of the population for cities, counties, SMSA's, urbanized areas, State economic areas, States, divisions, regions, and the United States appear in Volume I of the 1970 Census of Population (based on State of birth or residence 5 years before the census). Detailed statistics on mobility status by race and sex for State economic areas, SMSA's, States, divisions, regions, and the United States appear in Volume II, Subject Reports: PC(2)-2A, **State of Birth**; PC(2)-2B, **Mobility for States and the Nation**; PC(2)-2C, **Mobility for Metropolitan Areas**; PC(2)-2D, **Lifetime and Recent Migration**; PC(2)-2E, **Migration Between State Economic Areas**; and PC(2)-7E, **Occupation and Residence in 1965**. Some other subject reports of the 1970 census present statistics on mobility status in relation to the main subject of the report.