

Population Characteristics

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Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1978



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SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.
- B Base less than 75,000.
- ... Not applicable.

Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1978

The March 1978 Current Population Survey (CPS) included questions on respondents' county and city of residence 3 years earlier, in March of 1975. Comparing residence at these two dates reveals, for the most part, a continuation of major migration patterns observed over the last 5 to 10 years.

For example, internal migration is continuing to shift population out of the Northern States into the South and West. Secondly, the data indicate that more persons moved from metropolitan areas than to them between 1975 and 1978; this pattern was first observed in the early 1970's, and there is no evidence of its reversal. Finally, central cities of metropolitan areas continue, in the aggregate, to have net outmigration. Each of these migration trends is discussed below, emphasizing when they first appeared and paying special attention to differences between Blacks and Whites in patterns of migration. Major migration differentials by age, educational level, and other characteristics are also identified.

REGIONAL EXCHANGES

In the 1975-78 period, the Northeast and North Central regions continued to have net outmigration in the inter-regional exchange of population within the United States. In this 3-year period, the Northeast experienced a net outmigration of 699,000 persons 3 years old and over. Similarly, the North Central region had a net outmigration of 687,000 persons 3 years old and over. The net outmigration (excluding movement from abroad) in the 1970's from these two regions continues a pattern existing in the 1965-70 period.¹

The other two major regions—the South and the West—continued to have a net population gain due to internal migration. The South's net immigration from 1975 to 1978 was 1,009,000 persons 3 years old and over, and the West had a net immigration of 376,000 persons during this period. Both regions had net immigration in the 1960's, but the South had net outmigration in the 1950's and during other intercensal decades of the 20th century.² The West has had substantial net immigration during the 20th century.³ The important change is that in the 1970's, the South's net immigration has come to exceed that of the West. Clearly, over the last two decades net internal migration has been acting to redistribute population to the Sunbelt States in

general, with some acceleration of net immigration to the Southern States.

In terms of interregional movements, Black migration patterns in the 1970's have tended to more closely resemble White migration patterns than was the case in the 1960's.⁴ For example, in the 1960's the Northeast had net immigration of Blacks, and the South had net outmigration of Blacks. For Whites, these two regions had opposite migration patterns; the Northeast had net outmigration and the South had net immigration of Whites. In the 1970's, the Northeast has changed to net outmigration of Blacks (along with net outmigration of Whites), and the South no longer has net outmigration of Blacks.

In fact, the South probably has had net immigration of Blacks (along with net immigration of Whites), although data from the 1978 survey does not, by itself, confirm this migration pattern. Still, it is important for analytical purposes to observe that similar surveys taken in 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977 showed the same general pattern, with the number of Black migrants to the South seemingly larger—but not by a statistically significant amount—than the number of Black outmigrants.⁵ Also, it is important to observe that population estimates based on administrative records (and therefore not subject to sampling variability) showed that between 1970 and 1975 the South had net immigration of Blacks.⁶ These various pieces of evidence strongly indicate that the South does, in fact, have a small net immigration of Blacks.

METROPOLITAN AREAS

Between 1975 and 1978 the number of persons moving to metropolitan areas from elsewhere in the United States was smaller than the number moving from metropolitan areas. This net outmigration from metropolitan areas has been a characteristic pattern of the 1970's. It was first observed in data from the March 1973 CPS, which asked respondents

⁴Bowles, Gladys K., and Everett S. Lee, *Net Migration of the Population, 1960-70, By Age, Sex, and Color*, Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia, 1977, pp. 3-4.

⁵U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 262, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1973," 1974, pp. 55-56; No. 273, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1974," 1974, pp. 66-67; No. 285, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1975," 1975, pp. 61-62; No. 305, "Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1976," 1977, pp. 6-7; and No. 320, "Geographical Mobility: March 1975 to March 1977," 1978, pp. 6-7; Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-23, No. 67, "Population Estimates by Race, for States: July 1, 1973 and 1975," Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978.

¹U.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, p. 3.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Bicentennial Edition, Part 1*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

³Ibid.

about their residence in March 1970.⁷ The March 1978 CPS also used a 3-year migration interval and showed that metropolitan outmigrants still outnumber metropolitan inmigrants (excluding movement from abroad). In the 1975-78 period, 5,321,000 persons 3 years old and over moved from SMSA's (standard metropolitan statistical areas as defined in 1970) to nonmetropolitan territory, and only 4,220,000 persons 3 years old and over moved in the opposite direction. The net outmigration from metropolitan areas is an important change from the 1960's, when there was a net movement to metropolitan territory.⁸

The net outmigration from metropolitan areas is accounted for entirely by Whites. Between 1975 and 1978, the number of Black migrants to metropolitan areas approximately equaled the number moving from metropolitan areas. This approximate equality represents for Blacks some change from the 1960's, when metropolitan areas had net immigration of Blacks.⁹

In none of the four major regions of the country do metropolitan areas have net immigration from the non-metropolitan territory. In the Northeast and North Central regions, metropolitan areas are shown by the 1978 survey to have had significant net outmigration in the 1975-78 period. For the South and the West, the survey indicated no significant difference between the number of migrants to and the number of migrants from metropolitan areas in that period.

For the Nation as a whole and for each of the four major regions, central cities of metropolitan areas had net outmigration from 1975 to 1978. In the South and West, however, the net outmigration from central cities was partially offset by net immigration to suburbs (the part of SMSA's lying outside the central cities, according to their 1970 boundaries).

MIGRATION DIFFERENTIALS

Movers typically have different characteristics than persons who do not move. The impact of mobility on the areas of origin and destination may, therefore, change the demographic character of these areas even if the flows into and out of a particular area balance out. If an area has a net loss of population, the movers are likely to be younger and better educated than those left behind—a greater loss to the area of origin than the mere numbers would imply.

Age. The highest mobility rates are usually found for persons in their twenties. Many are establishing their own households, starting new jobs, finishing school or service in the Armed Forces, or have been recently married. In the later twenties, many are buying a house or moving to larger living quarters because of the addition of children to their family, or are moving to housing more convenient to schools rather

than to social and recreational amenities that attract single persons and young childless couples. In the 3-year period between March 1975 and March 1978, 63.4 percent of the persons 25 to 29 years old (in 1978) and 59.0 percent of those 20 to 24 years old had changed residence as compared to only 34.2 percent of the total population 3 years old and over at the end of the period. Young children also have high mobility rates reflecting the high mobility of their young parents (53.4 percent of children 3 and 4 years of age and 41.4 percent of those 5 to 9 years old in 1978 had moved in the 3-year period).

Despite the large numbers of retired persons moving to the Sunbelt and other resort areas, they are large in numbers only in terms of their impact on those areas. Only a small percentage of the persons over 55 made changes of residence in the 3-year period. Fewer than 20 percent of the persons 55 years old and over in 1978 had moved between 1975 and 1978: 16.6 percent of those 55 to 64 years old, 14.6 percent of those 65 to 74 years old, and only 11.8 percent of those 75 years old and over.

Persons in their forties and their teenage children have mobility rates intermediate between the extremes of the young adults and the older citizens. These adults in their middle years are more likely to be established in their careers, to be settled in a neighborhood and a house that they own, and are less inclined to move because they have more invested emotionally as well as monetarily in their present location.

Education. Educational attainment is another good predictor of residential mobility. Between March 1975 and March 1978, only 22.5 percent of those persons with 8 or less years of school completed had moved to a different house in the United States, while 33.4 percent of those with 1 to 4 years of high school and 41.5 percent of those with at least some college had moved. For nearly every type of move, those with at least some college were the most likely to move and those with only an elementary school education were the least likely. This relationship holds true whether the move was within the same SMSA or between counties, SMSA's or States. Only one exception was found to this general rule. Persons with 1 to 4 years of high school are equally likely to move within the same county as those with 1 or more years of college; persons with only an elementary school education were less likely to make this type of move. Persons with some college were most likely to move from central cities to the suburbs and were also most likely to move from the suburbs to the central cities.

When distance moved is examined for each of these three broad educational groups some additional differences emerge. Clearly, movers with some college are more likely to move long distances than movers with fewer years of school completed. Persons with some college are more likely to move to a different county than within the same county (20.2 percent and 21.2 percent, respectively). Persons with only an elementary school education, however, are less than half as likely to move to a different county (7.1 percent as compared with 15.3 percent moving within the same

⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 262, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1973," Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1970, Subject Reports*, PC(2)-2C, "Mobility for Metropolitan Areas," Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

⁹ *Ibid.*

county). Persons with 1 to 4 years of high school but no college are more than one and a half times as likely to move within the same county (21.0 percent) than between counties (12.4 percent).

Education contributes to mobility by reducing the costs of moving—both psychic and economic. Because college-educated persons usually have higher salaries, they can more easily afford moving costs. College-educated persons are also the group most likely to be transferred by their company, which in effect may eliminate the economic cost of moving entirely or even result in an economic gain through increased salary. Also the better educated individual is more likely to have information about alternative destinations in terms of labor markets, social and recreational amenities, and housing availability. This greater degree of information about other areas makes it easier for the more educated person to consider moving as an alternative to staying in the present area.

Race. Patterns of moving vary by race as well as by age and education. Between March 1975 and March 1978, Blacks and Whites changed residences at about the same rates (35.4 percent and 34.0 percent, respectively). Blacks, however, were more likely to have moved within the same county (26.3 percent) than Whites (19.7 percent). Whites, on the other hand, were more likely to make long-distance moves than Blacks. During the 3-year period, 14.3 percent of the Whites moved to a different county—7.8 percent to a different county in the same State and 6.6 percent to a different State. Meanwhile, only 9.1 percent of the Blacks moved between counties—4.5 percent within the same State and 4.5 percent between States. Furthermore, 74.3 percent of Blacks who moved to a different house in the United States during the 3-year period were moving within the same county. In contrast only 57.9 percent of the White movers were making that kind of move.

Local and long-distance moves can also be analyzed by looking at movement within and between SMSA's. The data, once again, support the theory that Blacks are more likely to make short-distance moves than Whites—22.7 percent of Blacks had moved within the same SMSA as compared with 15.2 percent of Whites. In addition, 64.1 percent of all residence changes by Blacks were within the same SMSA, while only 44.7 percent of the moves by Whites were of this type. Blacks were three times as likely as Whites to have moved within the central city of an SMSA (15.8 percent versus 5.0 percent); Whites were twice as likely to have moved between houses in the suburbs of the same SMSA (6.9 percent) as Blacks (3.4 percent). Movement between central cities and suburbs were about equal for both races; both were twice as likely to move from the central city to the suburbs as the reverse.

INTERVAL LENGTH

The mobility questions that are used in the March CPS do not measure number of moves during a given time period but estimate the number of persons who lived in a different house at the beginning of the period than at the survey date. In other words, the number of *movers* is estimated, not the

number of *moves*. Persons who moved more than once are counted only once; and persons who moved out of their current residence but returned by the end of the period are not counted as movers at all. As a result, a count of the number of *movers* in a shorter period more nearly approximates the number of *moves* during that period than is measured in a longer interval which more nearly measures the percentage of the population that is affected by mobility.

The effect of repeat movers on short-interval mobility rates can be illustrated by comparing the 1-year mobility rate from the March 1976 CPS with the 3-year rate derived from data collected in the 1978 survey. According to estimates from the 1976 survey, 17.1 percent of the 208,069,000 persons 1 year old and over were living in a different house in the United States 1 year earlier. By comparison, the 1978 survey shows that 34.2 percent of the 204,883,000 persons 3 years old and over were living in a different house in the United States on that date 3 years earlier.

MIGRATION UNIVERSE

The mobility data in this report are derived from the answers to questions on residence 3 years before the survey date and the geographic location of the respondent's current residence. A facsimile of the questions on previous residence is shown below. These questions were asked for all members of the survey household who were 14 years old and over on the survey date. Previous residence for persons under 14 years old was allocated based on the responses of their parents or other members of the household. (See the section "Non-responses and Allocations" for a further discussion of the allocation of mobility data for children and other persons for whom no response or only partial responses to the mobility questions were given.)

The universe sampled includes all civilian noninstitutional households and members of the Armed Forces living off base or with their families on base. (For a more detailed discussion of the sample selection and limitations of the sample and survey design, see the appendix section "Source and Reliability of the Estimates.")

<p>54. Was . . . living in this house 3 years ago; that is, on March 1, 1975?</p> <p>Yes <input type="radio"/> (Skip to 57) No <input type="radio"/> (Ask 55)</p>
<p>55. Where did . . . live on March 1, 1975?</p> <p>a. Name of State, foreign country, U.S. possession, etc. <input type="text"/></p> <p>b. Name of county <input type="text"/></p>
<p>56. Did . . . live inside the limits of a city, town, village, etc.?</p> <p>Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Name of city, town, etc. <input type="text"/></p>

NOTE

In the past the Census Bureau has designated a head of household to serve as the central reference person for the collection and tabulation of data for individual members of the household (or family). However, recent social changes have resulted in a trend toward recognition of more equal status for all members of the household (or family), making the term "head" less relevant in the analysis of household and family data. As a result, the Bureau is currently developing new techniques of enumeration and data presentation which will eliminate the concept of "head." While much of the data in this report are based on the concept of "head," methodology for future Census Bureau reports will reflect a gradual movement away from this traditional practice.
