

Comparing Migration Patterns and Consequences across Cohorts

Previous research demonstrates that migration patterns differ across groups. Migration is also shaped by broader processes of social change such as political and economic shifts, which take place at various levels of interaction, including local, national, and, in some instances, global scales. This research compares migration patterns across two cohorts using NLSY data (NLSY79 and NLSY97) in order to compare patterns of migration across these two cohorts and examine how they differ on various dimensions, including individual characteristics, migration types, and with regard to key life transitions such as entry into the labor market. Beyond group and cohort differences, other key interests include the extent to which community level attributes and/or broader social forces influence patterns of migration in conjunction with individual-level processes noted to be influential in previous research.

This research compares migration patterns across two cohorts, with special attention to the consequences of differential patterns for socioeconomic status among social categories (e.g. racial/ethnic groups and gender) and how they vary. Using the NLSY79 and NLSY97, we examine four key questions: 1) Have the characteristics of those who migrate changed between the two cohorts (with particular attention to gender and race composition and education levels)? 2) How have the patterns of migration for these age groups changed over time (highlighting size, rural-urban migration, migration distance, migration types and duration of migration)? 3) If the migration patterns have not changed, has the transition from education to the labor market changed for the 1997 cohort (time of the transition, labor market participation)? 4) If the migration patterns have changed, has it altered the transition from education to the labor market for the 1997 cohort?

These questions build on one another, as the answers to the first two questions regarding patterns and characteristics of migration change among racial-ethnic groups and how they vary across the two cohorts provide information vital to understanding the latter two questions (relation with labor market transition). In answering these questions, several key factors will be considered. These include types of migration

(beginning with primary and repeat migration, and further sub-dividing into onward and return migration within repeat migration), duration of residence, distance of migration, other individual and family background variables, and multilevel characteristics including community attributes (metropolitan and nonmetropolitan). For instance, individual level characteristics include age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, health, marital status and employment status. Family background includes family income and household composition (i.e. with or without children). As to county level characteristics, population size of the county, unemployment rate, poverty rate, and local amenity should be taken into account.

Though some previous research focused on comparative studies of migration patterns, to the best knowledge of the authors, none compared migration patterns between the two cohorts of the NLSY. A systematic comparison between these two cohorts in their migration patterns in their youth (between ages 14 and 24) will enrich our understanding in this field. In addition, migration is not a phenomenon on its own, but is largely shaped by both local, national, even global social, economic and political changes and also itself influences these changes over time. For example, migration patterns are not only shaped by period effects (such as economic restructuring, oil crisis), but also by cohort effects (baby boom in our study). These two cohorts, the first was born between 1957 and 1964 (NLSY79), and the latter between 1980 and 1984 (NLSY97) may vary quite a bit as a result of broader changes taking place. Therefore, understanding migration patterns over time and across cohorts are important both for the knowledge of its own and for its relation with other social economic changes such as the transition from education to labor market in this research.

This research will focus on migration variables that have significant impacts on migrants' education-labor market transition and social economic situations. These variables include types of migration (primary and repeat migration), duration of migration and distance of migration. All these variables and other migration patterns will be also compared along race/ethnicity lines (i.e. among Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks).

Previous research finds that both primary and repeat migration patterns, and onward and return migration differ among race/ethnic groups. For instance, Wilson (2005) showed that whites are significantly more likely to move onward than are blacks or Hispanics after controlling key socioeconomic factors. This research extends these findings and explores the importance of types of migration, especially repeat migration in the migration patterns and consequences among different race/ethnic groups.

Duration of residence matters not only because it is an important element of migration pattern itself (Toney, 1976; Bailey, 1989), but also because it affects the economic consequences of the migrants (Chiswick, 1978 and 1980; Borjas, 1990 and 1992). Previous results show that internal migrants to a state initially earn about ten percent less than demographically comparable natives, but this wage differential disappears within a few years (Borjas et al, 1990). Moreover, the results also show that the initial wage disadvantage suffered by internal migrants was found to be dependent upon the distance moved and economic conditions in the destination labor market.

Distance of migration is a key factor in determining the initial wage disadvantage suffered by migrants. Tolnay (2003) found that whites tend to migrate farther than blacks, which is consistent with the author's previous research using NLSY79 that whites migrate farther than both blacks and Hispanics. No research, to the knowledge of the authors, has explored the distance traveled in repeat migration among different race/ethnic groups. This research will bridge this gap by exploring the distance patterns of primary and repeat migration among whites, blacks, and Hispanics which will in turn illuminate the following research on migration consequences. It will be interesting to see if people migrate in a longer or shorter distance over time (across cohorts) and its implications for individual migration consequences.

The very nature of migration suggests a multilevel analysis including both the characteristics of individual/household level and county/state level. Previous research suggests that although individual characteristics are the most important determinants

of migration, migratory behavior is more fully explained by multilevel variables rather than a single-level variable (Lee, 2002). It is therefore important to consider county and state level characteristics. For instance, in comparison of the interregional migrants' earning levels between blacks and whites, research shows that factors linked with non-southern ghettos are more harmful than a rural southern origin (Adams and Nestel, 1976). To fully understand migration behavior and its consequences, it is important to analyze the characteristics of both the areas of origin and destination. Therefore, variables such as population size, unemployment rate, poverty rate, GDP per capita and local amenity of both origin and destination will be included in the analysis. The use of multilevel analysis in explaining migratory behavior, especially repeat migration (onward and return migration), among different race/ethnic groups will be another contribution of this research.

Preliminary results show some group-based differences, though further exploration is required. This research is based on the author's ongoing dissertation. Some preliminary results show that the migration patterns differ between the two cohorts with regard to the general migration rate, between sexes, and racial and ethnic groups. For instance, the younger or more recent cohort (from NLSY97) has migrated more frequently than the other. Males are more likely to migrate than females across both cohorts. And, across both cohorts, Whites are more likely to migrate than Hispanics and Blacks, but the differences decreases around age 20 for the younger cohort. Differences in employment rate were also found, as the younger or more recent cohort tended to be employed at greater rates across different types of employment including being self-employed. The primary consequence of migration to be investigated relates to labor market attainment, with particular emphasis on wages. Later analyses will integrate community characteristics as another potential source of variation as appropriate.