Mobility Disparity between Race/Ethnic Groups:

Onward and Return Migrations

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INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on three important and unique features of migration that have been rarely or insufficiently examined in previous migration studies. First, using longitudinal data, this study examines migration as a process that may involve a number of migrations over a period of time. Further, this approach separates repeat migrations including onward and repeat migrations which have been examined using limited data.

Several empirical studies show only a small part the migration process because they rely on limited data. A large portion of return and onward migrations are excluded in these analyses, and some return migrations may be wrongly defined as onward migration.

Second, this study contributes to alleviating the deficiency of research on the extent to which racial and ethnic differences exist across these important forms of migration. The lack of national panel data on Hispanics and blacks made it impossible for early migration studies to investigate their primary and repeat migration.

A third unique characteristic of this study is an examination of the effects of other individual level characteristics and place characteristics on repeat migrations. The inclusion of Federal Information Processing Standard codes, known as FIPS codes, to identify counties of residence for NLSY79 respondents allows the merging of place characteristics from census and other county level data sources.

METHOD

Data: The national longitudinal survey of youth 79 (NLSY79)

This study uses data from The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 79

(NLSY79) to examine the effects of individual level and place level characteristics on

migration. The NLSY79 is one of the longest running panels in the United States and its

relatively early oversampling of Hispanics and blacks makes it particularly valuable for

race/ethnic comparisons. In addition to nationally representative samples of 6,111

respondents, the panel includes supplementary subsamples of minority groups including

2,172 blacks and 1,480 Hispanics.

The NLSY79 respondents were surveyed yearly for 16 surveys through 1994.

Since 1994, interviews have been conducted every other year. The relatively short

intervals between interviews (e.g., 1 year and 2 years) enables the detection of

migrations missed with the typical five-year questions asked in the decennial census and

many cross-sectional surveys (Long and Boertlein 1990; Xu-Doeve 2007).

Person-period and hierarchical approach

For the analysis of the longitudinal data, which includes recurring multiple

events, this study transforms the data set into person-periods. Person- periods provide

an effective way for measuring whether an event occurs during a time interval and for

introducing variables measured at the beginning of the person-period to examine their

effect on happenings during the interval (DaVanzo and Morrison 1981; Schoumaker and Hayford 2004). Therefore, in the data set, individuals experience independent risk of migration during each of their qualifying person-periods.

However, the data of repeated observations may have the problem of intra-correlation. For this non-independent or nonrandomized observation problem in analysis for repeatedly observed occasions, a multilevel model, e.g., the hierarchical linear model (HLM), provides a good solution to this problem. This method corrects biases in parameter estimates resulting from intra-coefficient effects (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). In a multilevel model, each person-period or each observation (Level 1 unit) is considered nested in a person (Level 2 unit).

In HLM model, random effects are assumed normally distributed across person-periods, Level 1 units. But, the outcomes of this data have multinominal form, where the error of outcome is not normally distributed. For this problem, the hierarchical generalized linear model (HGLM) of the multinominal model is employed in the analysis for repeat migration.

RESULTS

The results of this study demonstrate several important findings, which add to the understanding of migration. The odds of whites are the highest in onward migrations

even after controlling all place attachment, demographic and life cycle, and socioeconomic factors. However, there are no significant differences between whites and Hispanics and blacks. The odds ratios of blacks and Hispanics to whites are relatively smaller than those in the other types of migration. This might suggest that unlike whites, minorities tend to search for opportunities in their prior residence.

The results of this study discover several different effects in return migration. The negative associations between return migration and socioeconomic variables such as education and household income are compatible with the concept of 'failed migration' (Newbold 2001; Newbold and Bell 2001; Hunt 2003). Migrants with low socioeconomic status are more likely to fail to get limited opportunities than the counterparts. Another interesting finding is the differences in the effects of age groups. The regression results of return migration indicate that return migrations increases with age as opposed to the pattern of declining with onward migrations.

* Tables will be presented in the completed paper.