Introduction

Few populations in the world are as mobile as the American population. In fact, on average Americans undertake more residential moves during their lifetimes than do the residents of any other industrialized nation, and are especially likely to make short-distance moves. While residential mobility would seem to be a pretty innocuous activity, it actually has important repercussions for both individuals and populations. For example, we know that neighborhoods, counties, and metropolitan areas vary in terms of the quality of housing, type of social interactions, economic opportunities, and services (e.g., schools, police protection, etc.) they offer to their residents. As a result, mobility between different geographic units has a potentially important impact on the life chances available to individuals and families. Mobility is also important because it often entails the disruption of established social ties and daily routines, a fact that has particularly profound repercussions for children. Finally, mobility has become an important life course transition and the place of residence has become an important marker of a person's social status, increasing the general interest in the study of mobility.

In this module you will have the opportunity to explore the frequency of different types of residential moves carried out by Americans. You will examine some of the basic determinants of residential mobility by looking at variations in different types of mobility by age, marital status, education, and housing tenure. Finally, you will have an opportunity to test hypotheses, drawn from a popular theoretical perspective, about racial differences in residential mobility.

Learning objectives

1. Explore the basic patterns and determinants of residential mobility and migration.
2. Practice collapsing and omitting categories of variables.
3. Develop hypotheses based on an existing theory.
4. Identify independent and dependent variables implied in an hypothesis.
5. Investigate and describe the relationship between two variables and assess whether the relationship supports or contradicts the hypothesis being tested.
6. Understand the criteria for causation and the rationale for including control variables.
7. Investigate and describe a partial relationship between two variables.

Data information

For this exercise you will use a data set called **mobility_CPS2k**. This data set contains information from the 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS) for over 270 million Americans over the age of one. It contains a number of variables crucial to any study of residential mobility and internal migration. Definitions for all of these variables and their categories are available on the "Important Definitions" page.

Part I. Basic patterns residential mobility and migration

A. Start your exploration of residential mobility and migration by using the dataset, **mobility_CPS2k**, to examine the frequency of various types of residential moves. Complete the following table displaying the distribution of the variable *mobility*.

Distribution of residential mobility and migration, 1999-2000

| Type of mobility/migration	%
Same House	
Different house in same county	
Different house in same state	
Different House in different state	
Moved from abroad	
Total	

Questions:
1. According to this chart, what percentage of people carried out some type of move between 1999 and 2000?

2. What percentage of people could be considered true migrants in 2000 (i.e., moved to a different geographic entity between 1999 and 2000)?

3. What was the most common type of move? What was the least common? What general principle can you glean from the relative frequency of different types of moves?

For the next problem we will combine all types of moves to distinguish between two groups: those who remained in the same house between 1999 and 2000 and those who made any kind of move. You can do this by doing the following:
- *Go to the "Modify" pull-down menu in StudentChip*
- *Select "Combine" and then click on "Mobility" to specify that you want to combine some categories of th mobility variable.*
- *Holding down the SHIFT key, click on all of the categories that indicate some kind of move (SameCnty, SameStat, DiffStat, and Abroad). If all goes well, all four of these categories should be highlighted. Then click on "Select."*
- *In the new box that opens up, type in the name for your new mobility category, "AnyMove." Now the variable "Mobility" should just have two categories, "SameHous" and "AnyMove."*

B. As noted in the introduction to this module, residential mobility tends to coincide with various life course transitions. This link is evident in the connection between age and mobility. Using the same dataset, *mobility_CPS2k*, look at the frequency of different types of moves across different ages. Focusing on short distance mobility (mobility between households but within the same county), complete the following bar chart.

Percent making any type of move, 1999-2000
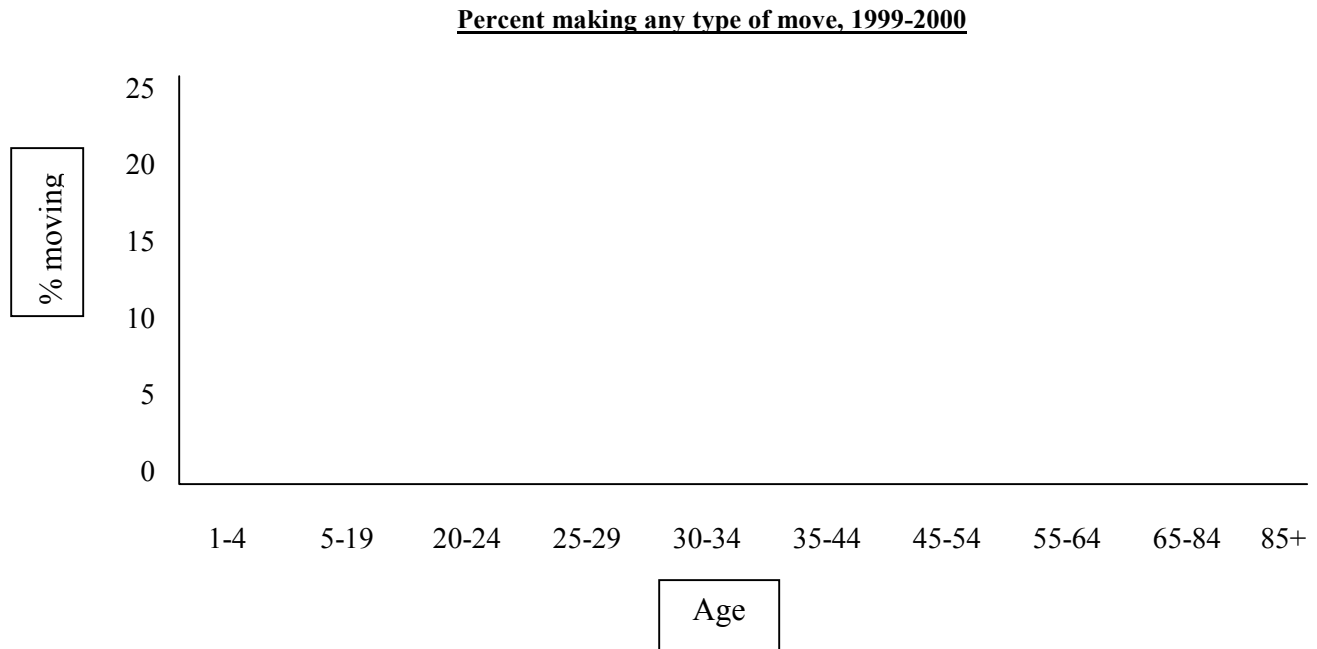
Questions:
4. How would you explain the unusual level of mobility of kids between the ages of 5 and 19? What do you think leads to the difference in mobility between kids in this age category and kids age 0-5? What do you think accounts for the higher mobility in the next highest age category, age 20-24?

5. Focusing on the age categories above age 19, describe the relationship between age and residential mobility. Is this a generally positive relationship or a generally negative relationship? Explain.

6. What do you think accounts for the slight upturn in residential mobility when people reach the oldest age category?

*For the remainder of the module we will distinguish between different types of mobility again. **Before you continue, please re-open the dataset so that the changes you mad to the mobility variable are undone.***

Part II: Testing hypotheses about residential mobility and migration

Theoretical perspective:
The push-pull theory of mobility suggests that mobility and migration are the result of an individuals' assessment of three sets of factors: strains and conditions that push the person to consider leaving their place of origin; characteristics of the place of destination that attract the person; and intervening factors that either lower or raise the cost of carrying out the move. While the model is actually quite simple, there are a number of individual-level characteristics that might shape the relative benefits of the origin and destination or affect the ease or difficulty of making a move. In other words, assessments of origin and destination characteristics, and the perceived possibility of making a move are different for different individuals. So, for example, great job opportunities might be enough to spur one individual to move to a different county, while for another person the same job opportunity might not be sufficient to outweigh the hassles and costs of making a move. The effects of this variation are apparent in the impact of martial status and education on mobility and migration.

The relationship between education and migration:
A. One basic hypothesis that can be drawn from the push-pull theory is that mobility will increase with education since highly educated people may have access to more information about potential destinations and more resources to carry out a move (both facilitators) and may be better positioned to take advantage of economic opportunities in other places (stronger pull factors). Investigate this hypothesis by examining the frequency of mobility and migration (variable: M*obility*) by education (variable: *Educ*) using the dataset **mobility_CPS2k**. Focus on short distance residential mobility (mobility within the same county) and longer-distance migration (move to a different state) to complete the following table.

Residential mobility and migration by Education, 1999-2000

Education	% moving to a different state	% moving within the same county
Less than high school		
High school graduate		
Some college		
College graduate		

The relationship between marital status and migration:

A. Another hypothesis that can be drawn from the push-pull perspective is that married people will be less likely than unmarried people to migrate. This is because for married couples, migration is more likely to entail the disruption of two jobs and two sets of social ties and is, therefore, more costly. Test this hypothesis by using the *mobility_CPS2k* dataset to examine the distribution of the variable *mobility* by the variable *marital*. Focusing on the percentage of each group moving to a different state, use your results to complete the following bar chart.

Residential mobility and migration by Marital status, 1999-2000

Marital status	% moving to a different state
Currently married	
Widowed	
Divorced	
Separated	
Never married	

B. Now test your colleague's argument by controlling for the effect of age as you examine the distribution of interstate migration across different marital statuses. Focusing on the 30-34 and 65-84 age categories, complete the following bar charts.

Residential mobility and migration by Marital status and Age, 1999-2000

Marital status	% moving to a different state	
	Age 30-34	Age 65-84
Currently married		
Widowed		
Divorced		
Separated		
Never married		

Questions:
7. Within specific age categories, which marital-status group had the lowest percentage moving to a different state? Is this finding consistent with the original hypothesis that married people are least likely to move?

8. How do you explain the difference between these results and the results presented in Part A? Was your colleague's explanation correct?

Testing hypotheses about racial difference in mobility:

C. Many people argue that racial discrimination in housing markets still play an important role in shaping the residential mobility behaviors of people of color. Specifically, the stratification perspective assumes that discrimination by real estate agents, rental agencies, mortgage companies, and potential neighbors is said to limit the housing options of African Americans and other minority groups, producing substantial racial and ethnic differences in a variety of mobility outcomes. For example, one hypothesis that has been drawn from this general line of thought is that, because discrimination limits the destination options of people of color, African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities should have a lower overall level of mobility than do non-Latino whites.

Test this basic hypothesis by examining the percentage of people within different racial and ethnic groups who moved to a different house within the same county. Use your results to complete the following table.

Residential mobility by Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2000

Race/Ethnicity	% moving to a different house in the same county
Non-Latino white	
Black	
Latino	
Asian	
American Indian	

Question:
9. Which racial/ethnic group is least likely to move between houses within the same county? Which group is most likely to move between houses? Are the basic racial/ethnic differences in mobility between houses consistent with the hypothesis based on the stratification perspective?

D. Dr. Persistence, a proponent of the stratification perspective, recently argued that real racial/ethnic differences in the likelihood of moving are obscured by the impact of racial and ethnic differences in homeownership. In the steps below, investigate Dr. Persistence's claim.

Start by looking at whether there really is a connection between home ownership and race/ethnicity. Fill in the following table summarizing the percentage of each race/ethnicity group that lives in an owner-occupied home.

Home ownership by Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2000

Race/Ethnicity	% Owners
Non-Latino white	
Black	
Latino	
Asian	
American Indian	

Now look at the impact of homeownership on mobility within the same county by completing the following table.

Home ownership by Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2000

Housing tenure	% moving to a different house in the same county
Homeowners	
Non-Owners	

Finally, reexamine the frequency of residential mobility within the same county by race/ethnicity while controlling for homeownership. Use your results to complete the following table.

Residential mobility and migration by Race/ethnicity and Housing tenure, 1999-2000

Race/Ethnicity	% moving to a different house in the same county	
	Homeowners	Non-Owners
Non-Latino white		
Black		
Latino		
Asian		
American Indian		

Questions:

10. Which racial/ethnic group has the highest percentage of owners? Which groups have the lowest? What factors might account for these differences?

11. In general, what impact does homeownership appear to have on the likelihood of moving within the same county? Why do you think this might be the case?

12. How does the apparent relationship between race/ethnicity and residential mobility change once homeownership is controlled? In general, are the racial/ethnic differences in residential mobility more or less pronounced after homeownership is controlled? Are the racial/ethnic differences for either homeowners or renters consistent with the hypothesis that racial and ethnic minorities face restricted mobility options? Explain.