

The South Atlantic States and the Rest of the South Compared

In comparing migration trends among the regions of the South, we expected lower net migration decline or higher growth for Blacks in the South Atlantic States than for Blacks in the generally less prosperous non-metro parts of the “Other South.”² This proved partly but not consistently true (fig. 6a). The results for 1965-70 are as expected, with net migration loss in all categories but greater loss for nonmetro than metro and greater loss for the Other South States than for the South Atlantic. For 1975-80, however, the South as a whole had an appreciable overall increase in the level of net migration, with essentially zero net migration on the nonmetro side in both geographic subregions,

²The South Atlantic States include Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, along with the District of Columbia. The remainder of the South, which for convenience we call “Other South,” includes Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

instead of earlier loss (fig. 1). But the level of metro net migration gain was higher in the Other South than in the South Atlantic States.

The results for 1985-90 are more consistent with 1965-70 and anticipate the population change pattern for 1990-2000. That is, the net migration gain from the North and West to the South Atlantic States is higher for both metro and nonmetro areas. Indeed, in the 1985-90 period the Other South had a slightly negative interchange with the North and West. Our earlier analysis for the South as a whole had shown there was essentially no net migration gain from the North and West for nonmetro Blacks even by 1985-90 (fig. 1). This result is a balancing of notable net immigration from the North and West to the nonmetro South Atlantic with outmigration to the North and West from the nonmetro Other South (fig. 6a).

The migration interchange between the metro and non-metro South reflects a higher level of metropolitanization in the Other South than in the South Atlantic States (fig. 6b). That is, for each of the three periods, nonmetro loss and complementary metro gain was

Figure 6a
Net migration rates for Blacks in South Atlantic and Other South: Interchange with North and West, 1965-90

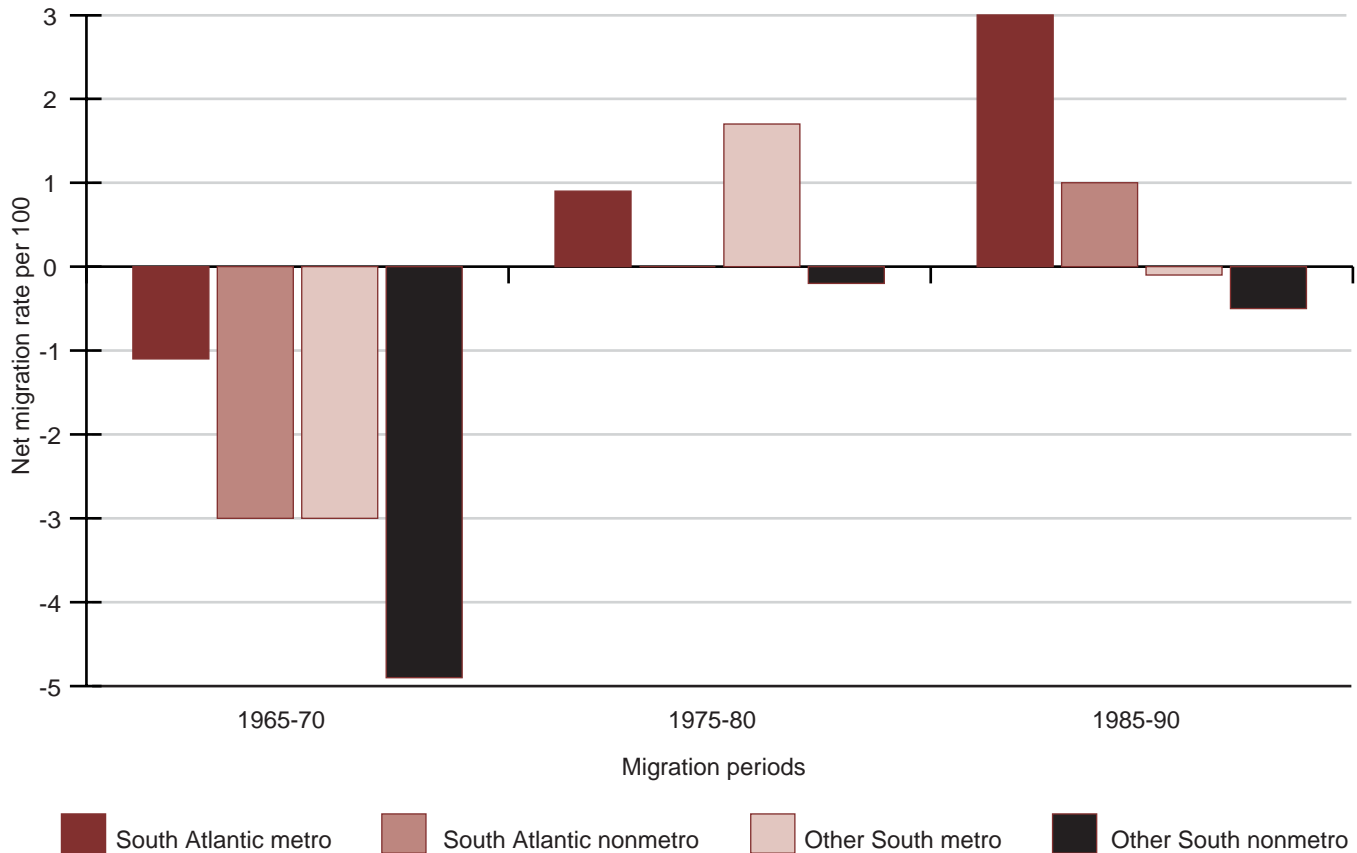
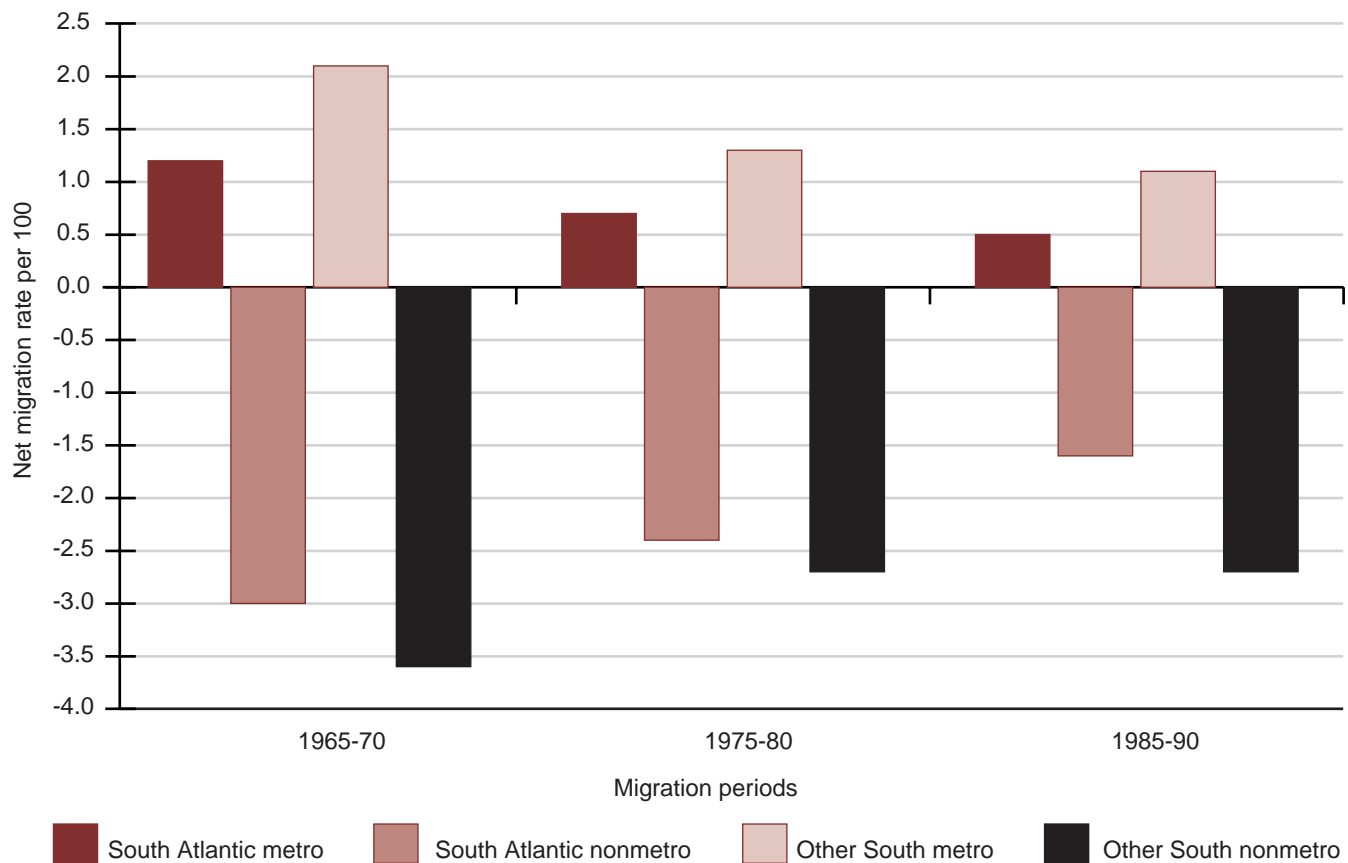


Figure 6b

Net migration rates for Blacks, South Atlantic and Other South: Metro-nonmetro interchange in South, 1965-90



higher in the Other South States. Over time, however, metropolitanization of migration slowed down, with declining metro gain and declining nonmetro loss across each time period. This finding mirrors the decline shown previously for the South as a whole (table 1).

By 1985-90, then, the South Atlantic States were having (a) the higher net migration gain for metro areas and the only net migration gain for nonmetro areas in the interchange with the North and West, and (b) the lower level of metropolitanization in the metro-nonmetro interchange with the South. That is, for Blacks, the eastern seaboard moved toward a pattern more similar to that for Whites, in terms of a more balanced metro-nonmetro interchange and nonmetro growth from migration.

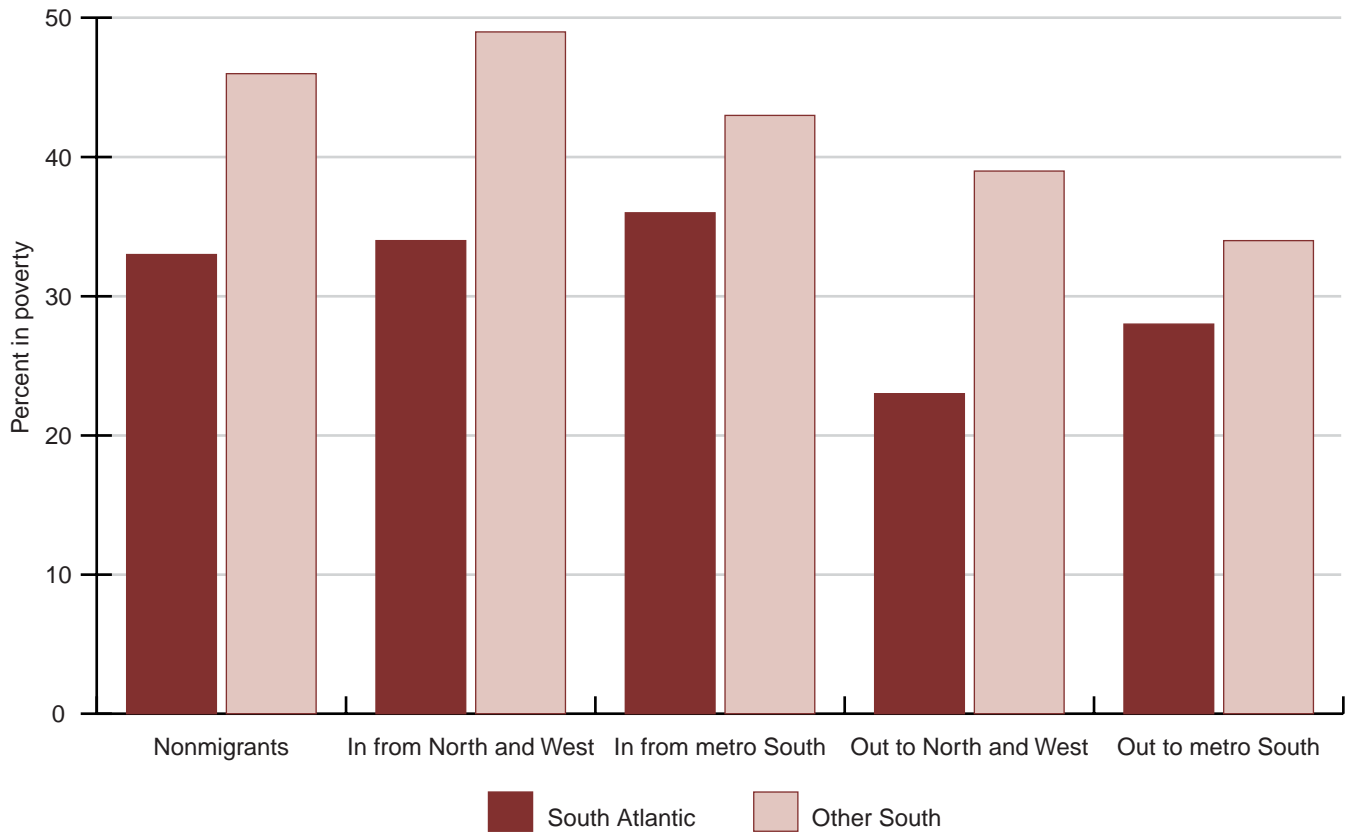
One might expect these subregional differences to be associated with distinct patterns in terms of the socioeconomic characteristics of migration streams. The subregional difference in educational levels, however, proves minimal (1-2 percentage points) for each

stream. Each subregion followed the education differentials found in the entire South (fig. 4).

On the other hand, a consistent subregional difference is found with the incidence of poverty. The South Atlantic States have a lower proportion in poverty across the migration streams and in the nonmigrant group (fig. 7). This finding accords with expectations, given the higher levels of overall population and economic growth in the South Atlantic States than in the rest of the South. As is true of the overall South, however, migration has raised poverty levels in the nonmetro areas of both subregions, with the immigrants having higher poverty proportions than the outmigrants in 1990. Migrants from the nonmetro South to the North and West and those from the North and West to the nonmetro South are distinctive in showing the greatest difference in poverty levels between the South Atlantic and the Other South. That is, the interchange between the North and West and the South Atlantic States was considerably less likely to include persons in poverty than that for the Other South. Almost half of the migrants from the North and West to the Other

Figure 7

Poverty composition in 1989 of Black migration streams, nonmetro areas of the South Atlantic and Other South States, 1985-90



South were classified as poor, compared with just a third of those moving to the South Atlantic States. A similar difference in poverty levels, though with lower percentages, exists for those moving from nonmetro areas to the North and West.

Because migration is measured from a date 5 years before the Census, and poverty status is determined for

the last calendar year before the Census, poverty rates may not reflect the income of migrants at the time they moved. However, given the superior educational attainment of nonmetro outmigrants compared with immigrants from the North and West, it seems unlikely that outmigrants would have been poorer than immigrants at the time of move.