Migration, Poverty & Place in the Context of the Return Migration to the US South

Katherine Curtis
Department of Rural Sociology

Research assistance from Jack DeWaard and financial support from the UW Graduate School and the Center for the Demography of Health and Aging. Presented at the IRP Seminar, December 11th, 2008.
Distribution of *Persistent* Poverty in the US by Division & Race 1970-2000

Persistent poverty counties—20 percent or more residents were poor as measured by each of the last four censuses, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.
Poverty in the US by Division & Race 1970-2000
Defining the “Return Migration”

**When:**
Coincided with the Great Migration (~1910-1970) & increased after 1970

**Who:**
African American & white southern-born migrants leaving & later returning to the South

*Plus* non-southerners migrating to the South

**Why:**
Economic: declining northern industry & expanding southern industry (1970+)
Social: kin & cultural ties
Distribution of Poverty among Southern Households by Migrant Status
(no controls)
Estimated Racial Difference in Poverty among Southern Households by Migrant Status
(with controls)
Guiding Question

Larger Q:
To what extent does migration contribute to changes in racial inequality in the South?

Today:
Focus on place (county) in a single time period (2000)
Conceptual Model

Elaboration of the spatially-informed *visibility-discrimination hypothesis* (Blalock 1956; Beggs et al. 1997)

Conditioned by Gender

Racial Inequality in Poverty = Population Concentration (African American)
Institutional Environment
Place Effects
Return Migration

Controls: Demographic Structure; Economic Structure; Metropolitan Status; Out-Migration
Place Effects & Return Migration

Especially for Female Poverty

Return Migration

Population Concentration in Adjacent Counties
("reactive" or "error of contagion")

Racial Inequality in Poverty

Racial Inequality in Poverty in Adjacent Counties
("interactive" or "diffusion")
Statistical Model

Separately for Female & Male Poverty

\[
\text{Racial Inequality in Poverty} = \text{Spatially Averaged Racial Inequality in Poverty ("interactive")} + \text{Spatially Averaged Population Concentration ("reactive")} + \text{Population Concentration; Return Migration; Controls}
\]
Methodological Approach

**Data:**
- Census of Population
- County-to-County Migration Flow Data
- Black Elected Officials (BEO)
  * 2000 only, for today

**Sample:**
- Southern Counties (N = 1,388)

**Dependent Variable:**
- Inequality in Gender-Race-Specific County Poverty Rates
  * Gender-Specific African American Official Poverty Rate divided by White Poverty Rate

**Modeling:**
- OLS & Spatial Lag Regression Analysis with Spatially Lagged Population Concentration
Study Highlights

• Racial inequality & in-migration are unevenly distributed across the South

• Racial differences are found in the association between in-migration & inequality in poverty

• Spatial effects are significant for both female & male inequality in poverty—greater “effect” for male inequality

• Migration is associated with lower racial inequality, although magnitude is weak & it does not attenuate spatial effects
Distribution of Racial Inequality in Poverty

Females

Males

White Advantage

(Square Root of Poverty Ratio)

- 0.00 - 1.00
- 1.00 - 1.52
- 1.52 - 1.71
- 1.71 - 1.89
- 1.89 - 4.85
Distribution of Return Migration

Correlation with Racial Inequality in Poverty

- Female: 0.08
- Male: 0.07

Total In-Migration

- 0.00 - 0.13
- 0.14 - 0.17
- 0.18 - 0.23
- 0.24 - 0.61
Distribution of Return Migration

African American

Correlation with Racial Inequality in Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AfAm</th>
<th>Wh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Estimated Correlates of Racial Inequality in Southern Poverty
(Females)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unstandardized Beta Coefficients from OLS &amp; Spatial Lag Regression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Concentration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.727***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatially Lagged Population Concentration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.538**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.551***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatially Lagged Racial Inequality ((\rho))</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.131***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.124**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Return Migration (AfAm)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.006***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.432***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.132***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.131***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-2 LL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-854.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-841.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-834.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \(p < .05\), ** \(p < .01\), *** \(p < .001\)

All models include controls for demographic & economic structure, metropolitan status, & out-migration.
# Estimated Correlates of Racial Inequality in Southern Poverty (Males)

## Unstandardized Beta Coefficients from OLS & Spatial Lag Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient 1</th>
<th>Coefficient 2</th>
<th>Coefficient 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Concentration</td>
<td>.928***</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Environment</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatially Lagged Population Concentration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatially Lagged Racial Inequality (ρ)</td>
<td>.689***</td>
<td>.695***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatially Lagged Return Migration (AfAm)</td>
<td>.130**</td>
<td>.128**</td>
<td>-.004***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.764***</td>
<td>1.429***</td>
<td>1.423***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 LL</td>
<td>-971.00</td>
<td>-954.57</td>
<td>-951.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

All models include controls for demographic & economic structure, metropolitan status, & out-migration.
Migration, Place & Racial Inequality in Poverty, with Gender Differences

Estimated Racial Inequality (White Advantage)

- Average: .137
- 10% Higher Immigration: .137
- 10% Higher Lagged Racial Inequality: .144
- 10% Higher Lagged Concentration: .185
Discussion & Next Steps

- African American in-migration is associated with reduction in racial inequality, although weakly
  - Maintain race-specific migration
  - Develop more nuanced migration rates; use restricted data

- Spatial effects are not attenuated by in-migration & have larger association with inequality than in-migration

- Gender differences found, although in opposite direction; greater impacts of “place”/spatial effects for male inequality

  - Address modeling challenges associated with spatial panel data