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Race and Residential Mobility: Individual Determinants and Structural Constraints*

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Abstract

Data from over 25,000 respondents of the Annual Housing Survey are used to examine racial differences in the levels and determinants of residential mobility between 1979 and 1980. Gross racial differences in mobility are small, but adjusting for differences in home ownership and other sociodemographic characteristics reveals that, net of these factors, blacks are significantly less likely than nonblacks to change residence in a given year. Both black and nonblack mobility are influenced by life-cycle factors, housing characteristics, and features of the metropolitan area, but there are clear racial differences in the determinants of mobility. Home ownership is less of an impediment to the mobility of blacks than nonblacks, and blacks are less likely to convert neighborhood dissatisfaction into a move. High levels of residential segregation in the metropolitan area create barriers to the mobility of blacks, while large suburban populations and high vacancy rates enhance the mobility prospects of nonblacks.

Race, residential location, and socioeconomic achievement are closely intertwined in the United States. Blacks and whites remain largely segregated from each other (Massey & Denton 1987; White 1987), with residential segregation having adverse effects on blacks' material well-being (Galster & Keeney 1988; Massey 1990; Massey, Condran & Denton 1987). Black residential mobility, especially into higher-status neighborhoods, is believed to be hampered by a deficit of financial resources (Massey & Denton 1985) as well as by the discriminatory practices of real estate agents, bankers, white residents, and local governmental agencies (Fairchild & Tucker 1982; Foley 1973; Pearce 1979; Shlay & Rossi 1981). Blacks appear less able than other racial and ethnic groups to translate human capital into desirable locational amenities (Logan & Alba 1992), including suburbanization and contact with whites (Alba & Logan 1991; Massey & Denton 1988).

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Moreover, for many people — and perhaps especially for inner-city minorities — residential mobility is frequently an avenue for social mobility (Rosenbaum & Popkin 1991). Barriers to residential mobility are therefore likely to constrain minority employment opportunities. Limited prospects for geographic mobility may also induce minority families to overinvest in their current dwelling unit and to reside in extended, multifamily households (Angel & Tienda 1982).

Given the theoretical and empirical importance of race in the study of residential mobility, it is surprising that few studies directly examine racial differences in the residential mobility process. To be sure, many studies focus on the aggregate geographic distributions of blacks and whites that define residential segregation (e.g., Farley & Wilger 1987; Massey & Denton 1987), while other studies describe patterns of racial change at the neighborhood level (e.g., Lee & Wood 1991). But few studies examine the individual and life-cycle factors that facilitate or impede mobility for blacks, or how these factors might differ between the races (cf. Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975). Even studies that do incorporate individual-level determinants are more apt to predict current area of residence (e.g., central city versus suburb) rather than actual residential mobility (Alba & Logan 1991). And no study has yet incorporated potential explanations for residential mobility — and racial differences in mobility — at the individual, neighborhood, and metropolitan levels, despite claims that black mobility is influenced more strongly by external constraints than by life-cycle characteristics (Fairchild & Tucker 1982).

The purpose of this article is to compare the levels and determinants of residential mobility among blacks and nonblacks in the U.S. We use longitudinal data from the Annual Housing Survey (AHS) to construct and estimate multilevel models of residential mobility occurring between 1979 and 1980. We give particular attention to the differential effects of life-cycle, demographic, neighborhood, and metropolitan area characteristics on the mobility rates of blacks and whites. We also give special attention to the mobility of blacks and whites who reside in relatively undesirable neighborhoods because their housing decisions have been the focus of considerable research and public policy (Hughes 1987; Wilson 1987).

RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY

Prior research demonstrates that rates of residential mobility are quite similar for blacks and whites. Long's (1988) life-table analysis of Current Population Survey data suggests that, over the course of a lifetime, blacks would be expected to move 13.1 times, and whites 12.9 times. Although blacks are slightly more likely than whites to make intracounty moves, and whites more likely to move between counties and states, the overall racial difference in residential mobility is clearly quite small. This similarity in rates of mobility may be somewhat surprising, given ample evidence of substantial barriers to the residential mobility of blacks. Racial discrimination in housing remains pervasive and severe (Yinger 1986), with black homeseekers steered away from white neighborhoods (Pearce 1979) and real estate advertising ignoring the needs of black residents (Galster, Freiberg & Houk 1987). Moreover, while there

is disagreement over the nature and extent of racial discrimination in mortgage financing (Hula 1991; Shlay, Goldstein & Bartelt 1992), most studies reveal that lending institutions systematically deny mortgages to black applicants and disinvest in black neighborhoods (Leahy 1985; Pol, Guy & Bush 1982; Shlay 1988; Taggart & Smith 1981). Although some of these obstacles are designed primarily to affect the locational choice of black residents, it seems likely that, all other factors being equal, they reduce the probability of mobility as well. Restricted housing alternatives are apt to discourage blacks who wish to relocate, thereby causing them to remain at their current residence. A scarcity of desirable neighborhoods open to blacks signals few attractive options that might enable them to move.

Of course, the observed racial similarity in gross mobility rates does not take into account many other social and demographic differences between blacks and whites that have been shown to influence residential mobility, such as home ownership. Blacks are considerably less likely than whites to own their homes (Jackman & Jackman 1980; Wilson 1979). Furthermore, home owners have substantially lower rates of mobility and mobility expectations than do renters (McHugh, Gober & Reid 1990; Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975). Hence, racial differences in home ownership may suppress the relationship between race and residential mobility. In addition, the lower incomes of blacks, in conjunction with the inverse relationship between income and mobility (Deane 1990), may account for parity in the unadjusted mobility rates of blacks and whites. It will be instructive, therefore, to examine racial differences in residential mobility after controlling for racial differences in home ownership and income, as well as for differences in other sociodemographic and life-cycle variables.

A MODEL OF RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY

In addition to determining the racial difference in mobility net of other factors, we also seek to examine the impact of a variety of personal and locational factors on mobility and to assess whether their effects differ for blacks and whites. Accomplishing this objective requires the development of a theoretical model of residential mobility. The model we apply here draws heavily on Speare's (1974; Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975) residential satisfaction perspective and on the modifications and extensions of that framework (Landale & Guest 1985; Newman & Duncan 1979; Rossi [1955] 1980). We elaborate this model further to include explanations of mobility that operate at the level of the neighborhood and metropolitan area because variables at these levels are believed to differentiate the mobility experiences of blacks and whites. Thus, our multilevel model of mobility incorporates individual-level determinants as well as characteristics of the neighborhood and urban context. We group the explanatory variables in this model into four categories: life-cycle and demographic factors; housing characteristics; neighborhood characteristics; and metropolitan area characteristics. In reviewing the hypothesized effects of these variables, we note the potential for racial differences when these seem likely to emerge.

Life-Cycle and Demographic Factors

Most models of residential mobility identify a set of personal and life-cycle variables that influence mobility either directly or indirectly by affecting the level of residential satisfaction. Among the prominent explanatory factors in Speare's (1974) model are age, marital status, family size, home ownership, duration of residence, education, and family income. Rates of mobility peak in the young adult years as these individuals leave the parental home, attend institutions of higher education, marry, and experience other life changes that necessitate a change of residence. Divorced and widowed individuals have been shown to have higher mobility rates than never married and married persons (Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975). Families with school-age children have comparatively low mobility rates, perhaps because children form a social bond that ties individuals to their current residence (Long 1972). Also reinforcing social and economic ties to one's place of residence are home ownership and duration of residence (Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975). Although, theoretically, one might expect higher education to increase knowledge of residential alternatives and higher income to increase the number of affordable options, socioeconomic differentials between "movers" and "stayers" appear to be relatively slight. Overall mobility rates are highest among the least educated (Long 1988), but longer-distance moves increase with education. Also, family income is inversely, but rather weakly, related to mobility (Deane 1990).

It seems likely that the impact of several of these factors might differ between blacks and whites. For example, given that black homeowners generally move into and occupy lesser-quality homes than do whites (Bianchi, Farley & Spain 1982; Marullo 1985) and have less equity in their homes (Parcel 1982), home ownership is less likely to serve as an impediment to mobility among blacks. And, socioeconomic status differentials are expected to be stronger among blacks than whites, especially for residents of undesirable neighborhoods. Wilson (1979; cf. Farley 1991; Massey & Eggers 1990) argues that during the late 1970s a diminution in residential segregation and overt housing discrimination created an exodus of middle- and upper-class blacks from inner-city neighborhoods, sharpening the status cleavage between movers and stayers and leaving only the poorest residents behind. The irrelevance of discrimination for whites means that socioeconomic status differentials in mobility should be smaller for this population.

Housing Characteristics

Research suggests that two features of individuals' current residence influence the probability of moving. Residential crowding, frequently measured as the number of persons per room, is often given as a reason for moving and is thought to predispose voluntary movers to search for a new residence (Rossi [1955] 1980). The empirical evidence linking crowding to mobility (or mobility expectations) is somewhat equivocal, however, with studies finding the hypothesized positive association for some population groups but not for others (McHugh, Gober & Reid 1990; Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975).

The other housing characteristic frequently linked to mobility behavior is satisfaction with current residence. In Speare's (1974) model, residential satisfaction has been proposed to mediate the relationship between demographic and life-cycle variables, on the one hand, and the desire to move and actual mobility on the other. The evidence for this linkage is also ambiguous. Though Speare (1974) finds general support for the model, other studies find either a weak relationship between residential satisfaction and mobility (Newman & Duncan 1979) or that satisfaction fails to explain the relationship between background variables and mobility (Landale & Guest 1985).

Neighborhood Characteristics

Three characteristics of one's neighborhood are potentially important predictors of residential mobility. First, dissatisfaction with one's current neighborhood is believed to promote mobility (Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975) although, as is the case with housing satisfaction, the empirical evidence on this score is mixed (Deane 1990; Landale & Guest 1985). Second, neighborhood crime may provide the impetus to change residences (Frey 1979). Third, the lack of adequate public transportation may hinder mobility, especially among those individuals with low incomes, because inadequate transportation makes it difficult to maintain current ties to one's current neighborhood and place of employment following a residential move.

Two of these factors might be expected to have different effects among blacks and whites. Because the discriminatory practices of real estate agents and bankers are likely to limit the number of neighborhoods into which blacks can relocate, blacks may be less able to translate neighborhood dissatisfaction into a change of residence. Residential segregation impairs the opportunity for blacks to upgrade their neighborhood, rendering dissatisfied blacks less residentially mobile than their white counterparts. Blacks who desire to move to a better neighborhood are less likely than comparable nonblacks to find one that will accept them.

Inadequate public transportation is apt to have a stronger effect for blacks than for whites. The growth of jobs for which urban blacks are best qualified has been concentrated in suburban areas, yet blacks remain largely confined to inner-city neighborhoods (Kain 1968; Kasarda 1989; cf. Jencks & Mayer 1990). Taking jobs in the suburbs requires adequate transportation from these central city neighborhoods to suburban rings (Kasarda 1989). Many of these new suburban job-holders will likely relocate closer to their place of employment, but for those already holding jobs near their current residence, the lack of adequate transportation facilities makes it difficult to move to a new neighborhood and maintain the same workplace. Thus, inadequate public transportation is likely to hinder mobility for blacks. The residential mobility of whites, in contrast, should be influenced less by the availability of public transportation because they face less of a spatial mismatch of job and residence and because they are less likely than blacks to rely on public transportation (Kasarda 1989).

Metropolitan Area Characteristics

Prior studies of residential mobility have generally not included characteristics of the metropolitan area as explanatory factors, despite evidence that mobility rates vary widely across cities (Long 1988). This omission can probably be attributed in large part to data constraints; most prior mobility research uses samples obtained from a single geographic area and thus cannot examine intermetropolitan variation in mobility or its determinants. For example, recent studies have used samples from Rhode Island (Speare, Goldstein & Frey 1975), Durham (Bach & Smith 1977), Toronto (Michelson 1977), Seattle (Landale & Guest 1985), Phoenix (McHugh, Gober & Reid 1990), and Nashville (Lee, Oropesa & Kanan 1992) to test residential mobility models. In contrast, the Annual Housing Survey includes respondents from a large number of metropolitan areas, and thus allows us to include metropolitan area characteristics as predictors of residential mobility.

We view several properties of the metropolitan area as potentially important predictors of mobility, with some having different effects for blacks and whites. The relative size of the black population is expected to inhibit the mobility of blacks by increasing discrimination by whites. The link between racial composition and discrimination proposed by Blalock (1967) should find expression in the practices of real estate agents, bankers, and white residents (Stearns & Logan 1986). Where blacks constitute a large proportion of the metropolitan population, they pose a threat to the white residents and are therefore apt to face severe barriers to mobility.

The size of the suburban population relative to the central city population is anticipated to enhance mobility, especially among whites. A large suburban ring creates greater opportunities for whites to attain lower tax rates, better quality schools, and other valued locational amenities. However, it seems unlikely that housing opportunities in suburbia will have much effect on the mobility of blacks since their rates of suburbanization are quite low and because they remain segregated in lesser-quality neighborhoods even when they do move to the suburbs (Logan & Schneider 1984; Massey & Denton 1988).

Characteristics of the metropolitan housing stock likely to influence residential mobility include the number of vacant dwelling units and the cost of housing. Numerous vacancies indicate a greater supply of available housing and should therefore promote mobility. High rental and sale prices should decrease mobility. Unlike the case for several other explanatory variables, there appears to be little justification for expecting these effects to differ by race after individual characteristics (especially income) are controlled.

The final explanatory factor to be considered is racial residential segregation in the metropolitan area. High levels of segregation imply that blacks are restricted to virtually all-black neighborhoods, and this limitation of the range of housing choices is likely to impede their desire or ability to move. It is less clear whether or how residential segregation might affect the mobility of whites. On the one hand, segregation limits the number of neighborhoods available to whites, since few would wish to move to all-black neighborhoods. Whites living in primarily white neighborhoods in highly segregated cities might be less motivated to move in order to avoid living in racially mixed neighborhoods. On the other hand, segregation also confines blacks to relatively few neighborhoods

in the metropolitan area, perhaps opening up more areas for whites. Because of these conflicting influences, it seems likely that the impact of residential segregation on mobility will be stronger for blacks than for whites.

Data and Methods

The Annual Housing Survey (renamed the American Housing Survey [AHS] in 1984) is a nationally representative longitudinal sample of housing units. The surveys were initiated in 1973, carried out annually through 1984, and biannually since then (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1984). The AHS contains both a national sample and a sample of selected metropolitan areas. Our analysis uses the national sample for the years 1979 and 1980. This sample contains approximately 80,000 housing units and uniquely identifies the largest 125 standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs) as of 1980. Because of our interest in the effect of SMSA characteristics on residential mobility, only respondents in these SMSAs are selected for this analysis. Applying this selection criterion and omitting respondents with missing data on model variables (see below) results in an effective sample size of 25,819.

Residential mobility is measured by a change of residence of the head of household between 1979 and 1980.¹ Mobility is determined by comparing the occupants of the housing unit in 1980 with the occupants in 1979.² Of the 25,819 respondents, 5,715 (approximately 22%) moved during the year. This figure is fairly comparable to Long's (1988) estimate from Current Population Survey data that 17% to 18% of individuals aged 5 or older moved annually during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The larger proportion of movers in our AHS sample likely results from its age restriction (virtually all the household heads are adults, who have higher mobility rates than children) and its restriction to residents of metropolitan areas, where mobility rates are higher than in nonmetropolitan areas.

The explanatory variables, along with their race-specific means and standard deviations, are shown in Table 1. Except for the SMSA characteristics, these variables are taken from the 1979 AHS interview (i.e., before a move occurred). The SMSA-level variables are taken from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982) and merged with the AHS file according to the respondents' SMSA of residence for 1979. Most of the operationalizations are straightforward, but a few require elaboration. In rating their homes and neighborhoods, respondents were given a set of specific housing and neighborhood problems, and then asked for an overall rating of the house and neighborhood as a place to live. We use the latter, more global assessments here. The perception of neighborhood crime was measured by asking respondents whether crime was a condition on their neighborhood streets. The analysis distinguishes the 24% of respondents who say crime is present in their neighborhood from the 76% who do not. The perceived adequacy of public transportation is derived from two questions, one asking whether public transportation is available in the neighborhood and, if so, whether it is satisfactory. Respondents who say that public transportation is either unavailable *or* unsatisfactory are distinguished from those who say it is available *and* satisfactory.

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics on Levels and Determinants of Residential Mobility 1979-1980, by Race

Variable	Blacks		Nonblacks	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Residential mobility (0=no; 1=yes)	.23	.42	.22	.42
Age of family head (in years)	44.47	16.40	46.86	17.55
Sex of family head (0=male; 1=female)	.43	.49	.25	.43
Marital status				
Never married	.18	.38	.13	.34
Married	.43	.49	.62	.48
Divorced/separated	.26	.44	.13	.33
Widowed	.13	.34	.12	.33
Children younger than 18 (0=no; 1=yes)	.46	.50	.37	.48
Education of family head (in years)	11.10	3.38	12.58	3.37
Family income (in \$1,000s)	12.94	10.39	19.20	12.85
Own home (0=no; 1=yes)	.42	.49	.62	.48
Duration of residence (in years)	7.17	8.57	8.54	10.03
Persons per room	.64	.38	.53	.29
Rating of home:				
Excellent	.19	.40	.42	.49
Good	.43	.49	.43	.50
Fair	.30	.46	.13	.33
Poor	.08	.26	.02	.14
Perceived neighborhood crime (0=no; 1=yes)	.33	.47	.23	.42
Public transportation inadequate (0=no; 1=yes)	.21	.41	.34	.47
Rating of neighborhood				
Excellent	.13	.34	.35	.48
Good	.44	.50	.48	.50
Fair	.35	.48	.15	.36
Poor	.08	.26	.02	.16
SMSA characteristics				
Percent black	18.64	7.72	13.68	7.89
Percent in suburbs	57.91	18.72	59.81	17.09
Percent housing units vacant	6.01	1.93	6.00	2.21
Median rent	210.35	34.86	213.99	37.52
Median value of owned homes (in \$1,000s)	57.33	16.90	59.12	18.75
Residential segregation	75.85	7.97	73.48	9.97
N	3,489		22,330	

The measure of residential segregation is the well-known index of dissimilarity between blacks and whites derived from 1980 census tract data. For 95 of the SMSAs in our sample, these values are taken from Farley and Wilger (1987), and for another 11 of the SMSAs, the figures are taken from Massey and Denton (1987). Respondents in the remaining 19 SMSAs for which we have no segregation data are omitted from the analysis. While unfortunate, this exclusion is likely to have little impact on our analysis because the omitted SMSAs have very small black populations. Indeed, neither Farley and Wilger (1987) nor Massey and Denton (1987) computed segregation scores for these SMSAs because they contained so few blacks.³

Our analytical strategy is to estimate a series of logistic regression equations assessing the role of race in residential mobility. We first describe the crude racial difference in mobility. Then we identify which factors might account for or suppress this racial difference. Third, we examine the determinants of mobility separately for blacks and nonblacks. And finally, we focus on residential mobility among respondents residing in relatively undesirable neighborhoods, again with an eye toward isolating racial differences in the effects of the explanatory variables on mobility.

As a source of data for the study of residential mobility, the AHS has several attractive qualities. It is rich in demographic and life-cycle variables, it includes data on both current household and neighborhood characteristics, and it is large enough to allow us to examine levels and determinants of mobility separately for blacks and whites. Further, its identification of specific SMSAs provides for a rare contextual analysis of metropolitan-level influences on mobility. Also, because the AHS is a panel sample of housing units rather than of individuals, it does not suffer from problems of sample attrition that normally plague mobility studies. In longitudinal analyses of individuals or families, it is often difficult to distinguish actual movers from those who attrite from the sample for other reasons (Speare & Kobrin 1980).

Being a sample of housing units rather than individuals is also the primary disadvantage of the AHS. Because respondents are not followed from one interview to the next, the destinations of those who move cannot be determined. It is also not possible to distinguish intrametropolitan mobility from longer-distance moves. Consequently, pull factors associated with specific places must be de-emphasized and push factors stressed. Several observers argue, however, that the issue of who moves and why can be addressed apart from where they move to (Speare 1974). Although short- and long-distance movers tend to express different reasons for moving (Wilson 1979), most determinants of mobility operate similarly for these two groups, implying little need to separate the two forms of mobility (Bach & Smith 1977; Lee, Oropesa & Kanan 1992).⁴ And, of course, the inability to examine locational choice with the AHS makes it no less appropriate than most other data sets used in microlevel studies of mobility.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for all variables in the analysis separately for blacks and nonblacks.⁵ Consistent with Long's (1988) findings, gross racial differences in mobility are slight, with 23% of blacks and 22% of nonblacks moving between 1979 and 1980. In contrast, racial differences in some of the explanatory variables are pronounced. Blacks are substantially less likely than nonblacks to be married, to own their homes, and to rate their homes and neighborhoods as excellent places to live. Black respondents are more likely to be female, to have children in the household, and to perceive crime as a problem in their neighborhood. Perhaps surprisingly, nonblacks are more likely than blacks to say that public transportation in their area is nonexistent or unsatisfactory. This difference in opinion may be a function of the relative scarcity of public transportation systems in suburbs where many whites reside; public transportation is more common in the central city areas inhabited by blacks. Not surprisingly, differences in education and family income both favor nonblacks. The only notable racial difference in the metropolitan characteristics is that blacks reside in SMSAs with larger black populations than do whites.

Table 2 presents the first set of logistic regression equations. In model 1 only race is included as a predictor variable. As would be expected from the minuscule racial difference in mobility rates shown in Table 1, the coefficient for race is small and not statistically significant.⁶

Model 2 of Table 2 then adds to the equation the life-cycle and demographic independent variables. Most of these variables have significant effects on residential mobility. The likelihood of moving decreases with age, children in the household, family income, and duration of residence. Females are less likely to move than males, owners are less likely to move than renters, and individuals who are currently married are less likely to move than those from dissolved marriages. These associations are generally consistent with past research (Long 1988). Of greater importance for our purposes is that controlling for these factors changes substantially the coefficient for race, such that net of these variables blacks are significantly less likely to move than nonblacks. Once life-cycle and demographic variables are held constant, the odds of mobility among blacks are only about 72% ($e^{-.324}$) of the odds for nonblacks. Put another way, if a nonblack had a probability of moving of about .25, then a black with similar values on the explanatory variables would have a predicted probability of moving of about .19. This net racial difference in mobility seems more consistent with prior studies emphasizing racial barriers to residential mobility than does the nil bivariate association observed here and in past research.

Detailed inspection of equations in which the independent variables are entered singly reveals that the variable most responsible for suppressing the relationship between race and mobility is home ownership; blacks are less likely than whites to own their homes, and homeowners are less likely than renters to move. Although the factors affecting the residential choices of blacks are varied and complex (Galster 1987), one plausible explanation for this pattern of effects is that racial discrimination in the housing market has counterbalancing effects on blacks' residential mobility. Although other factors such as financial assets and monetary assistance from kin surely play important roles, racial discrimina-

TABLE 2: Logistic Regression Analyses of Residential Mobility, 1979-1980^a

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b	S.E.	b	S.E.	b	S.E.
Independent variables						
Race (0 = nonblack; 1 = black)	.030	.043	-.324**	.048	-.369**	.050
Life-cycle and demographic factors						
Age			-.025**	.001	-.024**	.001
Sex			-.257**	.049	-.228**	.050
Marital status						
Never married			.078	.058	.100*	.058
Divorced/separated			.328**	.056	.324**	.056
Widowed			.551**	.075	.584**	.076
Children younger than 18			-.283**	.040	-.357**	.044
Education			.007	.006	.016**	.006
Family income			-.008**	.002	-.006**	.002
Own home			-1.237**	.040	-1.192**	.043
Duration of residence			-.024**	.003	-.022**	.003
Housing characteristics						
Persons per room					.192**	.062
Rating of home						
Good					.136**	.043
Fair					.260**	.057
Poor					.725**	.096
Neighborhood characteristics						
Perceived neighborhood crime					-.033	.039
Public transportation inadequate					.011	.037
Rating of neighborhood						
Good					-.022	.045
Fair					.008	.058
Poor					.155	.098
SMSA characteristics						
Percent black					-.003	.002
Percent in suburbs					.002*	.001
Percent housing units vacant					.048**	.008
Median rent					-.000	.001
Median value of owned homes					-.000	.001
Residential segregation					-.008**	.002
Intercept	-1.232**	.016	.777**	.104	.803**	.232
Model χ^2		.5		3768.9**		3955.0**
(N = 25,819)						

^a Reference categories for polytomous variables are marital status: married; rating of home: excellent; rating of neighborhood: excellent.

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test) ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed test)

tion in mortgage financing likely reduces black home ownership rates and thus increases black mobility. Counterbalancing this effect, the racially biased practices of real estate agents, local government agencies, and white residents probably reduce the housing alternatives available to blacks, and thus decrease black mobility. These two dynamics appear to offset one another so that the gross mobility rates of blacks and nonblacks are virtually identical.

The other explanatory variable that tends to suppress the relationship between race and residential mobility, albeit to a lesser extent than does home ownership, is family income.⁷ Black families have lower incomes than white families; and family income is inversely related to mobility — partly because higher-income families are more likely to invest in home improvements, which in turn deter subsequent mobility (Deane 1990).

The third equation in Table 2 (model 3) adds the other explanatory variables to model 2. As in prior studies (Newman & Duncan 1979; Landale & Guest 1985), little support is found for the hypothesis that housing and neighborhood satisfaction mediates the relationship between background variables and residential mobility. Neighborhood satisfaction is not significantly related to mobility, and although respondents who rate their home negatively are more likely than others to move, including housing satisfaction in the equation does not appreciably alter the effects of the life-cycle and demographic variables (cf. Deane 1990). Though none of the coefficients for the neighborhood characteristics are statistically significant, three of the SMSA-level variables have significant effects. Individuals living in metropolitan areas with large suburban populations, with high vacancy rates, and with low levels of racial residential segregation have comparatively high mobility rates. The significant effects of these variables implies that many prior studies have omitted important influences on mobility by ignoring determinants at the metropolitan level.

It is worth noting that controlling for these additional variables increases further, albeit slightly, the mobility differential between blacks and nonblacks. Adjusting for racial differences on all the explanatory variables, as in model 3, leaves the odds of black mobility less than 70% ($e^{-.369}$) of the nonblack odds. Again, in absolute terms, this is a difference of about 6 percentage points when all other variables are held constant at their means. Though not an overwhelming difference, neither is it trivial.

As suggested earlier, it seems probable that some of the determinants of residential mobility differ by race. The equations in Table 3 evaluate these arguments by estimating model 3 of Table 2 separately for blacks and nonblacks. Also shown is the difference between the race-specific coefficients, and the significance of this difference. Most of the independent variables have similar effects for blacks and nonblacks, but several significant differences emerge. As predicted, home ownership is less likely to deter a move by blacks than by whites, perhaps because black homeowners tend to own less desirable residences. Another difference is that black renters may be especially unlikely to move because of severe difficulty in obtaining a home mortgage and because of greater discrimination in the rental than in the sale of housing (Foley 1973). Furthermore, duration of residence has a stronger inverse impact on mobility among blacks than whites. In addition, neighborhood dissatisfaction provides less impetus to move for blacks than for nonblacks. In fact, relative to residents

TABLE 3: Logistic Regression Analyses of Residential Mobility 1979-1980, by Race

	Blacks		Nonblacks		Difference
	b	S.E.	b	S.E.	
Independent variables					
Life-cycle and demographic factors					
Age	-.026**	.004	-.024**	.001	.002
Sex	-.351**	.124	-.201**	.055	.150
Marital status					
Never married	.033	.155	.106*	.063	.073
Divorced/separated	.080	.141	.374**	.062	.294*
Widowed	.306	.205	.625**	.082	.319
Children younger than 18	-.476**	.115	-.335**	.048	.141
Education	.027	.017	.014*	.006	.013
Family income	-.010*	.006	-.005**	.002	.005
Own home	-.979**	.126	-1.216**	.046	.237*
Duration of residence	-.041**	.008	-.020**	.003	.021*
Housing characteristics					
Persons per room	.218*	.130	.197**	.070	.021
Rating of home					
Good	.141	.144	.130**	.045	.011
Fair	.301*	.157	.256**	.062	.045
Poor	.868**	.205	.697**	.114	.171
Neighborhood characteristics					
Perceived neighborhood crime	-.084	.100	-.023	.043	.061
Public transportation					
inadequate	-.079	.110	.023	.039	.102
Rating of neighborhood					
Good	-.228	.154	-.009	.047	.219
Fair	-.336*	.168	.064	.063	.400*
Poor	-.125	.226	.193*	.113	.218
SMSA characteristics					
Percent black	-.005	.006	-.003	.003	.002
Percent in suburbs	-.002	.002	.002**	.001	.004*
Percent housing units vacant	.004	.027	.052**	.009	.048*
Median rent	.002	.002	-.000	.001	.002
Median value of owned homes	-.002	.005	.000	.002	.002
Residential segregation	-.019**	.006	-.007**	.002	.012*
Intercept	1.664**	.671	.698**	.252	
Model χ^2		497.8		3505.2	
N		3,489		22,330	

^a Reference categories for polytomous variables are marital status: married; rating of home: excellent; rating of neighborhood: excellent.

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test) ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed test)

who evaluate their neighborhood as "excellent" (i.e., the reference category in the equations), blacks who evaluate their neighborhood as only "fair" are significantly *less* likely to move. In contrast, nonblacks from self-described "poor" neighborhoods are more mobile than their counterparts in excellent neighborhoods, although the differences are not large. Thus, it appears more difficult for blacks than for nonblacks to escape relatively undesirable neighborhoods.

Three of the SMSA-level variables have significantly different effects for blacks and nonblacks. As anticipated, the size of the suburban ring has a significantly stronger impact on nonblack than on black mobility; in fact, the coefficient is negative (but nonsignificant) for blacks. Second, the supply of vacant housing facilitates nonblack, but not black, residential mobility. And third, residential segregation, the only metropolitan-level variable to significantly influence black mobility, is a stronger impediment to the mobility of blacks than nonblacks. This difference is consistent with the idea advanced earlier that racial segregation poses greater barriers to black than to white mobility because segregation does not limit the number of alternative neighborhoods to the same degree for nonblacks as for blacks.

To give perspective on the magnitude of the effect of residential segregation, we have computed predicted probabilities of black mobility for various levels of the index of dissimilarity, holding all other variables constant at their respective means. As an example, a black living in a moderately segregated metropolitan area with an index of dissimilarity of around 50 (Sacramento and Tacoma have scores close to this value) has a predicted annual probability of moving of 25.4%. At the other extreme, a black in a metropolitan area with an index of dissimilarity of 90 (Chicago and Gary have values close to this) has a probability of moving of only 13.7%. Clearly, then, residential segregation is an important constraint on black residential mobility.

Much of the theoretical and policy debate over black residential mobility concerns the potential for inner-city minorities to leave undesirable or "underclass" neighborhoods. Lacking data on the destination of AHS movers, we cannot identify specifically who vacates bad neighborhoods for better environs. We can, however, shed some tentative light on the determinants of mobility *per se* among residents of relatively undesirable neighborhoods, regardless of where the movers move to.

Categorizing neighborhoods as bad or undesirable is clearly an arbitrary decision, and we are hampered somewhat by the lack of objective data in the AHS on neighborhood characteristics. But two criteria appear reasonable as a first step toward differentiating better from worse neighborhoods. First, we use the respondent's own evaluation as a criterion, classifying only those who rate their neighborhood as "poor" or "fair" as residing in an undesirable neighborhood. Second, because one feature of underclass neighborhoods common to all descriptions is the presence of street crime, only respondents who report that crime exists in their neighborhood are classified as living in an undesirable neighborhood. Imposing these two criteria classifies about 21% of the black respondents (26% of whom moved) and 8% of the nonblack respondents (33% of whom moved) as residents of "bad" neighborhoods.

Equations estimating the determinants of mobility among these respondents are shown in Table 4. In general, the effects of the explanatory variables are similar to what was observed for the entire sample, and differences between blacks and nonblacks are relatively few. But some important distinctions emerge. For example, among blacks in bad neighborhoods, mobility is more positively selective of education than among either whites in bad neighborhoods or, as shown in Table 3, the general black population. Similarly, family income does not deter mobility among blacks in bad neighborhoods as it does for other groups.

Unlike their white counterparts, blacks in bad neighborhoods who view public transportation in their area as nonexistent or inadequate are less likely to move. As suggested earlier, inadequate transportation may hinder the ability to find new employment, especially in the suburbs, or to relocate while still retaining ties to the workplace and neighborhood. The mobility of blacks in undesirable neighborhoods is also impaired by high median rents in the metropolitan area and, as for the general population of blacks, high levels of residential segregation. Segregation does not appear to significantly influence the mobility of nonblacks who live in bad neighborhoods.

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the theoretical centrality of race in discussions of urban residential segregation and neighborhood change, little research has focused directly on racial differences in the levels and determinants of residential mobility. Perhaps some of this neglect is attributable to the fact that, in the aggregate, blacks and whites change residences at about the same rate. Yet, our findings suggest that this ostensible equivalence is largely illusory, primarily a consequence of the markedly lower home ownership rates among blacks than nonblacks. Among persons with similar sociodemographic characteristics, blacks are significantly less likely to move than nonblacks, a differential that seems more consistent with the considerable evidence documenting obstacles to blacks' mobility in the form of racial steering, neighborhood "redlining," and white discrimination. Paradoxically, then, two forms of racial bias in the housing market may counterbalance one another to create parity in the mobility rates of blacks and whites. By reducing black home ownership rates, discrimination by home lending institutions is likely to increase black mobility relative to the mobility of whites. At the same time, discrimination by real estate agents and white residents is likely to reduce the housing alternatives available to blacks, and thus attenuate their mobility rates relative to those of whites. Of course, this explanation is admittedly speculative, given scholarly disagreement over the extent of discrimination in mortgage financing and the influence of other factors on home ownership rates (Hula 1991; Shlay, Goldstein & Bartelt 1992). But in any event, significant differences in the mobility rates of blacks and whites net of other sociodemographic characteristics suggests that greater attention be given to the role of race in models of residential mobility.

Racial differences exist not only in the level of residential mobility, but in its determinants as well. Many initiators of mobility, especially life-cycle and

TABLE 4: Logistic Regression Analyses of Residential Mobility in "Bad" Neighborhoods, by Race

	Blacks		Nonblacks		Difference
	b	S.E.	b	S.E.	
Independent variables					
Life-cycle and demographic factors					
Age	-.016*	.009	-.033**	.005	.017
Sex	-.456*	.269	-.101	.159	.355
Marital status					
Never married	.523	.344	-.120	.186	.643
Divorced/separated	.375	.320	.494**	.180	.119
Widowed	1.124**	.454	.476*	.271	.648
Children younger than 18	-.383	.245	-.526**	.149	.143
Education	.137**	.043	.047**	.020	.090*
Family income	.011	.013	-.020**	.007	.031*
Own home	-.489*	.284	-.900**	.152	.411
Duration of residence	-.082**	.020	-.033**	.010	.049*
Housing characteristics					
Persons per room	.148	.238	.302	.199	.154
Rating of home					
Good	.356	.478	.071	.184	.285
Fair	.628	.474	.050	.188	.578
Poor	.917*	.514	.507*	.239	.410
Neighborhood characteristics					
Public transportation inadequate	-.442*	.232	.001	.127	.443*
Rating of neighborhood					
Poor (versus fair)	.593**	.233	.064	.136	.529*
SMSA characteristics					
Percent black	.006	.014	.005	.009	.001
Percent in suburbs	.004	.005	.005	.003	.001
Percent housing units vacant	.056	.066	.066*	.031	.010
Median rent	-.013*	.006	-.004	.003	.009
Median value of owned homes	.009	.011	.007	.006	.002
Residential segregation	-.028*	.013	-.006	.007	.022
Intercept	1.834	1.732	1.242	.846	
Model χ^2		124.2		391.8	
N		742		1,885	

* Reference categories for polytomous variables are marital status: married; rating of home: excellent.

* p < .05 (one-tailed test) ** p < .01 (one-tailed test)

sociodemographic characteristics, operate similarly for blacks and nonblacks. For both groups, age, sex, children, family income, home ownership, and duration of residence emerge as significant predictors of mobility. This basic similarity in the determinants of mobility casts doubt on Fairchild and Tucker's (1982) assertion that life-cycle factors are appreciably less important for residential change among African Americans than among others and that, among African Americans, external constraints are substantially more important than internal family dynamics as explanations for mobility.

On the other hand, the magnitude of some determinants of residential mobility does appear to differ between the races. Home ownership, for example, is less of an impediment to mobility among blacks than nonblacks, perhaps because blacks homeowners inhabit lesser-quality homes than do whites. And, neighborhood dissatisfaction is less likely to induce mobility among blacks than nonblacks, presumably because fewer alternative neighborhoods are available to blacks wishing to move.

External constraints, as indicated by neighborhood and metropolitan characteristics, also influence mobility, and some of these differ for blacks and whites. Among blacks in general, the most important contextual predictor of mobility is the level of residential segregation. We suggest that high levels of segregation reflect limited housing opportunities for blacks, constraining their choices to comparatively few neighborhoods of low status. With limited housing options, many blacks who would otherwise change residences simply choose not to move. Thus, racial residential segregation, stemming in large measure from white discrimination, presents another "cost" to blacks in the form of a diminished ability to seek new — and, for many, improved — living quarters.

In addition, among blacks in undesirable neighborhoods the lack of adequate public transportation and high rental prices also inhibit mobility. The mobility of whites is enhanced by opportunities for suburbanization and higher vacancy rates. Together these findings suggest that both blacks and nonblacks adapt to a shortage of available and desirable housing by remaining at their current residence rather than moving. This pattern of effects is consistent with prior research showing that blacks and whites also adapt to a housing squeeze by increasing household complexity (Mutchler & Krivo 1989). Our results imply that, for blacks, housing constraints are produced primarily by high levels of residential segregation and high rents, while for whites metropolitan vacancy rates and the supply of suburban housing play more important roles.

The significant impact of metropolitan-level and, to a lesser extent, neighborhood factors on mobility suggests that conventional models of mobility be expanded to encompass external constraints on residential change. Traditional models have emphasized those life-cycle and demographic factors that *motivate* individuals to seek a new residence. Consistent with these models, our findings show that among blacks, as well as whites, life-cycle factors, demographic characteristics, and housing satisfaction all contribute to the explanation of residential mobility. But our multilevel model also indicates that the *opportunity* to acquire new housing has an important additional impact on the likelihood of mobility. The development of adequate models of residential mobility, therefore, requires going beyond characteristics of the individual to

incorporate properties of the neighborhood and metropolitan context that constrain or facilitate residential change.

Future research on the role of race in the residential mobility process might also attempt to incorporate characteristics of the destinations chosen by movers. It seems likely that the factors that constrain mobility *per se* also serve as barriers to the attainment of desirable homes and neighborhoods among those who do move. We know some of the outcomes of racial differences in these locational decisions: infrequent contact between blacks and whites, low rates of black suburbanization, poor health care and educational opportunities for black residents, and greater exposure of blacks to crime. But we know less about who moves where, and why. Data limitations prohibit an analysis of these locational choices; thus, some of the moves undertaken by these respondents are within the same neighborhood, or to other neighborhoods of equal or lesser quality. Still, it is clear that, for many African Americans, residential mobility is a necessary, but not always sufficient, condition for improving access to satisfactory urban services and amenities. Accordingly, factors that shape and restrict the mobility experiences of blacks deserve greater consideration in models of residential mobility.

Notes

1. The 1981 AHS interviewed only a proportion of the 1979 respondents, effectively prohibiting an analysis of moves occurring after 1980.
2. Because mobility is determined by comparing the occupants of the housing unit in 1980 with the occupants in 1979, it is possible that persons who died between the 1979 and 1980 interviews will be classified as movers. However, this could only include a very small proportion of the sample. Race-specific life table values for 1979 show that, at age 45 (approximately the mean age of the AHS sample), 99.7% of whites and 99.3% of blacks would be expected to survive one year (National Center for Health Statistics 1984). Even at age 70 (the 90th percentile of the sample) over 97.1% of whites and 96.2% of blacks would be expected to live to their next birthday. Thus, it is very unlikely that mortality among the AHS respondents could appreciably affect our results.
3. Farley and Wilger (1987) and Massey and Denton (1987) use somewhat different procedures in computing the index of dissimilarity. Most notably, Farley and Wilger use a black/white distinction while Massey and Denton use a black/Anglo dichotomy. Using only respondents in SMSAs for which Farley and Wilger have computed the index of dissimilarity produces results virtually identical to those we report. We use the largest possible sample size whenever feasible in order to generate unbiased parameter estimates for the other explanatory variables.
4. Among recent movers in the 1979 AHS, almost 80% of both blacks and whites relocated from within the same metropolitan area. Hence, most of the moves we describe here are of relatively short distance. In supplementary analyses we attempted to remove probable long-distance movers between 1979 and 1980 from the sample using questions about mobility expectations. Although long-distance movers cannot be identified with certainty from these questions, the results of these additional analyses were quite similar to the results for the full sample. Finally, we should note that, because long-distance movers might not be expected to respond as strongly as intrametropolitan movers to the explanatory variables in our model, the likely impact, if any, of including them in the sample would be to depress the parameter estimates and thus inject a conservative bias in the analysis.
5. We distinguish between blacks and nonblacks rather than between blacks and whites in order to use the largest possible sample of respondents. The treatment of persons of "other race" (i.e., who identify as neither black nor white) is undoubtedly immaterial as they comprise only 2.2% of the sample.

6. Correlation matrices are not shown to conserve space, but are available upon request from the authors.
7. Controlling only for family income results in a coefficient for race of $-.128$. In contrast, controlling only for home ownership changes the coefficient for race to $-.322$. While both partial coefficients are statistically significant, it is clear that home ownership does more than family income to suppress the relationship between race and residential mobility.

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