Objective. We examine (1) whether black migration trends from the final few decades of the 20th century continued during the first decade of the 21st century, (2) whether the black southern migration stream continues to be demographically distinctive, and (3) whether incorporating subjective/motivational factors into our models advances our understanding of race and interregional migration. Methods. Using data from the 2000 to 2010 Current Population Surveys, we employ descriptive and inferential statistics to (1) map recent patterns of interregional migration in the United States by race and (2) estimate the effects of race, other sociodemographics, and subjective/motivational factors on people’s propensity to migrate to the United States South. Results. We find that the rate of black migration to the South continues to exceed that of whites, and that black migrants differ from their white counterparts both demographically and motivationally. We also observe selected gender differences within the black southern migration stream. Conclusions. Our results underscore the need for more research on race, gender, and interregional migration in the United States. We suggest directions for such work, with particular focus on possibilities for further inquiry when 2010 census materials become more widely available.
substantial changes in interregional migration patterns in the United States. Specifically, (1) more blacks were moving to the South than were leaving that region; (2) the rate of black southern migration had steadily increased over the final few decades of the 20th century; and (3) the sociodemographic composition of the black southern migration stream differed in notable ways from that of whites’ (Adelman, Morett, and Tolnay, 2000; Frey, 2001, 2004; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt, 2004; Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2008, 2012).

In the current study, we build on a growing body of research into what Frey (2004) has called the “New Great Migration” by examining recent 21st-century migration patterns to the South. Specifically, using data from the 2000 to 2010 Current Population Surveys (CPSs), we seek to determine whether key migration trends appearing over the last several decades of the 20th century have continued into the first decade of the 21st century. In addition, we introduce an important new dimension to research on internal migration by adding measures of persons’ subjective motivations for moving to the set of sociodemographic factors more commonly used to model migration behavior. We turn next to some background material that sets the stage for the discussion of our specific research questions and goals.

Background

Trends in Recent Southern Migration

During the latter half of the 20th century, the South gained population due to changes occurring within, and outside of, that region. Within the South, the gradual shedding of the legacy of Jim Crow, and the evolution of what has been termed the “New South” (Wright, 1986; Lyson, 1989; Cobb, 1999), altered the tendency for people already living there to leave (i.e., out-migration declined). At the same time, outside of the South, factors such as deindustrialization, associated job losses, and a comparatively high cost of living resulted in a growing propensity of persons to move to the South (i.e., in-migration increased) (Long and Hansen, 1975; Frey, 2001). This change in the balance of net migration began in the 1950s among whites, and in the 1970s among blacks (Long and Hansen, 1975).

Beyond the differential timing of the reversal of net migration by race, there are reasons to believe that whites and blacks differ with respect to key factors underlying southern migration—including its sociodemographic and motivational precursors (i.e., who is moving, and why). As such, further examination of recent southern migration is critically important given (1) its potential to shed light on the role of race (both historically and currently) in shaping interregional population flows, and (2) the potential of such shifts to transform regions (and, by extension, the nation) in important ways. Below, we outline some of the sources of white/black differences in migration dynamics,
with special focus on blacks’ recent migration behavior and its implications for the African-American experience.

**Are Black Southern Migrants a “Select” Group?**

Clearly, urban centers outside of the South (e.g., northern and midwestern cities) did not become the “Promised Land” the participants of the Great Migration had hoped for (Lemann, 1991)—a development setting the stage for the late 20th-century population shift now termed the “return” or “reverse” migration of African Americans to the South (Frey, 2004; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt, 2004; Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2008, 2012). During the earlier Great Migration, millions of blacks left the South in search of manufacturing employment, only to be later disappointed when many of their nonsouthern destinations underwent extensive deindustrialization (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982)—a trend that was particularly hard-hitting among blacks, given their heavy concentration in manufacturing employment (Wilson, 1996). Scholars such as Anderson (1990) and Wilson (1987) have documented the social consequences of this macroeconomic shift, including the exodus of middle-class blacks from inner cities to suburbs, and the profound social, geographic, and economic isolation of a sizeable urban underclass that was left behind (Massey and Denton, 1993). Building on such imagery, Hunt and Hunt (2001) have speculated that the return migration of blacks to the South may be part of a larger, more generalized exodus of higher status African Americans—originally from the inner city to suburbs in the non-South, but that has increasingly included southern destinations as well.\(^1\)

There is, in fact, growing evidence to support Frey’s claim that the black return/reverse migration is selecting the “the best and the brightest” (2004:7) of the black community. Several studies document that the sociodemographic composition of the black southern migration stream differs notably from that of whites’, with black migrants tending to be younger, more educated, and disproportionately female, relative to their (same-race) counterparts who remained in the non-South (Adelman, Morett and Tornay, 2000; Frey, 2001, 2004; Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2012). Building on such findings, as well as on evidence that black southern migrants are more likely to be married and/or living in households with children, one recent investigation raised the possibility that blacks are moving south to find more “family-friendly” living arrangements (Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2008).

This emerging profile of the black return migrant is sharply different from the picture we have of typical participants in the Great Migration. While the earlier migration was dominated by relatively uneducated workers (e.g., those structurally displaced by the mechanization of agriculture, etc.), the return

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\(^1\)We use the term “non-South” as a convenience in subsequent discussion to refer to all parts of the United States outside of the Census South (see the “Data and Measures” section).
movement appears to be disproportionately selecting more highly educated persons seeking new opportunities in the expanding regional economy of the South. Although the Great Migration—at least in its early stages—was male-dominated (with larger numbers of women and families following in later stages), the return movement of blacks appears to involve a disproportionate presence of females. And, while nearly all black out-migrants from the South moved to urban places in the non-South during the Great Migration (owing to especially virulent racism in rural areas—e.g., see Loewen, 2005), recent black in-migration to the South is more varied in its destinations. While most blacks move to urban and suburban places in the South (Frey, 2004), there is a notable flow to rural places as well (Fuguitt, Fulton, and Beale, 2001; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt, 2004).

**Do Black Southern Migrants Have Unique Motivations for Moving South?**

While whites and blacks almost certainly share many of the fundamental “push” (northern deindustrialization) and “pull” forces (emergence of a “New South”) underlying southern migration, important white/black differences in migration behavior remain, some of which stem from the peculiar racial legacy of the South. For whites, recent southern migration may have primarily economic roots owing to the region’s expanding work-related opportunities and its lower cost of living (with the latter point—alongside the South’s warmer climate—motivating much retirement-related relocation). In addition, most whites who move south have no ancestral connections to the region. In fact, many have moved there *despite* the stigmatization of the region and the stereotypes of its native inhabitants by many Americans (Killian, 1970; Reed, 1982, 1986). For most whites, heading south involves moving to a “new” land.

By contrast, blacks moving south are much more likely to be “returning” (either literally or symbolically) to a region where they have longstanding intergenerational connections. Those connections stem largely from the legacy of slavery in the region. It was to the South—more than any other region of what is now the United States—that people of African descent were forcibly transported to play important (and unpaid) roles in the plantation labor systems from which white landowners built their wealth (Steinberg, 1981). This historical concentration of blacks to the agrarian economy of the South means that many black migrants to that region are particularly likely to have cultural and familial ties there (Stack, 1996). Thus, while black southern migrants almost certainly share with their white counterparts some of the fundamental economic motivations for moving (particularly in light of the improved racial and occupational climate of the “New South”), blacks’ reasons for moving are almost certainly more complex—having to do with both economic and cultural/familial forces—a possibility we examine empirically in what follows.

Before turning to our specific research questions, it is worth noting that the return/reverse migration of blacks to the South is unlikely to transform
its receiving region on the same scale (and within the same time frame) as the Great Migration. Indeed, much scholarship has documented how—over the course of just a few generations—the Great Migration fundamentally altered urban centers outside of the South owing to the dramatic growth of the black population that it entailed. Nonetheless, considering that (1) some of the key roots of the return/reverse migration lie in the Great Migration, and (2) the return/reverse migration appears to be selecting a distinctive set of persons, who may be moving for a complex set of reasons, expanding our knowledge of recent patterns of internal migration to the South is important given the potential of such population shifts to alter the social, economic, cultural, and political landscape of the nation.

Research Questions

In the current article, we examine whether late 20th-century trends in black southern migration—that is, what Frey (2004) has termed the “New Great Migration”—have continued into the first decade of the 21st century. To do so, we ask four main research questions:

1. Has the higher rate of black (vs. white) southern migration to the Census South continued into the 21st century?
2. Are blacks more likely than whites to choose a southern destination when interstate migration decisions are made?
3. Do black and white southern migrants constitute a demographically distinct migration stream?
4. Do black and white southern migrants report different reasons for migrating to the South?

This final research question represents—to the best of our knowledge—the first attempt to bring data on migrants’ motivations into research on interregional migration generally, and on southern migration in particular.

Data and Measures

To answer our research questions, we draw on data from a series of monthly nationwide surveys of the U.S. labor force—the CPS—conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor during the first decade of the 21st century. The CPS is representative of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population, and each monthly survey covers approximately 50,000 households. In contrast to the U.S. Census Bureau’s decennial enumeration of the entire population—the empirical basis of most research on internal migration—the CPSs do not include those in military service and those living in institutional settings such as nursing homes and prisons (following the view that the movement of these subpopulations is not voluntary). Further, while both the Census and the CPS identify a person’s current residence, and where the person resided at some
earlier time interval, they differ in the time intervals used to assess geographical mobility: the Census identifies where a person resided five years earlier, while the CPS asks about a person’s residence one year earlier. This means that estimates of the total volume of geographical mobility are likely to be lower for the CPS given the shorter time frame. Finally, a key advantage of the CPS is that (unlike the Census) they collect (in each March survey) data on the personal motivations of those making a change of residence (details below). Thus, whereas most prior migration research has focused only on the objective status characteristics of migrants, the CPS data allow for direct examination (rather than imputation) of motivational factors shaping migration choices. We turn next to a description of our key measures.

**Region**

Region is defined using the U.S. Census classification of 16 states and the District of Columbia as the South and all other states as the non-South.

**Regional Residence/Mobility Patterns**

We examine the residence/migration patterns of persons who lived in the non-South one year prior to a particular March CPS. Beginning with the South/non-South as an initial dichotomy, we focus on two facts about persons’ residences: (1) the state where a person lived one year prior to a CPS and (2) the state where a person lived at the time of the survey. Using these two data points, we identify three resident/migrant types: stable residents of the non-South (NNs), migrants who moved within the non-South (NNm), and migrants who moved to the South (NS). As such, the “NNs” type refers to persons who lived in a nonsouthern state one year earlier, and who resided in that same nonsouthern state at the time of the survey. The “NNm” type refers to persons who lived in a nonsouthern state one year earlier, but who resided in a different nonsouthern state at the time of the survey. The “NS” type refers to persons who lived in a nonsouthern state one year earlier but resided in a southern state at the time of the survey. Isolating the latter two types is important in allowing us to differentiate southern migrants from those who are on the move outside of the South.

**Selection Factors**

We examine age, education, and gender to see if migrants to the South differ from either stable residents of, or migrants within, the non-South. Age is measured in years and, because we are interested in the migration decisions of adults, we focus on people ages 21 and above, and the factors involved
in their migration patterns. Gender is coded 1 if female, 0 if male, and is examined to see (1) whether trends in migration are due to differentials in movement by men or women, and (2) if different migration patterns show distinctive gender patterns. Education is measured with a dummy variable identifying those who have education beyond a high school diploma (some college = 1, high school diploma or less education = 0).

**Reasons for Moving**

All respondents who moved were asked their main reason for moving, and their responses were coded by the CPS into four general categories: family, employment, housing, and “other” reasons. We measure each of these four general categories with dummy variables, and use “other” reasons as the excluded category in our regression models.

**Year of Survey**

Because the CPS data we utilize derive from a repeated cross-sectional design (i.e., separate waves of a survey aggregated over a span of years), we include a variable for “year of survey” as a control in our regression models. In addition, this variable provides a glimpse into over-time trends in migration (e.g., a positive coefficient means that the modeled outcome—that is, southern migration—has increased).

**Sample Weights**

Following CPS recommendations, we observe the weighting variable “perwt” in all of the analyses reported herein.

**Findings and Discussion**

Table 1 presents the residence/migration profiles for persons living in the non-South one year prior to a March CPS, and provides initial answers to our first two research questions: Has the higher rate of black versus white southern migration continued into the 21st century, and are blacks more likely than whites to choose a southern destination when interstate moves are made? We first examine the patterns for the 11 aggregated surveys, and then examine changes within shorter time intervals.

Across all 11 surveys, the data suggest a higher rate of movement south on the part of blacks (0.9 percent) than whites (0.6 percent). Across the four shorter time intervals, we see only a very slight increase for blacks (from 0.8 in
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNs</td>
<td>Stable nonsoutherner</td>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNm</td>
<td>Nonsouthern migrant</td>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Southern migrant</td>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrants to the South as a percentage of all migrants NS / (NNm + NS)

|                  | 26 | 33 | 23 | 30 | 24 | 29 | 35 | 47 | 33 | 45 |

Difference by race (%; black – white)

|                  | 7  | 7  | 5  | 12 | 12 |

**NOTE:** Non-South refers to all nonsouthern states following the U.S. Census definitions.
21st-Century Trends in Black Southern Migration

2000–2002 to 0.9 in 2009–2010) and a very slight decrease for whites (from 0.6 in 2000–2002 to 0.5 in 2009–2010). Looking at the lower panel of Table 1, we see that—among those changing their state of residence—blacks are more likely than whites to choose a southern destination. This pattern holds overall (33 vs. 26 percent), within each shorter time interval, and grows over time (a 7 percentage point difference in 2000–2002 becomes a 12 percentage point difference by 2009–2010). In addition, between 2006 and 2010, the percentage of interstate migrants heading south approaches one-half (45–47 percent) among blacks versus approximately one-third (33–35 percent) among whites. In sum, Table 1 demonstrates affirmative answers to our first two questions: (1) higher rates of black southern migration have continued into the first decade of the 21st century, and (2) among those on the move, blacks are more likely than whites to choose a southern destination.

Our third research question concerns whether black southern migrants constitute a demographically distinctive migration stream. Specifically, do black southern migrants differ from blacks who remained in the non-South? And, do they differ from white southern migrants? Table 2 presents the results of binary logistic regression analyses designed to assess whether the finding that blacks are more likely than whites to choose a southern destination (Table 1) is robust when controlling for other ways in which migrants differ. These models also specify the sociodemographic factors shaping migration, and whether these differ for whites and blacks.

The first panel of Table 2 contains estimates for the model predicting southern migration (NS = 1) versus being a stable resident of the non-South (NNs = 0), and the second panel contains estimates for the model predicting southern migration (NS = 1) versus being a migrant within the non-South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant to South (NS = 1) vs. Stable Non-South (NNs = 0)</th>
<th>Migrant to South (NS = 1) vs. Migrant Within Non-South (NNm = 0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALL Whites</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−0.03*</td>
<td>−0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child present</td>
<td>−0.41*</td>
<td>−0.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of survey</td>
<td>−0.02*</td>
<td>0.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>37.59</td>
<td>43.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Underline indicates that blacks differ from whites in effect of covariate (p < 0.001).

*p < 0.001.
In each panel, we report results from an initial model using the total sample (labeled “ALL”) to examine the “main effect” of race on the choice of the South as a regional destination. We then report results from identical models (minus the race dummy variable) run within the white and black subsamples to examine possible race differences in the effects of the sociodemographic covariates. To test for significant differences by race in the set of predictors, we ran fully saturated race-by-covariate interaction models for each outcome (not shown) and evaluated the significance of the Wald test statistic for each interaction term. Results from separate models run within race subgroups are presented in Table 2 for ease of interpretation.

The two models using the total sample (first column of each panel) show that blacks are significantly more likely than whites to move to the South, compared with both stable residents of the non-South, and with persons who moved within the non-South. The latter finding reinforces the image that—among persons who are geographically mobile—blacks are more likely than whites to choose the South when making state-to-state migration decisions. Regarding the sociodemographic correlates of southern migration, the first comparison (with stable residents of the non-South) shows that southern migrants are disproportionately female, younger, more educated, more likely to be married, and less likely to be living with a child. Here, the age, education, and “child-free” patterns fit with the expectations of conventional migration theory, while the gender and marital status patterns do not (i.e., the “typical” migrant, in most past research, is male and single, in addition to being younger, more educated, and relatively “child free”). These same basic patterns of effects (in terms of direction and significance) prevail when the models are run within race subgroups, though statistically significant white/black differences exist in the magnitude of each association. Specifically, the tendencies of southern migrants to be disproportionately female and married are somewhat more pronounced among blacks, while the tendencies of southern migrants to be younger, more educated, and “child free” are somewhat stronger among whites.

Regarding the comparison of southern migrants with their mobile counterparts outside of the South, our analyses show that southern migrants are disproportionately female, older, less educated, more likely to be married, and less likely to be living with children. Thus, the main departure from the prior models comparing southern migrants with stable nonsoutherners is that: when compared with those “on the move” outside of the South, southern migrants are significantly older and less educated. Given that the same general pattern of effects is seen among whites (and all black/white comparisons are significant except for the “age” variable), we note two important departures from these patterns observed among blacks: black southern migrants are significantly more educated, and more likely to be living with a child than their nonsouthern migrant counterparts.

All told, Table 2 results reaffirm the conclusions that (1) blacks are more likely to choose the South as a regional destination, and (2) the emerging black migration stream is demographically distinctive—particularly when migrants
with different regional destinations are directly compared. Regarding the latter, the unique education effect observed among black southern migrants resonates with Frey’s claim that the U.S. South is attracting the “best and brightest” of the African-American community. Further, that black southern migrants are more likely to be living with children (relative to blacks “on the move” outside of the South), alongside the fact that the black migration stream to the South is disproportionately married and female, resonates with arguments that unique family-centered selection factors may be shaping the migration decisions of black women (Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2008; Stack, 1996). To explore in greater detail the possibility of a distinctive family-motivated pattern underlying black southern migration, we turn to an examination of the reasons interregional migrants cite for making a move.

**Reasons for Moving**

Our final research question concerns the (possible) role of subjective motivations in migration decisions, and whether these factors vary by race and/or destination. Table 3 presents the reasons for moving reported by CPS respondents who made an interstate move in the year preceding when they were surveyed. Respondents were asked for their main motivation for moving and could choose one from among 17 or 18 particular reasons, depending on the year of a survey. As noted in the methods section, we follow the default CPS groupings of reasons in our analyses: family, work, housing, and “other.”

Table 3 results demonstrate differences, by race, in how gender and destination shape subjective motivations for an interstate move. Among whites, regardless of gender or regional destination, “work” is consistently the most often cited reason, followed by “family,” “housing,” and “other” reasons, in that order. In contrast, among blacks, the reasons reported for making a move differ by both destination and gender. First, among blacks moving within the non-South (NNm), family is the primary reason given by males (30 percent), while housing is the primary reason cited by females (37 percent). In contrast, among blacks moving to the South (NS), work is the most common reason among males (39 percent), while family is the most frequent among females (43 percent).

The white/black difference in motivation is especially marked in the area of family reasons: while both white and black males cite work most frequently, black males (28 percent) are also more likely to cite family reasons than are white males (20 percent). And, among females, fully 43 percent of blacks in the southern migration stream cite family reasons, compared to only 27 percent.

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2 Most of the surveys offered 17 reasons, but a new category of “natural disaster” was added in 2006 following Hurricane Katrina. A table providing a detailed listing and breakdown of these reasons is available from the authors upon request.
TABLE 3
Reasons for Moving (in Percentages) Provided by Interstate Migrants Who Were Living Outside of the South One Year Prior to a CPS, by Race, Gender, and Regional Destination (Native-Born Persons, Ages 21 and Older, Aggregated 2000–2010 March CPSs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Moving</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Black Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNm</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NNm</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reason</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work reason</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing reason</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other” reasons</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted N (in thousands)</td>
<td>8,117</td>
<td>3,009</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NNm = migrant within the non-South; NS = migrant to the South; underline indicates the most frequently mentioned reason. All destination differences (NNm vs. NS) are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) for all four “reasons” within all four race/gender groupings.

of whites. These data demonstrate that, for black females, family-centered motivations have the most general predictive power relative to understanding movement to a southern destination, while work-based motivations play a corresponding role among black males. These results point to the conclusion that, in addition to being demographically distinctive, the black southern migration stream is also unique in terms of some important subjective factors underlying migration.

To assess whether the gender distinctiveness observed for black southern migrants is robust in a multivariate context, we ran a series of logistic regression models comparing southern migrants (NS = 1) with their counterparts who migrated outside of the South (NNm = 0), reported in Table 4. These regressions replicate the second model run within the black subsample in Table 2, but add the “reasons” factors as predictors. We further stratified the black subsample by gender, and report two models within each gender category: Model 1 contains only the “reasons” as predictors, while Model 2 adds in the sociodemographic predictors to assess whether effects of the subjective/motivational factors (reasons) are robust to the inclusion of the sociodemographics. We determined significance of male/female differences in the effects of the predictors via a fully saturated “gender by covariate” interaction model, but present our results stratified by gender for ease of interpretation. All male/female differences in the impact of the predictors are significant with the sole exception of the “child present” variable.

Table 4 results confirm that the gender difference observed among blacks in Table 3 is sustained in a multivariate context: black males are primarily motivated by work-related factors, while black females are primarily motivated by family-centered ones. Among black males, relative to “other” reasons for migrating (the excluded category), family and housing reasons negatively predict southern migration (vs. migration elsewhere), while work-related reasons positively predict southern migration, before and after sociodemo-
TABLE 4

Binary Logistic Regression Estimates of Migration to the South (Versus Migration Within the Non-South) for Native-Born Blacks, by Gender (Ages 21 and Older, Aggregated March Current Population Surveys, 2000–2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for moving</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>Black Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reason</td>
<td>−0.235*</td>
<td>−0.296*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work reason</td>
<td>0.195*</td>
<td>0.092*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing reason</td>
<td>−0.824*</td>
<td>−0.949*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sociodemographics

| Age                | 0.007*      | 0.005*        |
| Some college       | −0.134*     | −0.056*       |
| Married            | 0.489*      | 0.170*        |
| Child present      | 0.068*      | 0.073*        |
| Year of survey     | 0.059*      | 0.075*        |
| Constant           | −0.490      | −118.905      | −0.252  | −150.740 |

Note: All male/female differences statistically significant at p < 0.001 level except “child present.”

*p < 0.001.

graphic controls. In contrast, among black females, relative to “other” reasons for migrating, work and housing reasons negatively predict southern migration (vs. migration elsewhere), while family-related reasons positively predict southern migration, before and after sociodemographic controls. These findings clearly underscore the need for more research into the interplay of race, gender, and interregional migration in the United States. We discuss this, and other avenues for future research, in our concluding remarks below, which focus on the most important implications of our findings as well as key questions to be addressed when the 2010 Census materials become more widely available.

Conclusions

Our analysis of CPS data from 2000 to 2010 shows that most of the previously documented 20th-century trends concerning black southern migration are present in the first decade of the 21st century. The CPS data show that (1) blacks have continued to move south at higher rates than whites, and (2) among those on the move, blacks are more likely than whites to choose a southern destination. Although some of the estimates of the rates of black southern migration are lower than those reported in work using Census data (e.g., Hunt, Hunt, and Falk, 2008), these differences are likely attributable to the shorter migration interval used in CPSs. Our results further document the demographic distinctiveness of black southern migrants, and
add important new insights regarding the role of subjective motivations in interregional migration. Our analysis of motivations also reveals some important gender differences within the black migration stream, pointing to unique family-related selection factors among black women.

One important implication of our findings is the need for more work examining the ways in which the black southern migration stream fits Frey’s image of its participants as the “best and brightest.” The CPS data demonstrate, for instance, that the black southern migration stream is unique in being disproportionately educated compared to both stable nonsoutherners and to blacks who are “on the move” outside of the South. Especially important in future research will be the examination of the factors leading to the disproportionate female presence in that migration stream—that is, future work should explore the way gender shapes migration dynamics in the black community by identifying the major push and pull factors leading black males and black females along possibly different paths. Do higher incarceration rates for black males (Western, 2007; Alexander, 2010) mean they are less available for movement to the South? Is the comparatively higher education of black females leading them to be disproportionately selected to southern labor markets? And, is the central role of women in the black family system a factor generating intergenerational connections, as Carol Stack (1996) has hypothesized, thus disproportionately leading black women to reclaim their southern roots? More research on the intersections of gender, education, labor markets, and the criminal justice system would be helpful in this regard.

Our findings also underscore the importance of examining the role of subjective motivations for migration. Our observation of white/black differences in stated reasons for making interstate moves, as well as important gender differences within the black migration stream, point to the need for research that moves beyond the “sociodemographic grid” forming the framework for most past and current studies of interregional migration. While the general categories used in the CPSs lack important specificity, their analysis lends a measure of support to the ethnographic work of Stack (1996). The fact that black women migrating to the South are unique in their emphasis on family-based reasons for moving suggests the centrality of kin connections in the minds of this important demographic group—a sociocultural force rarely considered in a research field focused primarily on the political and economic antecedents and consequences of an emergent New South.

REFERENCES


