Geographical Mobility

Special Studies

1990 to 1995

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From the local to the national level, residential mobility, internal migration, and immigration are critical in determining population growth and decline. In addition to its effect on geographic areas, migration also has a number of outcomes - such as economic opportunity or residential satisfaction - for individuals. Every ten years, the census asks individuals where they lived five years previously. This report examines data from

the same question asked in 1995 by the Current Population Survey (CPS), providing migration information for the first five years of the decade, a period not covered by the census. How populations change has implications for federal, state, and local governments, as well as for private industry.

moves are those that occur within the same state, either within counties (intracounty) or between counties. Interstate moves are those that cross state boundaries, as well as movement from abroad (movers who leave the United States are not identified). Though not true in all cases, we treat these different types of moves as forming a distance continuum. That is, intracounty moves are described as the shortest, followed by intrastate moves, interstate mobility, and movement from abroad.

This report examines data based on a 5-year migration question from the March 1995 CPS. The 5-year mobility question asks for information about respondents five years and older concerning whether they lived in the same dwelling five years previously. If the answer is no, then they are counted as movers. This type of question does not capture repeat migration (multiple moves during the 5-year period) or return migration (people who leave a residence and return within the 5-year period). Moves can be classified as intrastate or interstate. Intrastate

Table 1. **Five-Year Moving Rates: 1975-1980 to 1990-1995**

(Numbers in thousands)

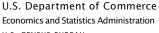
				F		residence of movers ent distribution)				
	Total.					Differen				
Migration interval	5 years and older	Number of movers	Moving rate	Total	Same county	Same state	Differ- ent state	Movers from abroad		
1990-1995 1985-1990 1980-1985 1975-1980	241,805 230,446 216,108 210,323	106,616 107,649 90,126 97,629	44.1 46.7 41.7 46.4	100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0	56.7 54.5 53.1 54.0	20.0 20.7 21.8 21.1	18.5 20.1 20.8 20.9	4.9 4.7 4.3 4.0		

Source: 1995 March CPS; 1990 Census; 1985 March CPS; 1980 Census.

Current Population Reports

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U.S. CENSUS BUREAU





Table 2.

Five-Year Moving Rates by Selected Characteristics: 1990-1995

				residence ent distrib	of movers ution)	·
				Different	t county	
Selected characteristics	Moving rate	Total	Same county	Same state	Differ- ent state	Movers from abroad
Age 5 to 9 years	55.0 45.5 41.7 62.9 74.7 63.2 50.3 41.9 32.0 24.2 17.1 14.7 18.7	100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0	59.9 59.4 60.9 52.8 55.9 57.1 58.3 57.9 55.1 56.9 55.1	18.3 17.6 16.6 21.9 21.1 21.2 20.1 19.5 19.9 21.6 20.6 21.5 22.0	17.3 18.2 15.7 18.9 20.2 18.1 18.3 18.4 18.4 19.5 20.7 19.5 22.0	4.5 4.8 6.8 6.5 5.8 4.7 4.6 3.8 3.9 3.7 1.9 0.8
Race and Hispanic Origin White non-Hispanic Black non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander	41.5	100.0	54.0	22.4	20.7	2.9
	47.6	100.0	66.4	15.1	15.1	3.4
non-Hispanic	54.0	100.0	47.8	13.9	14.1	24.2
	55.6	100.0	64.8	12.7	10.0	12.6
Sex Male	44.6	100.0	55.8	20.1	19.0	5.1
	43.6	100.0	57.5	19.9	18.0	4.6
Housing Tenure Owner occupied	31.2	100.0	57.1	21.8	18.7	2.6
	72.0	100.0	56.4	18.3	18.2	7.1
Education (For those age 25 and over) Less than 9th grade 9th-12th grade, no diploma . High school graduate Some college or AA degree . Bachelor's degree Prof. or graduate degree	33.6	100.0	63.8	13.5	11.4	11.4
	38.2	100.0	65.9	17.7	12.4	4.0
	37.5	100.0	60.7	19.6	16.5	3.2
	43.7	100.0	54.7	22.0	19.9	3.4
	48.4	100.0	47.7	23.5	23.6	5.0
	42.8	100.0	42.3	23.2	28.5	6.1
Marital Status (For those age 15 and over) Married Divorced or Separated Widowed Never married	39.9	100.0	54.0	20.8	20.2	5.0
	54.7	100.0	60.4	21.0	15.9	2.6
	22.1	100.0	60.0	20.0	16.6	3.4
	49.1	100.0	56.7	19.7	17.6	6.0
Family Income (In 1994, for those age 15 and older) Less than \$10,000\$10,000 to \$19,999\$20,000 to \$29,999\$30,000 to \$39,999\$50,000 to \$49,999\$50,000 to \$74,999\$75,000 and over	49.2 47.1 46.5 44.2 41.1 39.5 36.4 36.3	100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0	63.4 56.9 56.0 56.6 56.7 55.8 53.8 49.8	16.5 18.7 19.9 20.8 21.0 23.3 23.3 23.0	14.9 18.0 19.5 18.0 18.9 18.6 20.0 24.0	5.2 6.4 4.6 4.6 3.4 2.9 3.3
Employment Status (For those age 16 and over) Employed	47.3	100.0	56.4	21.5	18.1	4.0
	54.6	100.0	58.1	17.2	19.0	5.7
	32.9	100.0	55.4	19.0	19.0	6.7
Region Northeast Midwest South West	33.9	100.0	60.0	19.0	14.5	6.5
	42.4	100.0	59.0	22.8	15.5	2.6
	46.1	100.0	53.2	20.5	22.4	4.0
	51.9	100.0	57.6	17.3	17.8	7.2

About 107 million people moved during the 5-year period, most within the same county.

Between March 1990 and March 1995, 106.6 million people or 44.1 percent of the population moved (Table 1). This rate is slightly lower than the 46.7 percent moving rate between 1985 and 1990, as reported in the 1990 census. Of the 106.6 million people who changed residence between 1990 and 1995, 56.7 percent moved within the same county, 20 percent moved to a different county in the same state, 18.5 percent moved between states, and 4.9 percent moved to the United States from abroad.

Compared with prior 5-year periods since 1975, 1990-1995 saw a continued proportionate increase in shorter moves (intracounty), while longer moves tended to decline. Moves within the same county reached a new high (56.7 percent), while interstate moves and moves to a different county in the same state both dropped to new lows (18.5 percent and 20.0 percent, respectively). The proportion of movers from abroad increased from 4.0 percent in the 1975-1980 period to 4.9 percent most recently.

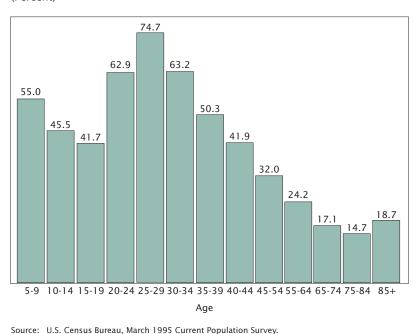
CHARACTERISTICS OF MOVERS

Moving rates differ by age, race, Hispanic origin, income, housing tenure, marital status, education, and employment status². Since the CPS identifies these socioeconomic characteristics, it lends itself well to this analysis. Table 2 shows mobility rates by many of these basic characteristics.

Comparisons between data from the CPS and the decennial census must be made with caution because of sampling and non-sampling variability. Data from the decennial census are for the total resident population of the United States, whereas data from the March CPS are for the civilian noninstitutional population plus members of the armed forces living off post or with their families on post, and thus they are not totally comparable.

² All characteristics of individuals are measured in 1995.

Figure 1. Five-Year Moving Rates by Age: 1990-1995 (Percent)



25 to 29 year olds had the highest moving rates.

Moving rates were highest for young adults, as 74.7 percent of 25 to 29 year olds moved during the 1990-1995 period. About 63 percent of 20 to 24 year olds and of 30 to 34 year olds also moved during this period. For older ages, the rate continued to fall, at least until very advanced ages: by ages 75 to 84, the rate was only 14.7 percent. Moving rates tended to be higher for young adults because of their relatively higher frequency of life course events (such as marriage, child birth, or a new job).

Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders were highly mobile.

Hispanics and non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders had the highest moving rates (about 55 percent). Non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites had lower moving rates (47.6 percent and 41.5 percent, respectively). Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics were most likely to make the shortest distance moves (within the same

county). Not including moves from abroad, non-Hispanic Whites had the highest intercounty and interstate moving rates among the given racial and ethnic groups. Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders were by far the most likely to have moved from abroad (24.2 percent). Hispanics were also much more likely than non-Hispanic Blacks or non-Hispanic Whites to have come to the United States from abroad (including Puerto Rico) during the 5-year period.

Table 3 shows that some of the mobility differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites can be attributed to age. Although Hispanic moving rates are higher than non-Hispanic Whites in every age category, the difference is particularly great among 5 to 19 year olds. Standardized overall moving rates show that even if the Hispanic population had the same age distribution as the non-Hispanic White population, the moving rate would still have been higher for Hispanics (49.3 percent compared with 41.5 percent). Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders' moving rates are only higher for age groups over 50, yet the standardized overall moving rate is still higher than that of non-Hispanic Whites (51.4 percent compared with 41.5 percent).

Lower-income groups were more likely to move than higher-income groups.

People in families in lower-income categories were more likely to move than those in higher-income categories. Almost 50 percent of those living in families with income less than \$10,000 per year moved during the 5-year period, compared with about 36 percent of those living in families with income over \$75,000. Some of the disparity in moving rates between low- and high-income groups may reflect differences in homeownership patterns, particularly the higher proportion of renters among families with low incomes.

Table 3.

Five-Year Moving Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin and Age: 1990-1995

Age	White non- Hispanic	Black non- Hispanic	Asian and Pacific Islander non- Hispanic	Hispanic (of any race)
5 to 19 years	44.3	51.9	52.8	57.7
20 to 29 years	68.8	65.6	68.8	72.4
30 to 39 years	55.8	55.1	66.7	62.7
40 to 49 years	36.4	42.0	47.5	45.9
50 to 64 years	25.6	25.2	38.0	31.8
65 years and over	15.7	18.9	31.8	20.3
Total	41.5	47.6	54.0	55.6
Standardized mobility rate.	*41.5	43.9	51.4	49.3

^{*} Standardized by age, White non-Hispanic as reference category.

Renters were more likely to move than homeowners.

Seventy-two percent of renters (people in renter-occupied housing units) moved during the 5-year period, compared with 31.2 percent of homeowners (people in owner-occupied housing units). Distance moved was not much affected, however: similar percentages of owners and renters moved within the same county, and to different states. However, a higher percentage of renters than owners were movers from abroad.

Divorced people were more likely to move than married or single people.

Among those 15 years and older, divorced and separated people were most likely to have moved, followed by people who had never married, and then by married people. Widowed people were least likely to have moved. Age could explain some of this variation, particularly the higher moving rates of those never married and the low rates of widowed people.

The highly educated were more likely to move.

People 25 years and older with at least some college education were more likely to move than those with only a high school education or less. Those with a bachelor's degree had the highest moving rate (48.4 percent), while those with less than a 9th grade education had the lowest (33.6 percent). Further education creates more job opportunities for the individual, possibly increasing one's chance of moving for job-related reasons.

In addition, movers with at least some college education were likely to have moved longer distances. For instance, 28.5 percent of moves made by those with professional or graduate degrees were to a different state, compared with just 12.4 percent of moves made by those with only 9 to 12 years of education. This difference could indicate that better educated people move longer distances for better paying jobs.

Finally, those with less than a 9th grade education had the highest percentage (11.4 percent) of moves from abroad. Second highest were those with professional or graduate degrees (6.0 percent), followed by those with bachelors' degrees (5.0 percent). This rate could reflect the dichotomous nature of the immigrant/foreign population, which consists of both highly and not so highly educated people.

The unemployed were more likely to move than the employed.

Unemployed people were more likely to have moved than the employed (54.6 percent compared with 47.3 percent). Those not in the labor force have the lowest mobility rate at 32.9 percent, which may reflect the high number of elderly and retired people in this category.

Though overall mobility rates between men and women are similar, there are some gender differences among the unemployed, whose moving rates were 52.1 percent for men and 58.0 percent for women (Table 4). This gender difference for the unemployed is only statistically significant for non-Hispanic Whites. Employed Hispanic men tend to move more than employed Hispanic women, but there are no significant gender differences among other racial and ethnic groups.

REGIONAL MOVEMENTS

The migration of people within the country changes the distribution of population. This section examines net migration changes and the

characteristics of migrants among the regions of the United States (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West).

Migration rates vary among regions depending on both region and historical period. As shown in Figure 2, both the South and West have been magnets for migrants coming from the Northeast and Midwest regions since the mid-1960s. Although this is still generally the case, data in this report show a slowdown in net loss from the Midwest, and no net gain in the West due to internal migration³.

High mobility rates were found in the West.

In the 1990-1995 period, the mobility rate was higher for Western residents— 51.9 percent — than for those in other regions (see Table 2). The second highest rate was for Southerners (46.1 percent), followed by Midwesterners at 42.4 percent. Northeastern residents had the lowest mobility rate —33.9 percent. Residents of the South and West were more likely to have made longdistance moves (to another state or from abroad) than Midwestern and Northeastern residents (26.4 percent and 25.0 percent compared with 18.1 percent and 21.0 percent, respectively)4.

Table 4.

Five-Year Moving Rates by Employment Status, Sex, and Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990-1995

	Empl	oyed	Unemployed			
Race and Hispanic origin	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Total	47.5 45.3 48.8 61.3	47.1 46.0 48.0 54.7	52.1 48.8 55.7 61.5	58.0 55.4 57.1 67.9		

³ These regional migration data do not include immigration from abroad, but rather are limited to moves among regions of the United States.

⁴The percentage of residents in the South and West who made long-distance moves are not statistically different from each other.

Table 5.
Migration Flows, Inmigrants, Outmigrants, and Net
Internal Migration by Region: 1990-1995

(Numbers in thousands)

From residence		Tota				
in 1990	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	outmigration	
Total inmigration.	1,162	2,191	4,682	2,269		
Northeast		387	1,586	505	2,478	
Midwest	281		1,613	749	2,643	
South	613	1,025		1,015	2,653	
West	268	779	1,483	,	2,530	
Net migration	*-1,316	*-452	*2,029	-261		

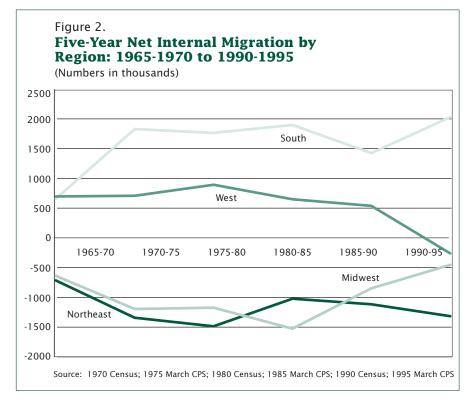
^{*} The net migration flows are significantly different from zero.

Only the South experienced a net gain of internal migrants.

As Table 5 indicates, over two million more people moved into the South than left it in the 1990-1995 period. The Northeast and Midwest experienced net losses due to internal migration, with the Northeast losing 1.3 million people and the Midwest losing 452,000.

The apparent net migration loss in the West is not large enough to be significantly different from zero. However, the 1990-1995 period marks the first time the West did

not experience a net migration gain in the 5-year periods since 1965-1970 (see Figure 2), although the net gain has been slowly declining since the 1975-1980 period. The Northeast and Midwest had continual net migration losses over the 30-year period, while the South experienced a net migration gain in each 5-year period. However, the Midwest lost fewer people between 1990 and 1995 than during any other of the 5-year periods since 1970, and net losses have declined steadily in the Midwest since the 1980-1985 period.



Both young and old moved to the South, left the Northeast.

Table 6. with selected characteristics of migrants for regions, shows that the South gained more people than it lost for most age groups in the 1990-1995 period. For instance, the South experienced a net gain of 528,000 people ages 5 to 19; 262,000 people ages 20 to 29; and 607,000 people ages 45 to 74. The Northeast lost people from almost all age groups, experiencing net losses of 357,000 people ages 5 to 19; 291,000 people ages 20 to 29; and 297,000 ages 45 to 74. The only other significant difference was found in the Midwest, where more 45 to 64 year olds left than came into the region.

Blacks moved to the South, left the Northeast and Midwest.

While regional migration patterns for non-Hispanic Whites are similar to those for the country as a whole, some variation is found among migration patterns for other racial and ethnic groups. The South gained 358,000 non-Hispanic Blacks, while there was a net loss of non-Hispanic Blacks from the Northeast and Midwest, and no significant difference in the size of the in and out migration flows for the West. The South gained 282,000 Hispanics through internal migration, while the Northeast and the West had more Hispanics move out than move in (net losses of 145,000 and 97,000, respectively).

The South gained people of all educational levels, while the Northeast lost them.

The South gained people age 25 and older across all educational backgrounds. In contrast, the Northeast had a net loss of people age 25 and older across all education groups. The West had a net loss of people with some college education and with less than a high school education. The Midwest had a net loss of people with professional or graduate degrees, as well as with a high school education or less.

Table 6. Inmigration, Outmigration, and Net Internal Migration for Regions by Selected Characteristics: 1990-1995

(Numbers in thousands)

	1	Northeast	t	Midwest			South			West		
Selected characteristics	ln	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net
Total	1,162	2,478	*-1,316	2,191	2,643	*-452	4,682	2,653	*2,029	2,269	2,530	-261
Age												
5 to 9 years	83	237	*-154	243	221	22	462	240	*222	201	291	-90
10 to 14 years	88	179	*-91	218	195	23	377	233	*143	173	248	-75
15 to 19 years	61	173	*-112	141	163	-22	296	133	*163	118	148	-30
20 to 24 years	154	323	*-169	256	324	-68	487	336	*151	295	208	87
25 to 29 years	195	317	*-122	346	390	-44	594	483	111	392	338	54
30 to 44 years	372	711	*-339	670	773	-103	1,411	830	*581	727	865	-138
45 to 64 years	159	362	*-203	240	425	*-185	750	289	*461	269	342	-73
65 to 74 years	22	116	*-94	41	83	-42	197	51	*146	54	63	-9
75 years and over	27	59	-32	36	69	-32	108	57	51	40	27	14
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White non-Hispanic	986	1,905	*-919	1,869	2,159	*-290	3,492	2,148	*1,344	1,798	1,931	-133
Black non-Hispanic	80	304	*-224	156	261	*-105	608	250	*358	197	224	-27
Asian and Pacific Islander												
non-Hispanic	37	44	-7	24	56	-32	84	72	12	94	67	27
Hispanic	51	196	*-145	112	151	-39	434	152	*282	165	262	*-97
Sex												
Male	593	1,246	*-653	1,152	1,320	*-168	2,347	1,370	*977	1,134	1,289	*-155
Female	569	1,231	*-662	1,038	1,323	*-285	2,335	1,283	*1,052	1,135	1,241	-106
Housing Tenure	504	1.011	* 700	1 100	1 000	100	0.400	1 000	*4.055	054	1 000	* 000
Owner occupied	524	1,244	*-720	1,138	1,306	-168	2,463	1,208	*1,255	954	1,322	*-368
Renter occupied	637	1,234	*-597	1,052	1,336	*-284	2,219	1,445	*774	1,315	1,208	107
Education												
(For those age 25 and over)		- 4				+ 00	400		****	40		
Less than 9th grade	11	54	*-43	57	95	*-38	186	67	*119	49	87	*-38
9th-12th grade, no diploma	46	99	*-53	71	135	*-64	243	74	*169	49	100	*-5
High school graduate	181	398	*-217	345	449	*-104	791	464	*327	368	373	- !
Some college or AA degree	157	384	*-227	361	434	-73	888	452	*436	387	522	*-13
Bachelor's degree	208	374	*-166	350	385	-35	575	412	*163	372	334	38
Prof. or graduate degree	171	255	*-84	150	242	*-92	378	240	*138	258	219	39
Marital Status												
(For those age 15 and over)												
Married	496	1,054	*-558	946	1,206	*-260	2,219	1,227	*992	1,029	1,203	*-17
Divorced or separated	110	185	*-75	203	283	*-80	434	254	*180	197	223	-2
Widowed	28	88	*-60	43	75	*-32	151	48	*103	38	48	-10
Never married	358	735	*-377	537	662	*-125	1,039	650	*389	630	516	*114
Family Income In 1994, for those age 15												
and over)												
_ess than \$9,999	280	660	*-380	535	721	*-186	1,259	634	*625	537	596	-5
\$10,000 to \$19,999	210	469	*-259	403	511	*-108	921	508	*413	413	458	-4
520,000 to \$29,999	145	275	*-130	241	306	*-65	513	349	*164	309	278	3
630.000 to \$39.999	106	205	*-99	190	217	-27	338	176	*162	166	203	-3
640.000 to \$49.999	53	100	*-47	71	121	*-50	160	112	*48	127	80	*4
650,000 to \$59,999	52	52	0	61	75	-14	92	84	8	68	60	4
660,000 to \$74,999			*-31						9			
675,000 and over	38 54	69 93	*-39	47 76	40 91	7 -15	91 159	82 99	*60	65 100	50 106	1:
Employment Status												
For those age 16 and over)												
Employed	667	1,300	*-633	1,223	1,401	*-178	2,283	1,453	*830	1,270	1,289	-19
Unemployed	55	87	*-32	70	103	-33	197	119	*78	98	111	-13

^{*} The net migration flows are significantly different from zero.

SUMMARY

Analysis of the March 1995 CPS shows that for 1990-1995, mobility rates varied by a number of characteristics including age, race, Hispanic origin, marital status, income, employment status, and housing tenure. During this period, people who were 20 to 29 years old, of races other than White, unemployed, divorced, renting, or in families with lower incomes were more likely to move than their demographic counterparts. Regional data, limited to domestic migration, show continued net gain in the South with continued net loss in the Northeast and Midwest. For the first of the 5-year periods since data have been collected, the West did not have a net gain of migrants.

SOURCE OF DATA

Most estimates in this report come from data collected in the March 1995 CPS, but some estimates are based on data collected in the CPS and the decennial census of earlier years. The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month but collects the data on residential migration only in March. The 5-year migration question is only asked in the middle of each decade, providing a fairly comparable time series of migration data for 5-year periods.

ACCURACY OF ESTIMATES

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Non-sampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately

answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process–including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, reviewing the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact Alfred Meier, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, at 301-457-4220 or on the Internet at Alfred.G.Meier@census.gov.

DETAILED INFORMATION

A set of detailed tabulations consisting of 29 tables from the 1995 March CPS shows more detailed characteristics of movers and nonmovers by type of move, for the United States and regions. The electronic version of these tables is available on the Internet at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site (www.census.gov). Once on the site, go to "Subjects A to Z," then click on "M," and finally on "Migration."

An abbreviated paper version (without the race and geographic repeats) is available as PPL-137 for \$27.50. To receive a paper copy, send a request for "PPL-137, Geographical Mobility: 1990-1995," along with a check or money order in the amount of \$27.50 payable to Commerce-Census-88-00-9010, to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call the Population Division's Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing Current Population Report P23 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report. Contact the Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422.

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USER COMMENTS

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