The New Great Migration and Black Marriage Patterns in the South

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Background

- There have been dramatic changes in family formation patterns.
  - Marriage rates have been declining for men and women (Schweizer, 2020).
  - Median age at first marriage has risen for people in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).
  - Lower proportion of men and women have ever married (Carlson, 2020).
  - Marriage has become selective of the college-educated (Schweizer, 2020).

- There are stark racial differences in marriage patterns.
  - Compared to their White counterparts, Black adults are:
    - Less likely to marry (Mayol-García et al., 2020)
    - Marry at later ages (Mayol-García et al., 2020)
    - More likely to divorce (Schweizer, 2019)
Percent Never Married among Those Aged 35 and Older by Sex and Race: 1890 to 2010

Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1890-2000); American Community Survey (2010). For more information on the ACS, see http://www.census.gov/acs

The Great Migration, 1910 to 1970

The First Great Migration:
1910-1940

The Second Great Migration:
1940-1970

Justification for the South

• There has been a reverse Great Migration occurring since the 1970s, whereby many Black people are leaving non-Southern regions and migrating South.

• The South is attractive to many due to factors such as:
  • Lower cost of living (Inge, 2006)
  • Reduction of poverty (Curtis, 2018)
  • Enduring kinship ties (Tolnay, 2003)

• Black middle class is concentrated in the South, and college graduates have led the way (Frey, 2004).
Research Questions

• How is the prevalence of college-educated Black adults within Southern metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) associated with marriage prevalence among Black adults?

• How has this changed from 2005-2009 to 2015-2019?

• What demographic and economic variables attenuate the association between the prevalence of college-educated Black adults and marriage prevalence among Black people?
Data and Sample

- ACS is a nationally representative survey consisting of 3.5 million addresses across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

- Unit of analysis is MSA:
  - Only included MSAs that:
    - Were at least the size of the smallest congressional district for those periods
    - Had a Black population of at least 50,000
  - N = 32
Study Variables

• Dependent variable
  • Percentage of non-Hispanic Black alone adults aged 18+ living with a spouse

• Independent variables (within MSAs)
  • Percentage of Black adults aged 25+ with a bachelor’s degree or higher
  • Percentage of Black women between ages 15-49
  • Median age of Black people
  • Percentage of unemployed Black people aged 16-64
  • Percentage of households with a Black householder in poverty

• Analytic strategy
  • Ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions
Descriptive Results: College Education

• Southern states with a significantly higher percentage of college-educated Black adults:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005-2009 National Percentage of College-Educated Black Adults: 17.2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>Maryland</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2019 National Percentage of College-Educated Black Adults: 21.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of Black Adults Aged 25+ with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in the South, by MSA: 2005-2009

Map showing the percentage of Black adults aged 25+ with a Bachelor's degree or higher in the South, by MSA for the years 2005-2009. The map uses colors to indicate statistical significance as compared to the national average. The national average is 17.2%.

Note: Estimates tested against the 95% confidence level.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey, 5-Year estimates.
For more information about the ACS, refer to census.gov/acs.
Descriptive Results: Marriage

• Southern states with a significantly lower percentage of Black adults living with a spouse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005-2009 National Percentage of Black Adults Living with a Spouse: 32.8%</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
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<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of Black Adults Aged 18+ Living with a Spouse in the South, by MSA: 2005-2009

Statistical significance as compared to the national average
- Significantly higher
- No difference
- Significantly lower

U.S. percent is 32.8%

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Percentage of Black Adults Aged 18+ Living with a Spouse in the South, by MSA: 2015-2019

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# Bivariate Results

## Results of Bivariate OLS Regression Analyses Predicting Marriage Prevalence

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<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
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<td>Percentage Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage Unemployed</td>
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<td>Percentage in Poverty</td>
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Note: Green arrows denote a positive association, while red arrows denote a negative association.

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

N.S. = Not Significant

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year estimates

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Multivariate Results: 2005-2009

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Multivariate Results: 2015-2019

Results of OLS Multivariate Regression Predicting Marriage Prevalence

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Discussion

- Many Southern MSAs have both a higher prevalence of college-educated Black adults and a higher prevalence of married Black adults.

- Socioeconomic variables appear to play a stronger role in marriage prevalence than demographic variables like median age or percent female within MSA.
  - There is less practical importance of marriage, so economic factors like college education appear to be becoming increasingly important.

- The association between college education and marriage prevalence became stronger over time.
  - Those without college degrees may become increasingly likely to delay or forgo marriage.
References


Thank You!

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