Migration trends within the San Francisco Bay Area, 1990-2010

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Background

Idea of “exodus” from San Francisco and other large cities common in popular media during pandemic.

Data sources not widely available to analyze pandemic trends.

Analyzing earlier trends is an exploratory step toward analyzing pandemic trends when data becomes available.

Methods

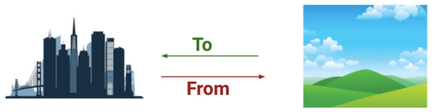
IRS migration data includes the flow of exemptions and income for pairs of origin and destination counties.

Exemptions are roughly analogous to the number of people migrating.

Migration efficiency
for a single county

$$\text{Migration efficiency} = \frac{\text{In} - \text{Out}}{\text{In} + \text{Out}} \times 100$$

Stream migration efficiency
for a pair of counties



$$\text{Stream migration efficiency} = \frac{\text{To} - \text{From}}{\text{To} + \text{From}} \times 100$$

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Objectives

Explore use of IRS data to examine human migration patterns.

Discern trends in migration between areas with different levels of urbanization.

Results

Trends clearly differentiated across counties in both income and migrant flows.

Central metro areas consistently lost migrants on net, primarily to small and medium metro areas (see stream migration eff.)

Small and medium metro areas peak in migration efficiency around 2000.

Late 2000s see shifting trends as large central metro areas lose fewer migrants and large fringe metro areas increase in efficiency, while small and medium metro efficiency declined sharply.

Future directions

County-level data is limited in ability to analyze urban-suburban migration trends due to heterogeneity within counties

Utilizing other data: credit records, census, real estate, traffic

Expanding scope to all US metro areas

Analyzing trends pre-1990 and post-2010, especially during the pandemic.

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