The changing propensity to move home in England and Wales, 1971-2011: A micro-level analysis

Tony Champion, Tom Cooke, and Ian Shuttleworth

Newcastle University, University of Connecticut, and Queen's University Belfast respectively

Acknowledgements & disclaimer

- This presentation includes results from work undertaken as part of the ONS-LS 2011 Census Link Beta Test, with results revised using the finally released version
- The permission of the Office for National Statistics to use the Longitudinal Study (LS) is gratefully acknowledged, as also is the help provided by staff of the Centre for Longitudinal Study Information & User Support (CeLSIUS) which is supported by the ESRC Census of Population Programme (Award Ref: ES/K000365/1)
- This presentation has been cleared by ONS (Clearance Number 401006C), but the authors alone are responsible for the interpretation of the data

Background

- Central argument is that much social science theory assumes increased mobility
- But recent evidence from the USA suggests that longer-distance migration rates have decreased over the long term
- This seems to be caused by a combination of composition and rate (by subgroup) effects
- In PSP paper (Champion and Shuttleworth (2016a) using NHSCR data, we showed no long-term decline in inter-regional migration rates for England & Wales 1975-2011
- In our second PSP paper (Champion and Shuttleworth 2016b) we use ONS-LS microdata for 10-year address changes for 1971-81 through to 2001-2011 and over all distances

Structure of presentation

- Background (done!)
- Theoretical perspectives (briefly)
- International comparative experience
- 10-year address changing from the ONS-LS
  - Address changing by distance for 4 decades
  - Allowing for changes in population composition
- Interpretation of results
- Limitations, next steps & future directions

Theoretical perspectives

- Much social theory (e.g. Globalization, New Mobilities Paradigm) assumes that migration/mobility will increase over the long term because of social and economic change (Sheller & Urry, 2009; Cresswell, 2006)
- In his Mobility Transition hypothesis, Zelinsky (1971) relates increasing mobility to stages of socio-economic development from a 'traditional' to an 'advanced' society – although it should be noted that, in his 'fifth stage', migration may be replaced by other mobilities ('circulation')
- Furthermore, occupational trends in western societies (e.g. growth of higher-skill jobs) might be assumed to increase the chances of mobility structurally
- But are such assumptions warranted? Are populations in '(super-)advanced societies' becoming more mobile?
- Let's look at international experience on migration …

International experience on migration

- In some ways, the answer is ‘YES, more mobile’ – transnational labour has become a feature of ‘local’ labour markets in the USA and beyond
- But for internal migration in USA the answer is a clear ‘NO’ as declines in long-distance (inter-county/inter-state migration) have recently been noted in the US (Cooke 2011; Kaplan and Schulhofer-Wohl 2012)
- Same seems to be true for Canada, and Australia and indeed other countries although no long-term decline in longer-distance migration rates of England & Wales using NHSCR data
- Is the NHSCR data correct? What about trends in shorter-distance migration?
- ONS-LS is an alternative source, with many advantages including precise distance of all address changes between censuses

The advantages of the ONS-LS

- 4/365 of the population (much larger than APS/LFS, BHPS/US, Birth Cohort Studies)
- high level of individual-person linkage between censuses (cf attrition of panel surveys, especially of migrants)
- even longer time coverage than the NHSCR dataset, i.e. back to 1971
- detailed geography of usual residence at each census, providing distance of 10-year change of address
- fair range of personal characteristics (unlike only age and sex in NHSCR), for which categories can be made fairly consistent over time (except students' usual address switching from vacation to termtime in 2001)
- available for micro-level analysis, albeit under the often challenging conditions of using the ONS's VML

The challenges of using the ONS LS

- Variable set not consistent through time – for example ethnicity only 1991 onwards
- Changing variable categories – for example educational levels
- Different population bases – for example, students and where they are counted
- Different spatial referencing practices in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001
- Migration measured as a transition – but what about multiple moves?

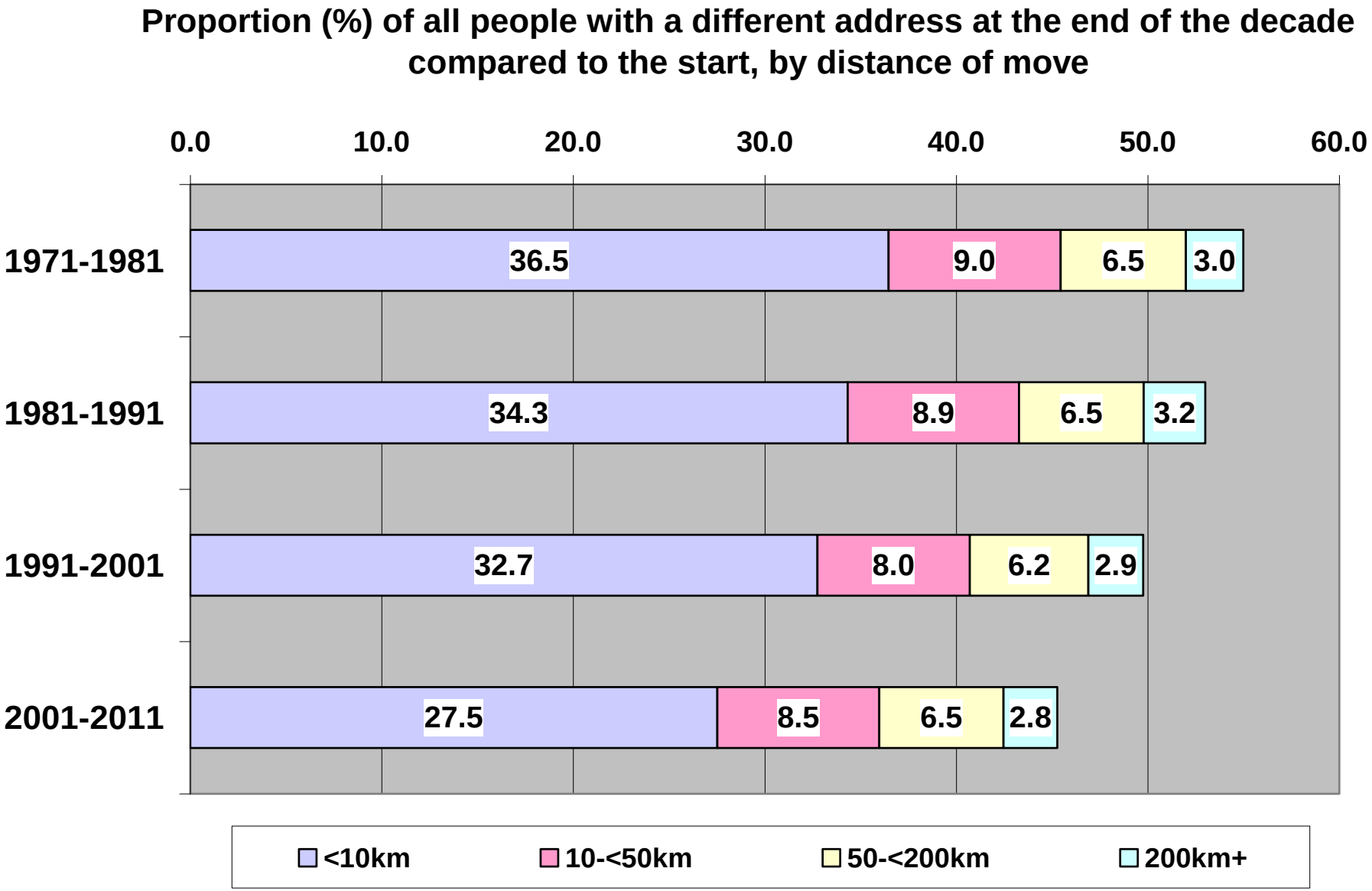
The research approach: 3 questions

1) Has 10-year change-of-address rate increased or decreased, and how far does this differ by distance of move?

2) How much variation between population groups has there been in the 10-year change-of-address rates between the 1970s and the 2000s?

3) Has population composition shifted towards types of people with traditionally higher or lower propensities of moving?

Q1: For all moves, a decrease from 55% to 45%, but nearly all this is due to a reduction in moves of <10km



Source: Calculated from ONS Longitudinal Study. Crown copyright.

The research approach: 3 questions

1) Have 10-year change-of-address rates increased or decreased, and how far does this differ by distance of move? DOWN OVERALL BUT MAINLY <10KM.

2) How much variation between population groups has there been in the 10-year change-of-address rates between the 1970s and the 2000s?

3) Has population composition shifted towards types of people with traditionally higher or lower propensities of moving?

Q2: A lot of variation between population subgroups in change in 10-year moving rate, 1970s to 2000s, examples:

Variable / migration rate (%) ->	1971-81	2001-11	%pt change
Divorced	63.1	43.5	-19.6
Non-UK-born	61.2	42.0	-19.2
Retired	37.5	20.7	-16.7
Armed forces	90.7	74.6	-16.1
Widowed	42.2	27.5	-14.7
Married	47.1	32.6	-14.5
Skilled non-manual	58.7	44.8	-13.9
Professional	58.3	44.6	-13.7
Sick	48.1	34.9	-13.2
Self-employed	52.6	40.0	-12.6
Unskilled	48.6	36.1	-12.5
ALL	55.0	45.3	-9.7
Social rent	53.3	45.5	-7.8
Partly skilled	49.6	41.8	-7.8
Employed full-time	56.4	48.7	-7.7
Employed part-time	42.1	35.9	-6.2
Single	65.6	60.2	-5.4
Private rent	71.5	76.4	+4.8
Communal	78.2	89.6	+11.4

The research approach: 3 questions

1) Have 10-year change-of-address rates increased or decreased, and how far does this differ by distance of move? DOWN OVERALL BUT MAINLY <10KM.
2) How much variation between population subgroups has there been in the 10-year change-of-address rates between the 1970s and the 2000s? A LOT.
3) **Has population composition shifted towards types of people with traditionally higher or lower propensities of moving?**

Q3: In the final column, the 'growth' population groups (above ALL line) and 'decline' ones (below ALL line) both include high-movers (in pink) and low-movers (in green)

Variable	% 1971	% 2001	change	% mover 1971-81
Owner occupation	52.0	77.6	25.5	47.5
Intermediate SC	12.4	28.6	16.2	55.4
Degree or equivalent	7.1	20.3	13.2	58.1
Divorced	1.3	8.7	7.4	63.0
Skilled non-manual	15.8	23.0	7.2	58.8
Retired	6.1	12.9	6.8	36.6
Single	20.5	27.0	6.5	73.5
Employed part-time	9.3	13.6	4.3	42.1
Self-employed	5.2	9.1	3.9	52.6
ALL	100.0	100.0	0.0	55.0
UK born	93.5	90.0	-3.5	52.0
Aged 15-24 (& not FTS)	19.1	10.8	-8.4	85.3
Employed full time	52.6	44.1	-8.5	56.4
Private renter	17.5	8.0	-9.5	69.3
Other inactive	21.1	10.3	-10.7	47.8
Married	73.4	60.8	-12.7	47.1
Social renter	30.4	13.9	-16.5	50.4
Unclassified SC	29.0	6.3	-22.7	47.3

Source: Calculated from ONS Longitudinal Study. Crown copyright.

The research approach: 3 questions

1) Have 10-year change-of-address rates increased or decreased, and how far does this differ by distance of move? DOWN OVERALL BUT MAINLY <10KM.
2) How much variation between population subgroups has there been in the 10-year change-of-address rates between the 1970s and the 2000s? A LOT.
3) Has population composition shifted towards types of people with traditionally higher or lower propensities of moving? BOTH WAYS.

Interpretation of results

- People in England & Wales are **moving home less frequently now than in the past** according to the ONS-LS, though this is less so for moves over longer distances (as also shown by NHSCR-derived inter-regional migration data) – in contrast to US experience
- **This is despite shifts in population composition** which, on balance, are moving people into traditionally more migratory groups (e.g. with degrees); in other words, this effect has been more than offset by a decline in move rates for almost all population subgroups
- The main explanations for declining migration rates should be sought among the drivers of **short-distance moving**: mainly housing and neighbourhood reasons, but also more longer-distance commuting being aided by car ownership or being forced on 2-earner households
- **Long-distance moving** is possibly reduced by housing barriers and competition from international labour migrants

Study limitations

- 10-year migration rates are very relevant for studying trends in population distribution between regions and cities, but the **ONS-LS cannot identify all address changes**: some groups move quite often (e.g. students to/from university)
- The analysis **has had to omit those who were students** at the start of each decade because of the change in their usual-address definition in 2001: so their positive effect (see NHSCR) is missed
- Unfortunately, **no other dataset** can match the LS for detail and consistency, except perhaps the APS for recent years and into the future (but only for all moves, not by distance)

References

- Champion, T., Shuttleworth, I., (2016a), Is longer-distance migration slowing? An analysis of the annual record for England and Wales since the 1970s, *Population, Space and Place*, DOI: 10.1002/psp.2024

- Champion, T., Shuttleworth, I., (2016b), Are people changing address less? An analysis of migration within England and Wales, 1971-2011, *Population, Space and Place*, DOI: 10.1002/psp.2026