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Resources and Opportunities for Neighborhood Attainment

This revised application describes a program of research designed to explore the patterns and determinants of migration between U.S. neighborhoods of varying socioeconomic and racial/ethnic composition. Using almost forty years of individual- and family-level data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, in conjunction with neighborhood-level data drawn from four decennial censuses, the proposed study goes beyond prior research on the determinants of inter-neighborhood migration by attending rigorously to the influence of characteristics of the metropolitan areas in which neighborhoods are embedded. It is well-known that levels of residential segregation by race, ethnicity, and social class, as well as the race- and class-specific inter-neighborhood migration propensities that sustain these high levels of segregation, vary widely across U.S. metropolitan areas. But little research has attempted to explain why the inter-neighborhood migration patterns that sustain high levels of racial, ethnic, or economic residential segregation vary so markedly across metropolitan areas. By aggregating neighborhood-level characteristics and their inter-relationships to the metropolitan level, and by applying statistical techniques appropriate for the analysis of multilevel data structures, the proposed analysis holds promise for substantially enhancing our understanding of why families' propensity to move between neighborhoods of varying racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic composition varies so widely across metropolitan areas.