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## Urban Destination Selection among African Americans during the 1950s Great Migration

*This article examines a place utility model of how destination assets influenced in-migration for the 1950s African American urban system. Archival and historiographical data are combined with census data to conduct weighted least-squares regressions that compare economic, ethnogenic, and other place utilities. Despite declines in migrant selectivity and net southern out-migration, ethnogenic characteristics increased the size of in-migrant streams during the 1950s, net of the momentum from prior migration and, most important, net of economic and demographic place utilities. Even as several dramatic changes began or intensified during the period, ethnogenic attractions continued to shape destination selection during this “bridge” decade of civil rights-era migration.*

In 1910 nearly 90 percent of African Americans lived in rural areas of the southeastern United States (i.e., the South). One generation after the end of World War II, nearly 90 percent of them resided in urban areas throughout the United States, most often outside the South. The “black exodus,” or Great Migration, in and around the two world wars brought about this change and has been accurately described as “perhaps the most dramatic population movement to occur within the United States during the 20th century” (Tolnay 2001: 235–36). This movement began when the urban opportunities of World War I were tentatively opened to African Americans and ended with the second wave migration before, during, and after

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World War II. Recently, William H. Frey (2004) wrote about “the new Great Migration” between 1965 and 2000, when African Americans returned to the South. Little work has addressed the factors that shaped the migration *between* these two geographic movements, that is, during the “bridge” decade at the onset of the civil rights era. This article provides a comprehensive portrait of which destination characteristics informed African American urban in-migration during the 1950s, between the “old” and new migrations.

### **African American Migration during the 1950s**

The Great Migration is generally understood to have taken place in two waves, or periods of primary population movements, in and around the two world wars. However, this two-wave view is an oversimplification (Shrestha et al. 2003; Tolnay et al. 2005). African American migration had an earlier onset, beginning in the post-Civil War South, and gained momentum in the first decade of the twentieth century (Johnson and Campbell 1981; Thomas 1992). A decline in migration occurred between the two world wars, due in large measure to the impact of the Depression. However, despite the decline, prior research has also shown this inter-world war movement’s important contributions to the Great Migration in both character and content (Alexander 1998; Price-Spratlen 1998, 1999a, 1999b). Much of this movement occurred well after World War I, when the postwar 1920s’ economic shock had severely reversed.

After World War II and the second wave of the Great Migration, between 1950 and 1960, more than 1.5 million African Americans moved out of the South. This was nearly 10 percent of the total 1950 African American population and was only an 8 percent decline in the cross-regional movement of the prior decade. Given their sustained, predominantly southern, and often rural residence, this sizable movement was not purely a product of the mechanization of cotton harvesting, which began in earnest in 1948. Due to increased federal subsidies, this mechanization destroyed the South’s long-standing, racialized crop lien system, economically dislocating millions of African Americans. But “the mechanical cotton harvester did not account for anything near a majority of migration from 1950 to 1960” (Heinicke 1994: 513).

During the 1950s African Americans were the center of many national social and political changes. Heightened racial tensions were coupled with

increased hope brought about by earlier legal successes in securing greater economic and political rights. Decades of sustained initiatives were galvanized. Momentum toward social justice was finally realized through civil rights movement victories both large and small (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984). Such victories furthered the long-standing view of (especially non-southern) urban areas as an African American “promised land” of expected opportunities. As a result of the optimism spawned by these changes along with actual urban attractions, migration often served as a partial solution to the problem of structural inequalities (Fligstein 1981; Tolnay 2001). Urban communities featured a vertical integration of different segments of the population. Lower-, working-, and middle-class black families all lived more or less in the same communities, sent their children to the same schools, and availed themselves of the same public facilities (Wilson 1987; Suarez 1999). Amid marginalizing and oppressive challenges, in these segregated communities African American ethnic capacity, or ethnogenesis, may have been a dominant influence as migration continued after World War II. Yet research has not evaluated the relative importance of African Americans’ ethnogenesis to their urban migration during this time.

### **African American Ethnogenesis and the 1950s**

Much of the prior work on the Great Migration has emphasized “push” factors, or southern characteristics that instigated “a threshold level of dissatisfaction with the premigration [origin] residence” (Roseman 1983: 153). Once that dissatisfaction threshold had been passed, the search for a better quality of life in potential destinations began. The classic works in this push tradition have shown the postbellum South’s late-nineteenth-century migratory “tradition” of within-region movement in search of a better living environment (Johnson and Campbell 1981; Jones 1985); the prevalence and nature of violence, inhumanity, and denial of the rights of citizenship from which African American migrants were seeking to escape (e.g., Fligstein 1981; Tolnay and Beck 1992); and the role of mechanization in sustaining and then intensifying long-standing economic exclusions (e.g., Marks 1989; Lemann 1991; Heinicke 1994). These works enriched our understanding of the process of African American migration. But their emphasis on origin dynamics and the years surrounding the two world wars leaves unaddressed the destination characteristics that formed the “other half” of the process and the factors

that mattered to it during the late 1950s. One set of destination characteristics that research has shown to be important to African American migration is the cultural or ethnic community capacity of ethnogenesis (Boyd 1998, 2002; Price-Spratlen 1998, 1999a, 1999b).

Ethnogenesis is the process by which ethnic and racial groups build institutions, community, and a collective sense of identity. This local-area ethnic or cultural capacity reflected their collective sense of “urban place.” This is accompanied by group-oriented social organizations and a collective ethos from the interplay between group-oriented sociocultural characteristics and American social structure. Such influences nurture the growth of a group-specific “safe space” along with the establishment of social networks and communication patterns as the bases of African American institutional and communal life (Yancey et al. 1976; Taylor 1979). Group-affirming organizational interactions and means of information exchange enhanced their quality of life in urban communities. During the 1940s’ second wave of the Great Migration, African American ethnogenesis improved place utilities in urban destinations, increasing the likelihood of “cognitive liberation” among urban dwellers and prospective migrants alike. The effect of cognitive liberation on subsequent mobility was, in part, a function of the strengths of integrative ties within the interaction networks that ethnogenesis established and maintained (McAdam 1982; see also Tolnay and Crowder 1999).

As with the cultural capacity of other groups, African American ethnogenesis has been a simultaneous product both of external forces of racial exclusion and of internal forces in African American communities. It can be viewed as a “counterformation,” or reaction to exclusion from mainstream social processes (Taylor 1979), and as a proactive formation, or means by which African Americans sought to reaffirm a collective autonomy through organizational development and voluntary communalism (Jones 1985; Price-Spratlen 1998, 2003). The magnitude and pattern of these organizational interactions and race-conscious resource exchanges have been well documented historically but have seldom been systematically assessed. These community assets enhanced African American life in a particular community and were influential in the “more than mechanization alone” argument suggested by Craig Heinicke (1994), Jacob L. Vigdor (2002), and others.

The infrastructure of African American ethnogenesis consisted of four basic elements of the social structure previously shown to be important determinants of migration in earlier historical periods: community newspapers, job

placement support, churches, and volunteer organizations (Price-Spratlen 1998, 1999a; see also Curry 1981; Grossman 1989; Thomas 1992). Moving beyond origin area pushes, single-city destination analyses have focused on the ethnogenic richness of Detroit (Thomas 1992), Pittsburgh (Alexander 1998), Cleveland (Kusmer 1976; Phillips 1999), and Chicago (Drake and Cayton 1945; Lemann 1991; Canaan 2001). However, while historically and ethnographically rich, this single-city tradition does not provide systematic, comparative analyses of the relative contributions of these place utilities or of how they influenced migration across the U.S. urban system. Prior work has shown that the influence of these ethnogenic dimensions on *net* migration flows was influential yet changed over time. Significantly contributing to the increase in Depression-era migration flows, African American ethnogenesis was influential throughout the urban United States (Price-Spratlen 1999a). However, this pattern of influence was not even across all groups. Extending from the gendered nature of some destination characteristics, African American women's migration was more heavily influenced by avenues of expressive culture (i.e., church participation), in contrast to the migration of African American men (Price-Spratlen 1999b).

In addition to the influence of these ethnogenic dimensions in many urban areas and their gendered effects over time, there was a gradual reduction in their influence on *net* migration flows, such that "by the 1950s . . . ethnogenesis had no significant effect on the net migration of African Americans" (Price-Spratlen 1998: 528). Douglas S. Massey (1990) suggests that a variety of geographic attachments in a politically and economically integrated society over time enriches a convergence in social and economic institutions that reduces the impact of area-specific "push and pull" characteristics (see also Wilson 2001). This reduction was probably most apparent when in-migration and out-migration were simultaneously contrasted with a net migration value. However, ethnogenic decline may not be as relevant, or as apparent, when one focuses solely on persons moving to particular destinations. For them, the effects of this convergence and an increasingly equitable distribution of amenities resulting from it are probably dwarfed by the value placed on enhanced opportunity for an improved quality of life. In short, the absence of out-migrants in the migration modeling of ethnogenesis will probably result in a more accurate assessment of a destination's allure (Mueser 1989).<sup>1</sup>

These ethnogenic elements wielded effective influence, because they

were an important part of a network that gave prospective migrants information about urban areas, including “what life was like . . . and virtually anything else they wanted to know before leaving” (Grossman 1989: 68). In addition, prospective migrants wrote hundreds of letters of inquiry to public agencies, social welfare organizations, newspaper editors, and employers seeking information, illustrating that moves of the Great Migration were often highly informed decisions (Grossman 1989; Phillips 1999). For the first time in the history of African American migration, during the 1950s more than two-thirds of urban migrants moved from one city to another (Heinicke 1994). This suggests that better-prepared, more urbane migrants with a higher standard of anticipated destination amenities made up these in-migrant flows. Not surprisingly, such migrants moved during a period of increasing diversity as African Americans selected a larger number of destinations beyond the small pool of 13 traditional areas of long-standing African American urban primacy. This was also coupled with an increasing diversity of migrants from varied social strata as migration momentum grew. Taken together, these period-specific trends make the 1950s’ African American in-migration a valuable test of destination selection or place utility processes, enriching our understanding of the bridge between the two waves of the Great Migration. Consistent with prior research (e.g., Price-Spratlen 1998), throughout the United States urban areas with strong ethnogenic richness should draw more migrants because of the enhanced place utilities and higher quality of life that this richness nurtured.

### **Place Utility and 1950s African American Migration**

This research uses a place utility model first used more than 30 years ago to evaluate contextual factors that shape migration *within* urban areas (e.g., Brown et al. 1970; Brown and Longbrake 1970). The utility, or attractiveness, of a place is assumed to be based on direct experience on which past, present, and future rewards at that place are evaluated (Sjaastad 1962; Vigdor 2002). The decision to consider moving or to move, then, is a function of this direct place utility, with comparisons between possible locations being drawn on to determine the single destination of greatest value (Roseman 1983). By comparing several contextual assets throughout the U.S. urban system, place utility provides a more accurate analysis of destination characteristics in the

migration process. It is now experiencing a renewed interest in several topics of demographic research, including migration destination selection (e.g., Fotheringham et al. 2000) and the enhancement of quality-of-life outcomes on arrival (e.g., Tolnay et al. 2002).

The place utility model has perhaps been most richly applied in historical African American urban sociology, where it has been used to evaluate individual migration decisions (e.g., Kontuly et al. 1995; Tolnay 2001; Tolnay et al. 2002). Insights on the characteristics of African American southern migrants in the North and how they compare to their northern-born brethren have been provided, along with the selective character of the migrants themselves (Tolnay 1998; Tolnay and Crowder 1999; Vigdor 2002). Noting the importance of regional differences, attention has also been focused on migrant residential settlement patterns and related segregation outcomes in northern cities (Tolnay et al. 2000; Jenkins 2001). Other work has evaluated place utility across multiple urban destinations during earlier time periods (Price-Spratlen 1999a, 2003; Vigdor 2002) or has used a net amenities focus on net migration (e.g., Tolnay 1998). Recent research also has emphasized the role of occupational niches in improving quality-of-life outcomes (Boyd 1998, 2002; Maloney 2001, 2002) and has evaluated family stability or other gender-informed demographic and economic themes, again most often for an earlier pre-World War II period (Tolnay and Crowder 1999; Wilson 2001). The intersection of gender and economics has been illustrated in the critical role of black women's economic incentives in shaping the migration motives of women and men alike (Lemke-Santangelo 1996; White et al. 2005). However, this rich prior literature has not yet provided a systematic, comparative analysis of the relative influence of these ethnogenic place utilities in explaining the flow of migrants to various destinations throughout the 1950s African American urban system.

Tables 1–3 provide an overview of three descriptive aspects of African American in-migrant flows during the 1950s, including the urban areas with (1) the 15 largest 1950 African American populations and their number of in-migrants and in-migration rates, (2) the 15 largest in-migration flows, and (3) the 15 largest in-migration rates. As tables 1 and 2 show, the largest urban areas were also the most popular migration destinations. Places with the seven largest African American populations in 1950 were also the seven most valued destinations and were the only areas that received 20,000 or more in-migrants. This early evidence suggests that 1950s migration place

**Table 1** Counties with the largest African American populations, 1950

Popula- tion rank	County	City	1950 population	In- migrants	Rates
1	All five boroughs	New York	747,608	137,824	0.1844
2	IL, Cook	Chicago	520,979	60,312	0.1158
3	PA, Philadelphia	Philadelphia	376,041	26,762	0.0712
4	MI, Wayne	Detroit	335,414	25,049	0.0747
5	DC	Washington, DC	280,803	36,978	0.1317
6	MD, Baltimore	Baltimore	242,976	20,716	0.0853
7	CA, Los Angeles	Los Angeles	217,881	92,101	0.4227
8	AL, Jefferson	Birmingham	208,459	8,657	0.0415
9	LA, Orleans	New Orleans	181,775	9,725	0.0535
10	TN, Shelby	Memphis	180,002	12,534	0.0696
11	MO, St. Louis	St. Louis	170,585	13,731	0.0805
12	GA, Fulton/De Kalb	Atlanta	159,377	12,464	0.0782
13	OH, Cuyahoga	Cleveland	151,187	18,928	0.1252
14	TX, Harris	Houston	149,286	19,907	0.1333
15	PA, Allegheny	Pittsburgh	112,964	5,590	0.0495

utility was a direct result of population size. But the fact that Los Angeles County, California, had the seventh largest African American population yet received the second largest number of in-migrants illustrates a partial violation of the population as primary place utility view. Also, differences in population and in-migrant rankings 8 through 15 more strongly suggest that more than population alone informed this bridge-decade migration. This is further supported by table 3.

Table 3 presents the 15 highest rates of in-migration for urban areas with 1,000 or more African Americans. Perhaps due to the lagged effect of regional World War II economic growth, the urban counties with the four highest in-migration rates are in the Far West, and the South is the only region to have one urban area represented in tables 2 and 3. This clearly illustrates a South/non-South difference in the patterns of in-migration and a western regionalism critical to the fastest-growing urban areas. Los Angeles County is the only county that appears in all three tables—not surprisingly, given that county's unique combination of large population and western location, which the tables support as two of the most critical dimensions of 1950s African American in-migrant place utility.

What other dimensions influenced African American in-migration during the 1950s? Because numerous related questions remain unanswered,

**Table 2** Largest in-migration counts, 1955–59

In-migration rank	County	City	1950 population	In-migrants	Rates
1	All five boroughs	New York	747,608	137,824	0.1844
2	CA, Los Angeles	Los Angeles	217,881	92,101	0.4227
3	IL, Cook	Chicago	520,979	60,312	0.1158
4	DC	Washington, DC	280,803	36,978	0.1317
5	PA, Philadelphia	Philadelphia	376,041	26,762	0.0712
6	MI, Wayne	Detroit	335,414	25,049	0.0747
7	MD, Baltimore	Baltimore	242,976	20,716	0.0853
8	TX, Harris	Houston	149,286	19,907	0.1333
9	NJ, Essex	Newark	104,307	19,762	0.1895
10	OH, Cuyahoga	Cleveland	151,187	18,928	0.1252
11	CA, Alameda	Oakland	69,442	17,525	0.2524
12	CA, San Francisco	San Francisco	43,502	16,007	0.3680
13	TX, Dallas	Dallas	82,928	14,129	0.1704
14	MO, St. Louis	St. Louis	170,585	13,731	0.0805
15	TN, Shelby	Memphis	180,002	12,534	0.0696

“an investigation into causes of African American migration in the 1950s other than the [mechanical] cotton picker is warranted” (Heinicke 1994: 517). This research analyzes comparative, interacting, and nonlinear place utilities to yield a better understanding of period-specific migrant flows of the 1950s (Vigdor 2002). Four questions guide this analysis: (1) Did ethnogenic resources shape the destination selection of African Americans during this bridge decade between the old and new migrations? (2) How important were ethnogenic resources compared to demographic and economic place utilities? (3) In view of gender and regional differences that prior work has found in the Great Migration (e.g., Alexander 1998; White et al. 2005), did this movement unfold differently for women and men or between regions of the United States? (4) Given the demonstrated importance of multigenerational contextual history, what lagged and cumulative causation influenced the migration?

## Data and Methods

The data for this study are from the 136 urban counties in the United States that make up the 1950s African American urban system.<sup>2</sup> They include the

**Table 3** Largest in-migration rates, 1955–59

Rate rank	County	Central city	1950 population	In-migrants	Rates
1	WA, Spokane	Spokane	1,359	1,355	0.9971
2	CA, Sacramento	Sacramento	7,499	7,204	0.9607
3	WA, Pierce	Tacoma	6,011	5,463	0.9088
4	UT, Salt Lake	Salt Lake City	1,208	954	0.7897
5	NY, Cayuga	Auburn	1,007	596	0.5919
6	NE, Lancaster	Lincoln	1,467	843	0.5746
7	WI, Racine	Racine	1,844	1,047	0.5678
8	NY, Monroe	Rochester	7,937	4,300	0.5418
9	IL, Will	Joliet	5,886	2,740	0.4655
10	NY, Chemung	Elmira	1,846	861	0.4664
11	NY, Onondaga	Syracuse	4,896	2,089	0.4267
12	WI, Milwaukee	Milwaukee	22,129	9,490	0.4288
13	CA, Los Angeles	Los Angeles	217,881	92,101	0.4227
14	MI, Jackson	Jackson	4,992	2,000	0.4006
15	MN, Hennepin	Minneapolis	6,961	2,706	0.3887

13 primary urban “targets” among African American migrants throughout the Great Migration as well as destinations throughout the 1950s. These 136 urban areas make up nearly 90 percent of the 1950 African American urban settlement (i.e., African Americans living in cities of 25,000 or more total residents) and nearly 90 percent of the areas having 25,000 or more African American residents in 1950, including the 25 cities with the largest African American populations. Given the primacy of African American migration—a few destinations receiving a large proportion of all migrants—the sample includes both the prime destinations and a broad range of alternatives when the urban system expanded as the second half of the twentieth century began.

### Dependent Variable

The only nationally comparative in-migration counts are from the half decade 1955–59, drawn from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1963. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the number of people of color (i.e., all nonwhites) five years or older who moved into an urban county during the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> These values, the first for which county-specific, five-year in-

migration counts were compiled, indicate the number of persons who in 1960 lived in a county different from their home county of five years earlier.<sup>4</sup> To reduce heteroskedasticity, the dependent variable has been transformed. The natural logarithm of these migration counts is used to reduce this potential problem, often associated with cross-sectional studies, and to provide a better model fit for all predictors (Blalock 1979; Greene 1997; Allison 1999).

### Independent Variables

Predictor variables for the analysis include indicators of African American ethnogenesis and five additional place utility characteristics identified in prior research as relevant to the historical urban migration of African Americans.

**Ethnogenesis.** The infrastructure of African American ethnogenesis consisted of four basic elements of ethnic capital previously shown to be important determinants of migration in earlier historical periods (Curry 1981; Grossman 1989; Price-Spratlen 1999a): community newspapers, job placement and other social supports, churches, and volunteer organizations. Community newspapers, or “race papers,” represent the number of newspapers in each county that were directed at an African American audience and were in circulation for at least six months during the 1940s. Drawn from Pride 1950, nearly half of the counties had at least one such newspaper during this time. National Urban League (NUL) longevity is the number of years prior to 1950 that an NUL branch existed in the county, as reported in NUL 1990. Nearly one-third of the counties had NUL chapters by 1950. Early establishment of a chapter implied a higher level of ongoing race-conscious social service delivery, business development, and job placement support in a county. Historically, African American churches have been centers for social and political action (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Mattis 2001). The percentage of African Americans regularly attending church services in 1936 is the most comprehensive, reliable, nationally comparative indicator of the viability of a religious, ethnogenic outlet informing 1950s African American migration. These data are from the 1936 Census of Religious Bodies (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980), because no race-specific religious censuses were conducted after 1936. All churches of the census were categorized into traditional African American denominations: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal, Church of God

in Christ, Colored Primitive Baptist, and Negro Baptist. NAACP activism measures the level of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter activity reported in the *Crisis*, the national magazine of the organization (Wilkins 1934–49), which compiled chapter activities from across the United States. It is a content analysis of reported chapter-specific “external” engagements, or outreach activities during the decade most valued by the national office (e.g., participation in a boycott, lobbying for expanded employment opportunities). It gauges the degree to which African Americans and persons sympathetic to social justice concerns organized to promote progressive change in a county.<sup>5</sup> Prior research has shown the extensive exchange of resources between the NAACP and African American churches (e.g., Lemann 1991; Thomas 1992; Jonas 2005). Also, given the onset of the civil rights movement and the uneven distribution of activism in the preceding decades (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984), the influence of these factors may be nonlinear. As a result, an interaction term representing the resource exchange between the NAACP and black churches is added in the second set of models, after the quadratic model of NAACP activism is analyzed in the first set of models. Given the institutional safe space, enriched cognitive liberation, and improved quality of life, ethnogenesis variables should be positively related to 1950s African American urban in-migration.

**Historical Urbanization.** Urban primacy measures pioneer urban settlements, the areas with an African American urban presence preceding the Great Migration. It is a dummy variable for counties that had a city with 25,000 or more African American residents in 1910; just over 18 percent of all cases fit this criterion (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [ICPSR] 1974). Migration momentum is measured by the natural logarithm of the net flow of African American migrants to counties in 1940–49 (Gardner and Cohen 1971) and indicates the effect of prior migration on 1950s migration. It assesses the significance of cumulative causation as a geographic movement (Massey 1990) net of any place-specific destination utilities. Also, assuming that the origin pathways remained relatively similar between decades (Vigdor 2002), it provides a partial control of origin characteristics in this destination place utility model.<sup>6</sup>

**Demographic and Concentration Measures.** Consistent with the gravity model and prior analyses (e.g., Tolnay and Beck 1992; Fotheringham et al.

2000), the size of a county's African American population is included to measure the effect of the destination population (ICPSR 1974). Migration may increase simply because of a larger destination population (Lieberson 1980). Potential social network ties and enrichment are also associated with race-specific population size (Mueser 1989). The effect of racial concentration is evaluated with residential- and occupational-concentration variables. Residential segregation is measured by the index of dissimilarity. The index summarizes the pattern of overall unevenness in 1950 of the residential distributions of people of color and whites across census tracts in the urban center of the sample county (Taeuber and Taeuber 1965).

Occupational concentration is an index of the county-specific, occupation-specific racial proportion of African Americans in 1950 across the 35 reported occupational categories (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1953). Adapted directly from the women's economic participation measure of Samuel H. Preston and Alan Thomas Richards (1975), it indicates the portion of a county's labor force that African American women and men constitute. For example, women's U.S. racial proportion for occupational category A is multiplied by the county proportion of category A among all 35 reported categories of women's occupations. These 35 category-specific products (i.e., racial proportion  $\times$  category proportion) are then summed to generate the total racial occupational proportion for women in each county in 1950.<sup>7</sup> Variation across counties in the sample mirrors the variation in the representation of African Americans in the primarily menial, low-paying service occupations that predominate when they were well represented (Greenwood 1981). A high index value may be positively related to in-migration if the occupational networks established through overrepresentation increase the ease of adjustment for new migrants. The women's value may be positively related if concentration is indicative of an enriched opportunity network with which a new migrant can successfully navigate local competition of racially bounded, saturated networks. Including the male equivalent allows for a comparison of the migration influence of gendered, racial occupational concentration. It may be negatively related if these networks increase the local competition of the saturated networks. This saturation in turn decreases the ease of migrant adjustment(s) and becomes a deterrent to in-migration.

**Economic Effects.** To control for the place utility of economic expansion, two growth measures are included: (1) the 1947–52 proportional change in

the total number of jobs and (2) the 1947–52 proportional change in the total number of business establishments in the county. These measures test whether the pace of prior economic change was an important destination attraction (ICPSR 1974; see also Fligstein 1981).<sup>8</sup> Lagged occupational displacement is the proportional decline in a county's white, foreign-born population in 1910–20 (ICPSR 1974). It proxies a decline in the level of secondary labor force competition during the first wave of the Great Migration. Due to the multigenerational momentum of reduced secondary labor force competition at this time, a larger percentage decline of foreign-born whites then should result in a higher level of African American migration more than a generation later.

**Region.** Previous work has reported significant variations in migration patterns between regions and in the South's historically different social and cultural climate for African Americans (e.g., Tolnay and Beck 1992; Roseman and Lee 1998). To evaluate the presence of any regional differences, the counties were grouped into the four U.S. regions, generally consistent with the definitions of the U.S. census.<sup>9</sup> All four regions were tested independently and collectively in multiple, one- to three-region dummy variable groupings to assess potential interregional place utility differences. The clearest distinctions were between the West (positively) and the South (negatively), compared to the Midwest and the Northeast. Thus the West and South are included in each model.

**Transportation Access.** Finally, consistent with prior analyses, transportation access is included to evaluate the importance of major passenger rail corridors in shaping the pattern of African American historical migration (Morrill and Donaldson 1976; Price-Spratlen 1998). These data are from Ullman 1957. Better local rail connections should increase in-migration. While trains were one of several means of travel, especially in the 1950s, the measure evaluates the relative ease of reaching a given destination by one of the primary modes of transportation that migrants used.

### Statistical Analysis

To evaluate the destination place utilities that shaped African American urban migration during the 1950s, in-migration counts in 1955–59 are regressed on

African American ethnogenesis, concentration effects, and other independent variables, using weighted least-squares (WLS) regression. In analyses of urban areas, heteroskedasticity is a potential problem, because the error variance tends to increase with the African American population of the urban area (Krivo and Peterson 2000). The Breusch-Pagan test (Greene 1997) was used to test for heteroskedasticity by county population size, and analyses indicated significant heteroskedasticity. To correct for it, WLS regressions were performed (with error variance specified as inversely proportional to county population size). Especially important in cross-sectional data, WLS accounts and adjusts for error variance that is not constant across individual cases. It generates more efficient parameter estimates and allows the migration function to fit a linear model (Neter et al. 1985). Nonlinear relationships of interest (e.g., [NAACP activism]<sup>2</sup>) are represented with selected quadratic measures and models. Two sets of quadratic models are presented. First, the means and standard deviations for all model variables are detailed in table 4. In table 5 model 1 presents results for models in which in-migration is regressed on African American ethnogenesis measures and region only. Then measures of economic growth and each additional place utility dimension (save population and migration momentum) are added in model 2. Population is added in model 3, and migration momentum is included in model 4. Diagnostics found no other measure- and model-compromising multicollinearity. Model 5 removes New York City to assess the model fit for all other urban areas with fewer than 100,000 in-migrants. Finally, to assess the effects of interorganizational resource exchange, the interaction between NAACP activism and religious predominance is evaluated in the quadratic interaction models (6–7).

## Findings

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for all of the variables. These descriptive statistics show the common pattern of rather high levels of in-migration: on average 6,237 persons over the five years, or more than 1,200 in-migrants per year. Amid the economic unevenness and development of the civil rights era during the 1950s, destination selection was taking place, with an average in-migrant rate of more than 13 percent of the local 1950 African American population. Consistent with tables 1–3 and the rather volatile mobility pattern they detail, the high standard deviations of in-

**Table 4** Means and standard deviations for variables in the analysis of total African American urban in-migration counts, 1955–59

Dependent variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Urban in-migration counts, 1955–59	6,236.771	15,667.956
Ethnogenesis		
Number of African American community papers	0.967	1.542
National Urban League chapter longevity	6.931	12.426
Total religious participation	34.762	13.840
External NAACP activism	12.640	30.235
History effects		
Urban primacy, 1910	0.184	0.388
Migration momentum	9,518.922	28,435.224
Population and concentration effects		
African American population size	46,817.191	98,515.022
Racial residential segregation	85.331	4.689
African American women's occupational blackness	8.451	2.029
Economic effects		
Job growth (change in number of employees)	0.011	0.182
Business growth (change in number of establishments)	0.012	0.114
Lagged decline in foreign-born whites, 1910–20	-0.057	0.033
Region		
Northeast	0.375	—
Midwest	0.353	—
West	0.081	—
South	0.191	—
Transportation access		
Train connections, 1948	7.171	3.204

migration, momentum, and population indicate marked intrasystem variation in the number of in-migrants and the diversity of destination populations. Regarding ethnogenic richness, on average counties had about one community newspaper, local chapters of the NUL had been open for nearly seven years, and just over one-third of county residents regularly attended church services. NAACP chapters typically engaged in a little over 1 major external activity per year (i.e., 12.6 activities over 10 years) as reported to the national office and the *Crisis*. This was in addition to the numerous less visible activities not reported or never printed nationally.

Table 5 presents the WLS regression results predicting migration into

the 1950s African American urban system. Model 1 includes only the ethnogenesis and regional predictors, answering the first research question.<sup>10</sup> The results show that ethnogenesis significantly informed the urbanward migration of this period. African American urban in-migration in the 1950s was significantly greater in counties where a rich set of institutions served an African American clientele, nurtured cognitive liberation, and provided a high level of place utility for new migrants and sustained residents alike. Four of the five ethnogenic assets increased in-migration flows, contrary to the decline noted previously in the level of influence of ethnogenic variables on net migration during this period (Price-Spratlen 1998). Nonlinear relationships of interest (e.g., [NAACP activism]<sup>2</sup>) are represented with selected quadratic measures and models. This quadratic model shows that NAACP activism has a significant curvilinear association with the in-migration of African Americans in the late 1950s. Activism has a positive effect at low levels, but its influence weakens at higher levels. This illustrates a diminishing return of activism as a destination asset across the U.S. urban system.

In model 2 variables from the other four dimensions of destination place utility are added to the ethnogenesis indicators (except for African American population size and momentum). The overall explanatory value of the model increases very little (less than 3 percent) and further illustrates the importance of ethnogenesis during this time. All five ethnogenic indicators are significant, and their effect sizes are similar to those in the initial model. The information networks of these often highly informed decisions drew on and extended migration streams in which African American institutions played a central role (Price-Spratlen 1998). African American newspapers detailed opportunities and the quality of life in potential urban destinations. Race papers were the most transferable source of information and, as a result, were often the most influential on various community outcomes (Marks 1989; Lemann 1991). Job placement, business development, and other forms of social service delivery by the NUL established and cultivated business and other connections and helped in the adjustment processes of migrants on their arrival. Churches provided access to numerous social supports and spiritual empowerment. Finally, like churches, secular volunteer organizations provided important opportunities for political activism and the promotion of social awareness (Morris 1984; Jones 1985). Focusing primarily on local legal cases, the growth and development of chapters of the NAACP often paralleled the rising tides of racial awareness and racial discrimina-

**Table 5** WLS regression models of ethnogenesis, urban history, and other factors on African American urban in-migration, 1955–59

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<b>Ethnogenesis</b>							
Number of African American community papers	0.293** [0.084]	0.239** [0.085]	0.057 [0.055]	0.037 [0.055]	0.035 [0.055]	0.252** [0.088]	0.040 [0.057]
National Urban League chapter longevity	0.014 [0.010]	0.018* [0.010]	0.003 [0.006]	0.003 [0.006]	0.002 [0.006]	0.018* [0.010]	0.004 [0.007]
Total religious participation	0.030** [0.007]	0.026** [0.008]	0.009* [0.005]	0.007 [0.005]	0.010* [0.005]	0.019* [0.009]	0.006 [0.006]
External NAACP activism	0.040** [0.009]	0.038** [0.009]	0.011* [0.005]	0.007 [0.006]	0.021* [0.009]	0.003 [0.007]	0.002 [0.005]
(NAACP activism) <sup>2</sup>	-0.000** [ <i>t</i> = -3.487]	-0.000** [ <i>t</i> = -3.305]	-0.000 [ <i>t</i> = -0.985]	-0.000 [ <i>t</i> = -0.759]	-0.000* [ <i>t</i> = -2.081]	—	—
NAACP activism × religious participation	—	—	—	—	—	0.002** [0.001]	0.000 [0.000]
([NAACP activism] <sup>2</sup> × religious participation)	—	—	—	—	—	-0.000** [ <i>t</i> = -2.829]	-0.000 [ <i>t</i> = -0.372]
<b>History effects</b>							
Urban primacy, 1910	—	0.002 [0.374]	-0.161 [0.237]	-0.165 [0.233]	-0.106 [0.233]	-0.131 [0.389]	-0.171 [0.241]
Migration momentum	—	—	—	0.166* [0.078]	0.160* [0.077]	—	0.171* [0.078]
<b>Population and concentration effects</b>							
African American population size	—	—	0.626** [0.047]	0.601** [0.047]	0.568** [0.050]	—	0.605** [0.048]

Racial residential segregation	—	−0.012 [0.019]	0.001 [0.012]	−0.011 [0.013]	−0.011 [0.013]	−0.009 [0.019]	−0.011 [0.013]
African American women's occupational blackness	—	1.655* [0.730]	0.250 [0.474]	0.667 [0.506]	0.712 [0.500]	1.745* [0.750]	0.682 [0.515]
African American men's occupational blackness	—	−1.426* [0.821]	−1.159* [0.520]	−1.084* [0.513]	−1.097* [0.508]	−1.501* [0.831]	−1.094* [0.516]
Economic effects							
Job growth (proportion change in employees)	—	−0.088 [0.540]	0.395 [0.344]	0.351 [0.339]	0.286 [0.337]	−0.306 [0.552]	0.333 [0.346]
Business growth (proportion change in establishments)	—	0.960 [0.867]	0.458 [0.550]	0.267 [0.550]	0.259 [0.543]	0.730 [0.881]	0.232 [0.553]
Lagged decline in foreign-born whites, 1910–20	—	4.034 [2.863]	−2.110 [1.869]	−2.512 [1.851]	−1.782 [1.869]	4.153 [2.907]	−2.488 [1.866]
Region							
South	0.332 [0.281]	−0.404 [0.369]	−0.419* [0.234]	−0.383* [0.231]	−0.403* [0.228]	−0.430 [0.374]	−0.398* [0.252]
West	1.025** [0.315]	0.967** [0.340]	0.793** [0.215]	0.698** [0.217]	0.676** [0.215]	1.081** [0.340]	0.714** [0.217]
Transportation access							
Train connections, 1948	—	0.043 [0.034]	−0.003 [0.022]	0.004 [0.022]	0.000 [0.022]	0.036 [0.035]	0.003 [0.022]
Intercept	5.945** [0.187]	6.195** [2.129]	1.262 [1.397]	0.880 [1.388]	1.242 [1.385]	6.646** [2.197]	0.846 [1.427]
Adjusted $R^2$	0.630	0.658	0.863	0.867	0.860	0.648	0.865

Notes: Standard errors of the coefficients are in brackets. All tests are one-tailed tests.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

tion in urban areas. Though its influence weakened at higher levels, NAACP activism often served as a barometer of the potential for a better life for many African Americans, despite the organization's tradition of a small, elite membership (Thomas 1992; Jonas 2005). These reactive and proactive institutional influences each made important, independent contributions and made ethnogenically rich areas more attractive as destinations.

Also, women's and men's occupational blackness influenced 1950s migration in strikingly different ways. While women's concentration significantly increased in-migration flows, men's was a significant deterrent. This suggests that gender-specific queues of employment were in effect during this time. This intraracial gender effect may have resulted from a gendered compression, wherein African American women were more dependent than African American men on occupational access as a destination incentive. This compression was also probably an extension of African American women's occupational opportunities (e.g., as domestics and day workers) being linked more strongly to informal networks than those of African American men (Lemke-Santangelo 1996). These informal networks provided a richer diffusion of awareness of potential opportunities for which there was no male equivalent.

The size of the African American population is added in model 3. Comparing adjusted  $R^2$  values, this increases the model's explained variance by 31 percent and nearly doubles the number of migrants (a 92 percent increase). Prior work comparing the 1930s and the 1950s has shown that the explanatory contribution of population significantly increased over time on African American net migration (Price-Spratlen 1998). In addition, there was no change in class-informed selectivity in the impact of population size on the migration of this period (Vigdor 2002). This increased the probability of a rich set of family attachments and micromigration networks that were strong and beneficial regardless of one's intraracial class standing (Spilimbergo and Ubeda 2004).

The addition of population to the model substantially reduces the effects of religious participation and NAACP activism while explaining away the effects of the (NAACP activism)<sup>2</sup> term, race papers, and NUL longevity. The activism reduction is consistent with prior research showing a significant decline in its influence on African American *net* migration between the 1930s and the 1950s (Price-Spratlen 1998). In model 5, removing the New York City effect, this is further supported by the sustained significance of the

quadratic even after adding population size to the model. The visibility and sustained success of the NAACP from the late 1920s forward was a product of the organization's highly effective strategy of challenging local statutes of injustice, which then established a foundation for later national, Supreme Court-level success. The NAACP was apparently so central to the increased richness of ethnogenesis that, as the migration itself gained momentum, the increased access to network connections it provided over time significantly reduced its independent influence on migration (Price-Spratlen 2003; see also Watson 1993). This population influence is probably also a product of ethnogenesis influences increasingly becoming anchors to place rather than instigators of differential utility valued by prospective migrants. Removing the New York City effect in model 5, complete with richer micronetworks and family attachments, 1950s migration was still influenced by these two more family-oriented ethnogenic variables and their differentiating place utilities. There was more religious participation and NAACP activism in places with more African Americans, decreasing their differential place utility.

Adding migration momentum in model 4 leads to the nonsignificance of all ethnogenic measures in the full model. Momentum, and the cumulative causation it nurtured, led to a self-sustaining migration, driven by population, regional diffusion, and the avoidance of areas where African American men were the most occupationally overrepresented. Destination diffusion is reflected in the negative South and positive West regional effects. The more urbane 1950s migrant was significantly less likely to choose any southern areas and more likely to move to the nontraditional destinations of the Far West. Model 5 shows that this complete ethnogenic absence was driven by New York City. When the city is removed, the variance explained by the model declines only slightly, and NAACP activism and religious participation sustain their significance. As model 5 shows, momentum's complete muting of ethnogenic effects was driven by the most highly urban destination.

Model 6 is an adaptation of model 2. Instead of (NAACP activism)<sup>2</sup>, it tests for the interaction and resource exchange between the NAACP and African American churches. When both the interaction term and its quadratic are included, they show that migration was significantly greater to destinations marked by a rich resource exchange between these two more family-oriented ethnogenic variables. The effect of this resource exchange diminished, having a positive effect at low levels and weakening at higher levels. This again suggests that there was a gradual change of effect as it tran-

sitioned from differential destination attraction to an anchor to place. And this pattern of relationships remains largely unchanged with the addition of all other (nonpopulation) measures. As with model 4, adding population and migration momentum in model 7 reduces to nonsignificance all ethnogenic predictors, including mediating the effects of religious participation, the interaction and its quadratic. These largely size- and momentum-dependent place utilities still contributed to the era's migratory diffusion, maintaining their differential place utility outside the largest urban areas.

## Discussion

Cultural or ethnic capital as a destination asset in migration has often been discussed in and among white ethnic or Latino populations and in terms of intergenerational skill acquisition and occupational mobility. Here I have illustrated its utility to a better understanding of historical African American urbanization. Much of the previous research on historical African American migration has examined the southern regional dynamics that helped instigate movement, provided detailed single-city analyses of primary urban destinations, and assessed the individual and familial differences among migrants and between regions. My findings show that African American ethnogenesis continued to influence in-migration flows during the bridge decade of the 1950s. More urbane migrants, who valued destinations marked by proactive organizational initiatives and community empowerment efforts, moved as news of a good quality of life spread. No prior research has systematically evaluated the ethnogenic and other place utilities of urban destinations that shaped this period's movement.

The findings of this research extend our understanding of historical African American migration in at least four important ways. First, this analysis shows that the late 1950s' urban in-migration was affected by those who continued to establish and sustain racially affirming outlets and institutions. This is contrary to prior analysis, which has shown a decline in ethnogenic utility on *net* migration between the 1930s and the 1950s (Price-Spratlen 1998). Despite the moderate correlation between in-migration counts and net migration ( $r = .394$ ;  $p < .001$ ), evaluating the 1950s model independently of the out-migration counterstream is an important advance, moving from a model of net utility to one of direct destination asset comparability. Peter R. Mueser (1989) cautions against the use of a gross migration mea-

sure, because a place characteristic that influences arrivals will also inform migrant departures. The equilibrating process in a larger system shows that in-migration and out-migration are jointly determined. Yet the contribution of this research rests in the evaluation it admits of comparable yet distinct migrant destination place utilities. This article has intentionally focused exclusively on those who moved into an area in the African American urban system. Prior work has illustrated the benefit of assessing gross in-migration flows for understanding the process of “welfare magnetism” and local-area brain drains among U.S. counties in contemporary migration patterns (Voss et al. 2001). The substantial increase in the variance explained by the current in-migration model compared to the similar 1950s net model in Price-Spratlen 1998 by nearly a factor of 10 (0.867 vs. 0.089) illustrates the value of this gross, in-migration focus as an important spatial unit of influence in historical African American migration.

Second, heeding the call of Heinicke (1994) to assess reasons other than the mechanical cotton picker that influenced African American migration during the 1950s, this research has shown that African American ethnogenesis continued to make significant contributions to the destination place utilities and selection among the more urbane African American migrants of this period. Multiple dimensions of ethnogenesis mattered, even after other potential place utilities were considered. There were regional variations in the overall migration flows, which were higher in the Far West and lower in the South. Save New York City, however, this sustained ethnogenic place utility was true throughout the United States, and no ethnogenic regionalisms influenced 1950s migration flows (these nonsignificant interaction results were not shown). While black newspapers “tended to be the most influential institutions in shaping black social consciousness” (Thomas 1992: 187; see also Dann 1971), NAACP activism and religious participation were particularly influential. They enriched the attractiveness of urban destinations by deepening a proactive cohesion and spirit of African American self-help. Here again, the distinction between net and in-migration is critical. Mueser (1989) suggests that present levels of locational characteristics that vary sufficiently over time will most often be proxies for recent changes in those characteristics. Recent changes in the ethnogenic factors had diminishing migratory utility. As the civil rights movement gained a geographic and social momentum, African American organizational resources became anchors to place. Outside New York City, NAACP activism and religious

participation, the two most family-friendly ethnogenic resources, added to the motives for moving in search of a still greater quality of life during the bridge decade.

Third, African American migration momentum and population size are the most critical destination place utilities that informed African American migration of the 1950s. Perhaps the most relevant population proxy to an African American migration model is the value of community and family ties that made up the micromigration networks of these destinations. Various ties and micronetworks are more diffuse as population increases and have long been positively related to migration (Todaro 1980; Massey 1990; Brown 2002). Historically, African Americans, for whom kinship and friendship affiliations have been most critical, have reported family and community reasons for geographic mobility much more frequently than whites (Lansing and Mueller 1967; McHugh 1988). And the discriminatory context that informed the residential settings of African Americans rendered a “strength in numbers” migrant motive important to their destination place utility assessments. Similarly, Vigdor (2002) has shown that African American population size was not an instigator of intraracial, class-selective migration during the 1940s. A decade later, when migration efficiency and selectivity declined and most migrants moved from one urban location to another, micronetwork richness was essential in terms of both how many people were there already and how many had recently arrived.

Consistent with prior research, these effects of population size and migration momentum indicate a cumulative causation rationale suggested by Massey and his colleagues (Massey et al. 1987; Massey 1990; Massey and Zenteno 1999). At the individual level, a migrant experiences enhanced quality-of-life outcomes that in turn create new standards of well-being “and [instill] new ambitions for upward mobility that did not before exist” (Massey and Zenteno 1999: 5328). When it happens among many migrants and in many areas of a migration system, the cumulative effect is a movement that supersedes any particular location and location-specific asset, where migration itself generates its own momentum. This is illustrated by the increasing explanatory significance of population size over time on African American net migration (Price-Spratlen 1998), with population size mediating, in this research, the effects of multiple measures. Migration momentum furthers this process. As a result, this research expands our understanding of place utility cumulative causation as a multidimensional process throughout the U.S. African American urban system.

Finally, in addition to the importance of ethnogenic richness and the cumulative causation processes of African American population size and migration momentum, African American urban movement during the 1950s was marked by destination diffusion, or a broadening of the number and type of urban destinations. This diffusion was independent of, and unaffected by, accessibility, long-standing urban presence, and economic growth, a finding in distinct contrast to prior research on Depression-era migration, which has showed a consistent, positive historical primacy effect (Price-Spratlen 1998). As the diffusion broadened over time, a greater number of urban alternatives experienced larger migration flows well beyond the urban areas of long-standing African American residence that preceded the World War I first wave of the Great Migration.

This greater destination diversity also illustrates the success of prior ethnogenesis itself. When combined with the positive western and negative southern regional results, this research shows that, as the level of ethnogenic diffusion increased, destination diversity expanded and the efficiency of the migration fell (i.e., more urban-to-urban migrants). An increased sense of self-definition and opportunity for a greater quality of life amid a richer set of urban destinations probably led southern urban destinations of an earlier migration stage to become *origins* to urban areas of the broader 1950s African American urban system. Ethnogenic enrichment, cumulative causation, and destination diffusion processes simultaneously informed this urban migration of the 1950s.

## Conclusions

These findings illustrate the value of broadening the too frequently applied emphasis on economic forces in migration research to encompass social determinants and gender dynamics of geographic mobility (e.g., Price-Spratlen 1999b; Tolnay 2001; White et al. 2005). Extending what Massey (1990) and others have noted, the rational-actor assumption of economic motives must be adapted to take into account the ethnogenically rational migrant and the macrodynamics of diffusion, momentum, and cumulative causation. The promise of the geographic movement to help African Americans approach a position of social and economic opportunity was exemplified by the vitality of historical ethnogenic activities that drew on an infrastructure held together by African American social institutions, leaders, and individual and communal initiatives (Lemke-Santangelo 1996; Gregory 2005).

Even after the widespread mechanization of southern farming and consistent with the suggestions of Vigdor and Heinicke among prior researchers, the urbanward migration of African Americans in the 1950s appears to have been a product of far more than agricultural mechanization alone.

This analysis raises critical questions for future research. Were there places of ethnogenic paradox, where rich ethnogenesis was partnered with especially low in-migration? What are the locations and other related dimensions of these destination paradoxes during this and earlier periods? And what is the role of African American ethnogenesis in the “second Great Migration” of southern turnaround, in which large numbers of African Americans moved to rural and urban areas in the South? If “culture is diffused from the origin to the destination, and from the destination back to the origin” over time (Brown 2002: 11), how did these cultural exchanges shape the Great Migration? The works of James N. Gregory (2005) and Stewart E. Tolnay and his colleagues (Tolnay and Beck 1992; Tolnay 2001; Tolnay et al. 2005) have effectively addressed the last question, though much work remains to be done. The answer to these and other related questions can help us better understand the historical foundations of contemporary urban America. In particular, studies are needed that probe more deeply into the relationships between African American ethnogenesis and sociodemographic outcomes that it may have instigated. Richer historical and longitudinal work will help us better understand the long-standing and recent urban influences on destination selection processes that shaped different periods of the twentieth century.

## Notes

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- 1 This emphasis on urban ethnogenic destination should not be construed to minimize the importance of various southern pushes that also shaped the migration. Such factors have been thoroughly documented elsewhere (e.g., Fligstein 1981; Tolnay and Beck 1992). It is the intent of this analysis to evaluate whether ethnogenic destination

- place utility was also important in shaping the urban in-migration of African Americans during the 1950s.
- 2 These counties contain each of the 161 cities with 25,000 or more residents in 1900. Sixteen of these cities were in counties in which another city also had a population of 25,000 or more. Nine additional counties adjacent to another county that comprised a homogeneous single unit were combined. Consistent with Fligstein's (1981) analysis of "Black Belt" migration, a county is included if it existed in both 1950 and 1960 and if any boundary shift caused no more than a 10 percent reduction or increase in the square mileage over the decade. This led to a final sample of 136 cases.
  - 3 No further race specificity is provided, but since African Americans were the overwhelming majority of urban people of color in the late 1950s, this is a minor statistical problem.
  - 4 The U.S. Census Bureau compiles in-migration counts only for the last five years of each decade. In-migration compilation began in the 1955–59 period. Because of the "war effort" and the consequent return of so many persons after World War II, only one-year in-migration counts were collected for the 1940s (e.g., 1949–50). These one-year values are too volatile to represent the effect of migration momentum from the prior decade, because they introduce excessive measurement error. Since there was nearly as much post-World War II movement in the 1950s as in the 1940s (92 percent of the 1940s total), the model fit and contextual tests are better suited for the later decade. In-migration removes the methodological and analytic confusion of counterstream out-migrants in a net migration measure. This provides a "purer" test of place utilities by contrasting only in-migrants among a broad range of destinations. With increased urbanization there is a gradual movement toward counterstream symmetry. This leads to a decline in the efficiency of migration (i.e., the difference between in- and outflows divided by their sum), since, where in-migration tends to be great, so does out-migration (Greenwood 1973, 1981). This too is likely to lead to a suppression effect in the predictive accuracy of a (net) migration model, again assuming symmetry in the motives and behavior of in- and outstreams. Because this in-migration measure removes (i.e., "corrects for") counties that had heavy out-migration streams, it provides the most effective measure of destination place utility. To evaluate the predictive significance of population size, actual counts—rather than rates—were used.
  - 5 This content coding of the *Crisis* probably undercounts external (and internal) NAACP activism. Many activities were not reported to the national office. Many that were reported were not chosen for presentation of local-area chapter activity, and still others that were reported but not chosen were in some way contrary to or otherwise "inconsistent" with the mainstream, inclusionary motive of the NAACP national mission (e.g., socialist alliances forged in selected chapters) (Jonas 2005). Despite these potential limitations, these data provide the best available nationally comparative chapter-specific proxy of activity.
  - 6 In exploratory analyses, this 10-year net migration value is used to represent migration momentum because it provided more explanatory power compared with the

1-year in-migration counts of 1949–50 available for selected cities. Also, this destination place utility model cannot directly control for the many diverse places of origin among the migrants to any given destination. The origin areas of the in-migration flows were not documented in the census data. Region is the proximal origin control that the data allow. First, the geographic distribution of adjacent urban locations is highly region-specific. In effect, the symbolic pattern from Northeast to Midwest to South to West holds and describes the relative accessibility of alternative urban locations in the larger 1950s U.S. urban system. Northeast urban areas had the least distance between each other, with Midwest, South, and Far West areas following in order of increasing distance between them. Using a random sample of eight urban areas in the 1950 U.S. system (i.e., two from each region), I compiled the distance in roadway miles between the chosen urban areas and their four closest urban areas. The average across the eight adjacent urban alternatives in the Northeast was under 30 miles; in the Midwest, more than 82 miles, or nearly three times as much; in the South, just over 140 miles, or more than 70 percent greater than in the Midwest; and in the Far West, over 450 miles, or more than three times greater than in the South. However, migrants came from origins other than the urban areas closest to them: both local and urban, distant and rural. But to the degree that adjacency informed the migration, region provides a proxy of the urban adjacency effect. Among the four regions, only the correlation between 1950s in-migration flows with the Far West approaches significance.

- 7 If, for example, personal services jobs predominated in the local area, the index value will be high. By contrast, for a county with many construction jobs or manufacturing jobs in nondurable goods, the index value will be low. A high index value may suppress migration, since people are least likely to migrate to places where their employment prospects are limited to the menial, low-paying service jobs that predominate when African American jobs are overrepresented (Greenwood 1981; Kyriakoudes 2003).
- 8 The human capital or economic perspective that has dominated migration research posits that migrants are motivated by the opportunity to enhance their economic well-being. Such studies hypothesize that prospective employment change causes migration: people move from low-income to high-income areas. The research results have substantiated a mutually dependent relationship between employment growth and migration and have led researchers to conclude that growth in employment opportunities is the critical economic determinant (Blanco 1962; Sjaastad 1962; Greenwood 1981). The economic perspective depicts an African American migrant who has made a rational choice to relocate in the face of economic difficulties, hoping to improve the family's financial circumstances (Tolnay and Beck 1992). Economic expansion and job growth significantly increase migration flows. In the most extensive county-level evaluation of African American historical migration, Fligstein (1981) finds that numerous dimensions of capitalist development significantly shaped net migration during the first half of the twentieth century. Both the absolute number and the percentage change in manufacturing establishments were

significant determinants of Depression-era migration in the South. Most evidence suggests that areas of economic growth experience the greatest in-migration and the least out-migration (Greenwood 1981).

- 9 While the percentage of counties in any given region varied, the largest proportions were in the Midwest and the Northeast, and even the Far West contained more than 8 percent of the 1950s African American urban system (i.e., 11 urban destinations).
- 10 Additional leverage models were run to assess the pattern and magnitude of influence brought about by contrasting sample makeups. A series of models comparable to the seven reported here were run without the top 5, 10, and 15 counties that had the largest African American populations and that had the largest in-migration flow values. This procedure allowed for an assessment of relative leverage effects on both the right- and the left-hand sides of the equations. While some slight differences occurred in the relative magnitude of various factors (e.g., the effect of population size gradually declined across these models as more populous counties were removed), the overall patterns of relationships reported here held across the leverage models.

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