

Migration in the Arctic: Subsistence, Jobs, and Well-being in Urban and Rural Communities

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Summary

This project studies patterns of migration of North American arctic indigenous people between rural communities, larger regional centers, and urban areas over the past several decades.

Main Research Questions

We address questions about the causes and consequences of migration, focusing on the roles of subsistence opportunities and community quality of life amenities relative to income-earning employment opportunities. We look specifically at gender and age differences in the pattern of migration responses to changes in community job and subsistence opportunities.

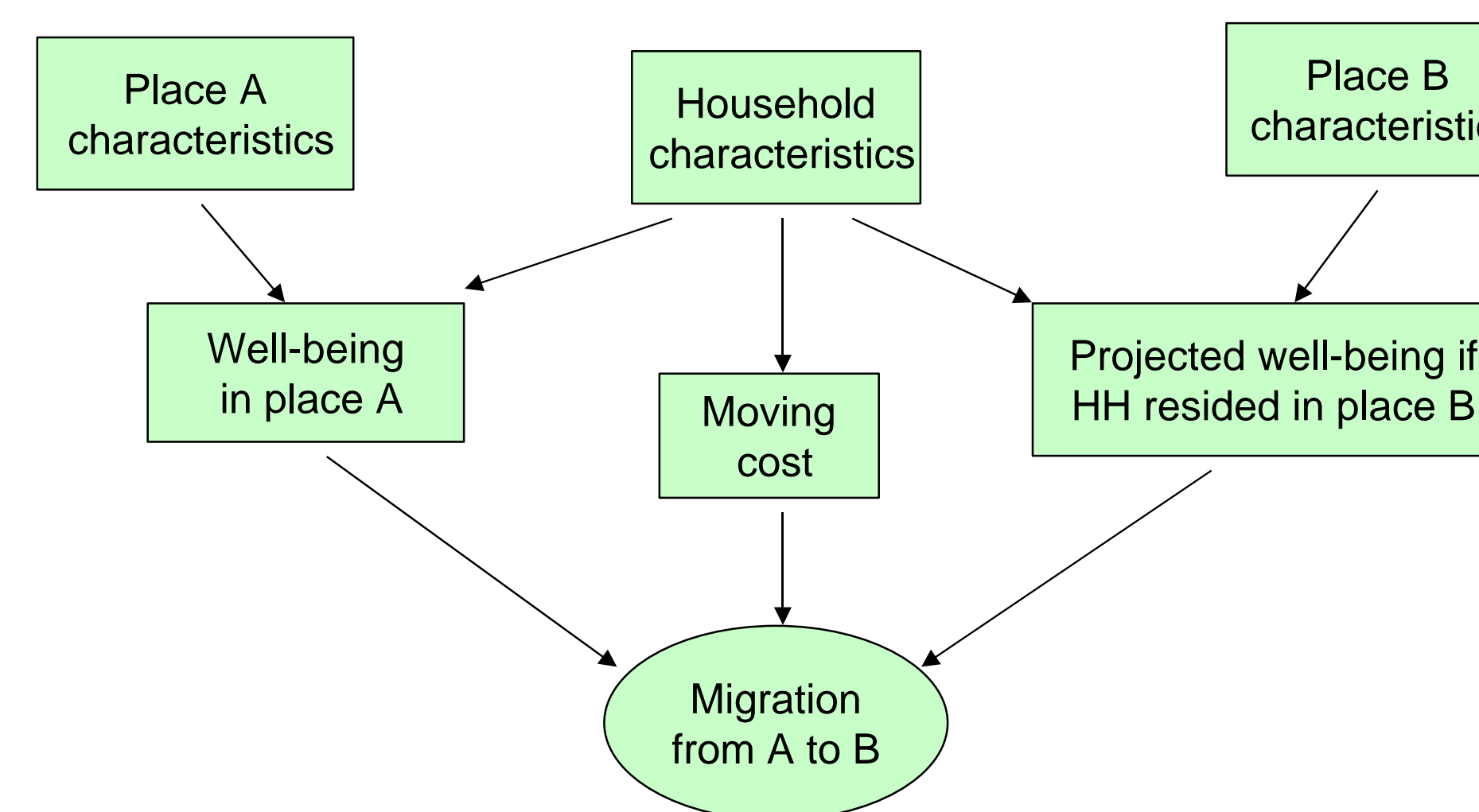
We also examine the role of certain national policies on migration decisions. For example, comparing the Inupiat regions in Alaska to the Nunavut Territory of Canada, we ask whether Canadian Inuit are less mobile than Alaska Inupiat; and if so, to what extent can this be attributed to differences in policies in the two nations?

We also investigate the long-term consequences of migration decisions: is mobility on balance improving living conditions in arctic communities, especially the poorest places, or is it draining leadership to larger settlements and exacerbating inequalities?

Approach

Our conceptual model of arctic migration starts from the basic idea that factors that influence relative well-being of living in different places provide incentives for individuals and households to move among these places. At the community level, then, migration provides an indicator of relative well-being.

Migration as an Indicator of Relative Well-being



Research Objectives

- Develop improved methods for analyzing migration decisions of individuals participating in mixed subsistence and cash economies;
- Apply these methods to improve understanding of Inuit migration decisions in a comparative multi-decadal study of Alaska and arctic Canada;
- Develop and make available to other researchers metadata for research and policy applications;
- Involve arctic local governments in policy-relevant research.

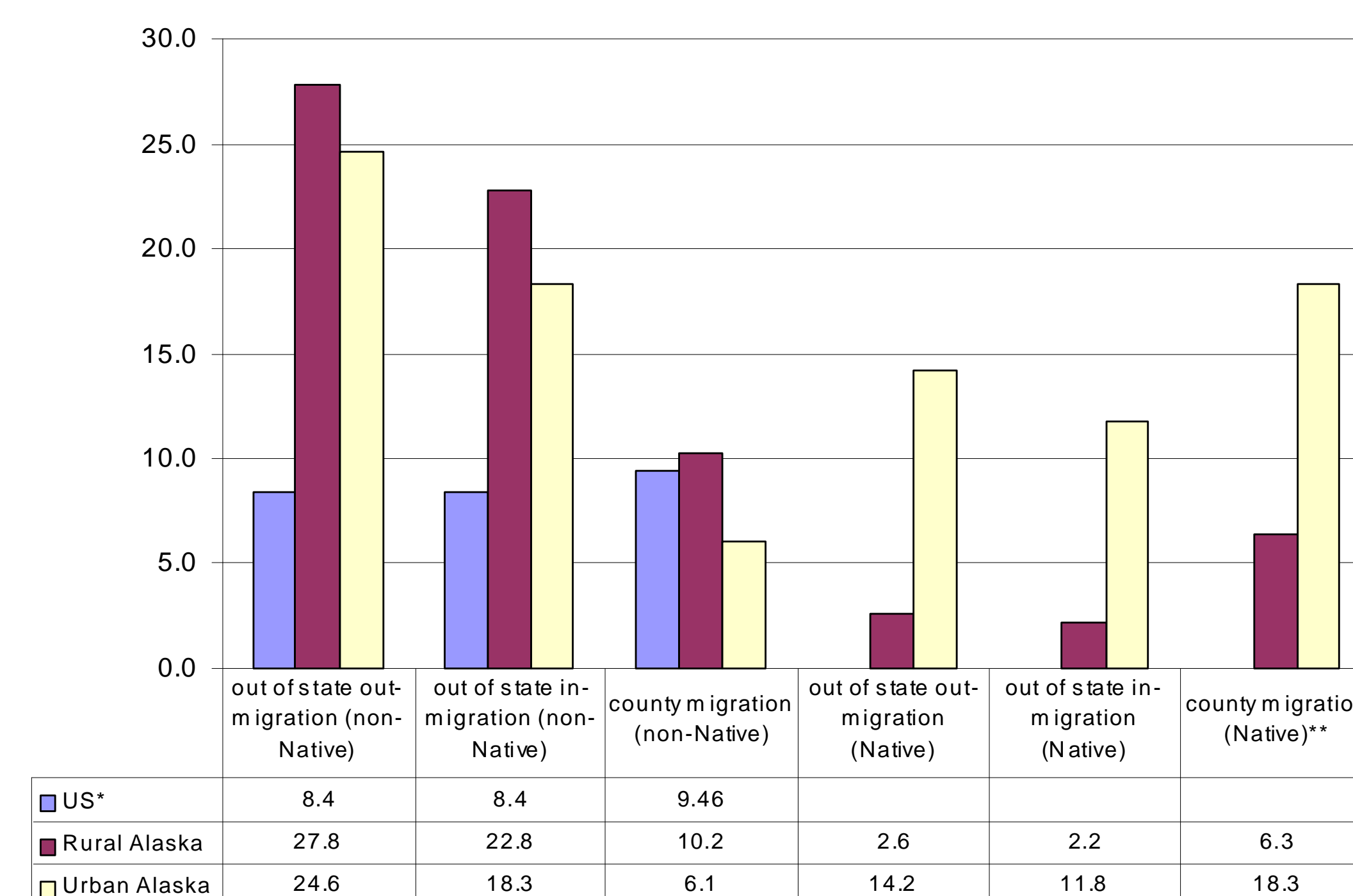
Data Sources

Working with participating organizations, we are developing research protocols for analyzing microdata collected from the late 1970s to the present, including the US Census, the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, North Slope Borough Censuses, Statistics Canada's Aboriginal People's Survey, and other household survey data from Nunavut and Alaska. A key step in the research is the creation of a new large-sample household-level dataset from 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census Long Form data, in cooperation with the US Census Center for Economic Studies.

Source	Geographic Detail	Year
US Census PUMS	Alaska regions (urban/rural)	1980, 1990, 2000
Canada Census PUMF	Canada Territories, Provinces	1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 (planned)
Canada Aboriginal Peoples Survey PUMF	Canada Territories, Provinces	1991, 2001 (planned)
Kruse (1982)	Places: North Slope Borough	1977
North Slope Borough Census	Places: North Slope Borough	1988, 1993, 1998, 2003
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game; US Parks	Select Northwest Arctic Places	Various years 1980-2004
SLICA Alaska survey	Places: 3 Alaska census areas	2003
Nunavut Survey	Places: Nunavut Territory	1999, 2001, 2004
US Census CRDC Long-Forms	Places: Alaska, other states	1990, 2000
Canada Aboriginal Peoples Survey data	Places: Canada	1991 (proposed), 2001 (planned)

Internal migration is an important driver of demographic change in North American arctic communities. Migration is not just a rural-to-urban phenomenon. However, most Alaska natives who move among Alaska census areas either start or end their moves in an urban community.

US Migration Flows, 1995-2000, as a Share of the 2000 Population

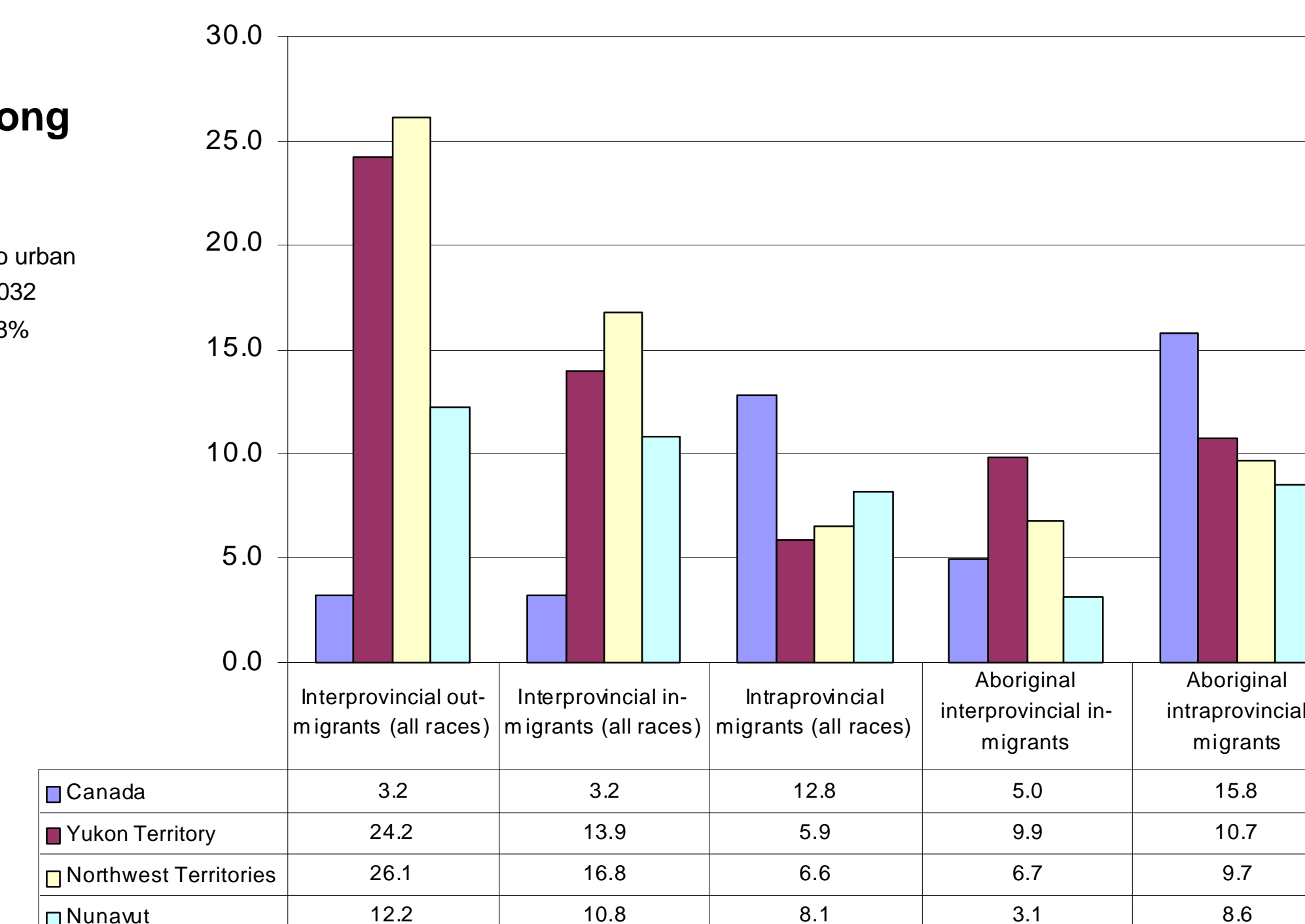


Source: U.S. Census, 2000

* includes all races

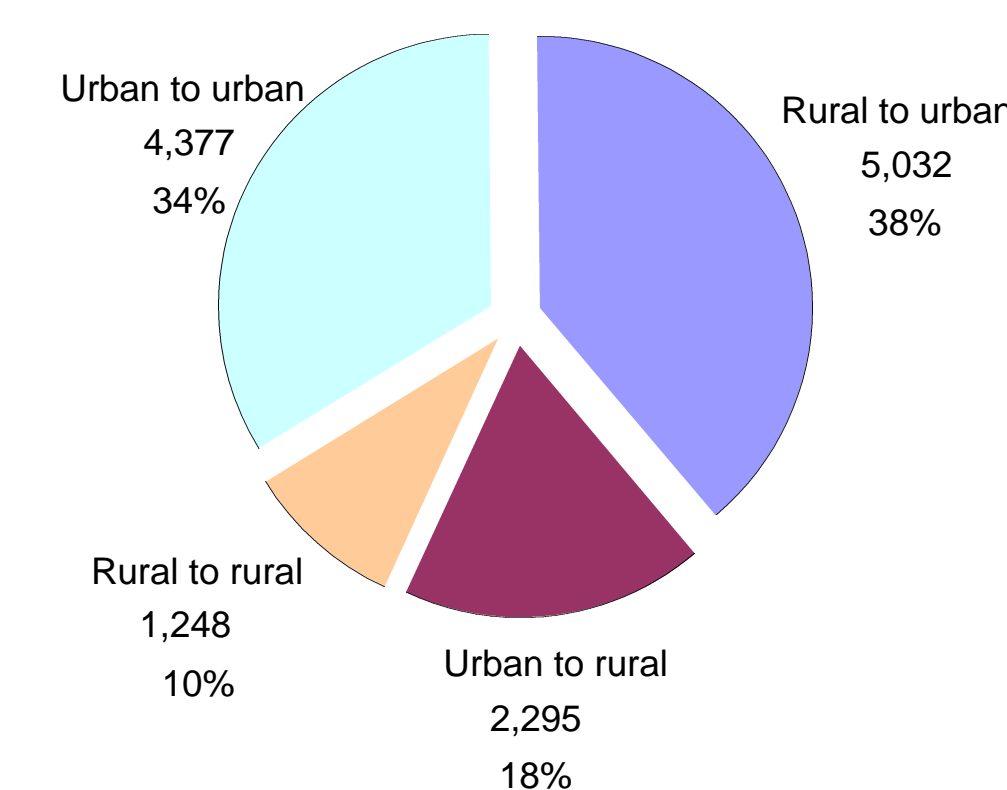
** rural county migration includes urban to rural and rural to rural migrants; urban county migration includes rural to urban and urban to urban migrants

Canada Migration Flows, 1996-2001, as a Share of the 2001 Population



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Alaska Native Migration Among Alaska Census Areas



Participating Organizations

Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage
 North Slope Borough, Department of Public Works
 Nunavut Research Institute, Nunavut Arctic College
 U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies
 Government of Nunavut, Dept. of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs
 Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics
 Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence