Economic Conditions in the Great Plains

Income and Poverty. Many of the important economic indicators from the 2000 Census are not yet available. These are scheduled to be released starting in the spring of 2002. As a result, one must rely on estimates for a snapshot of the economic health of the region's smaller areas. The Census data used in this publication are experimental estimates derived from the Small Area Income Estimates Branch. Perhaps the most telling indicator from these data is youth poverty. The future of any area lies in its youth and the ability to cultivate human capital. An alternative to relying on Census data is finding other sources of economic data. One source utilized in this study is the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) which provides a summary of tax return data based on a large sample. These data document change in residency of tax return filers between years. From these data, one can analyze the movement of filers (flow data) between counties and states.

Highlights

Figure 22. The highest concentrations of impoverished youth, both in the Great Plains region and the U.S. in general, tend to be in the south and among Native American reservation areas.

Figure 23. The economic consequence of out-migration in the Great Plains is compelling. The majority of central and northern counties in the region have sustained net income losses for at least four of the six years between 1993-94 and 1998-99.

Table 21. IRS returns offer one way to estimate the economic consequence of migration. The net change in income between in-movers and out-movers of a county can be calculated from tax returns. Even though these data are rough estimates, the income changes due to migration are dramatic. For example, the net income exchange due to migration in 1998-99 cost North Dakota more than $100 million and Oklahoma $200 million while Colorado gained more than $1 billion.

Figure 22. Percent of Persons Ages 0 to 17 Below Poverty in the U.S. by County: 1997

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Estimates Branch

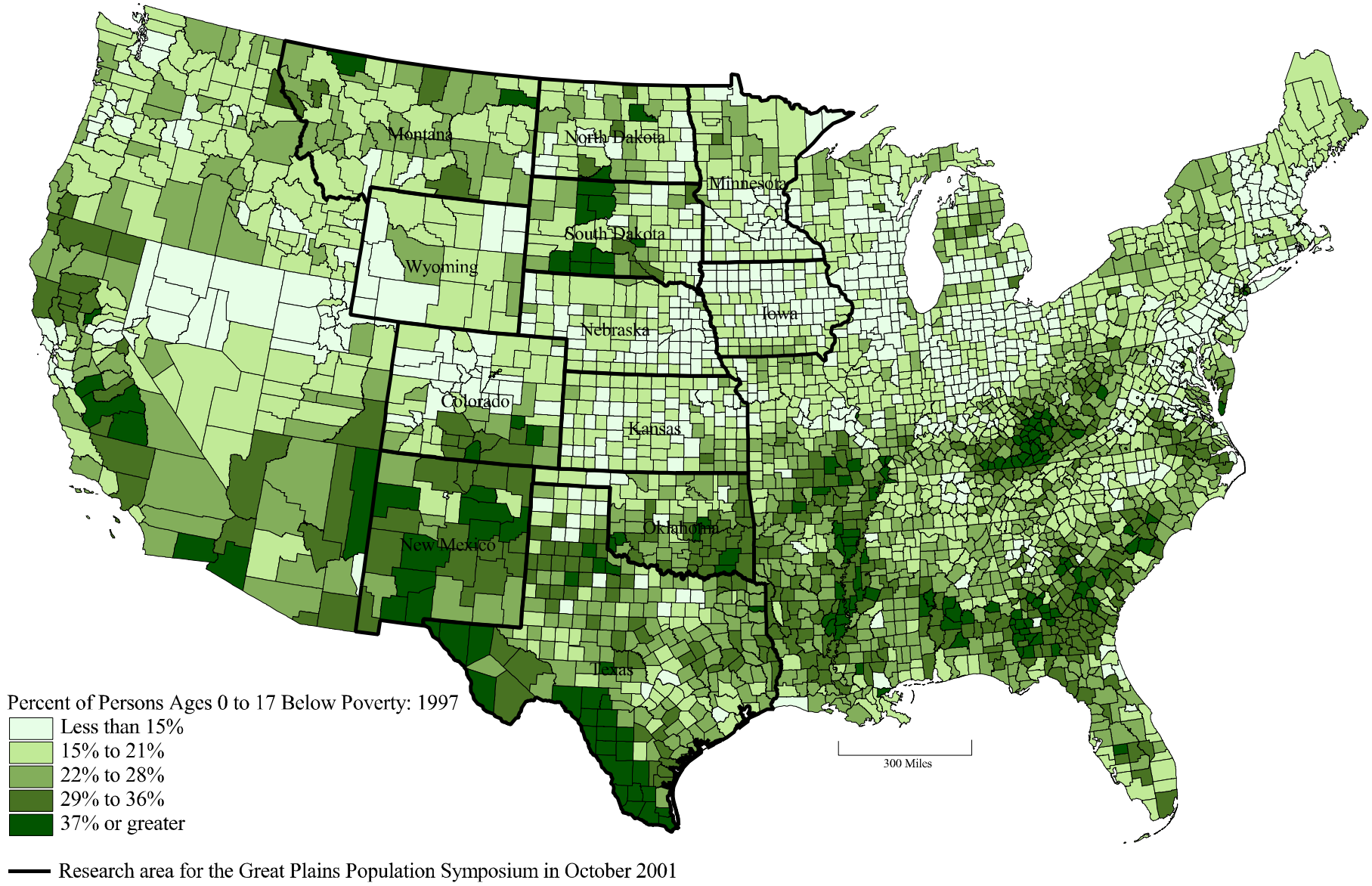

Figure 23. Income Movement Patterns as a Result of Migration in the Great Plains States by County: 1993-94 to 1998-99

Source: Internal Revenue Service, Sample Flow Files

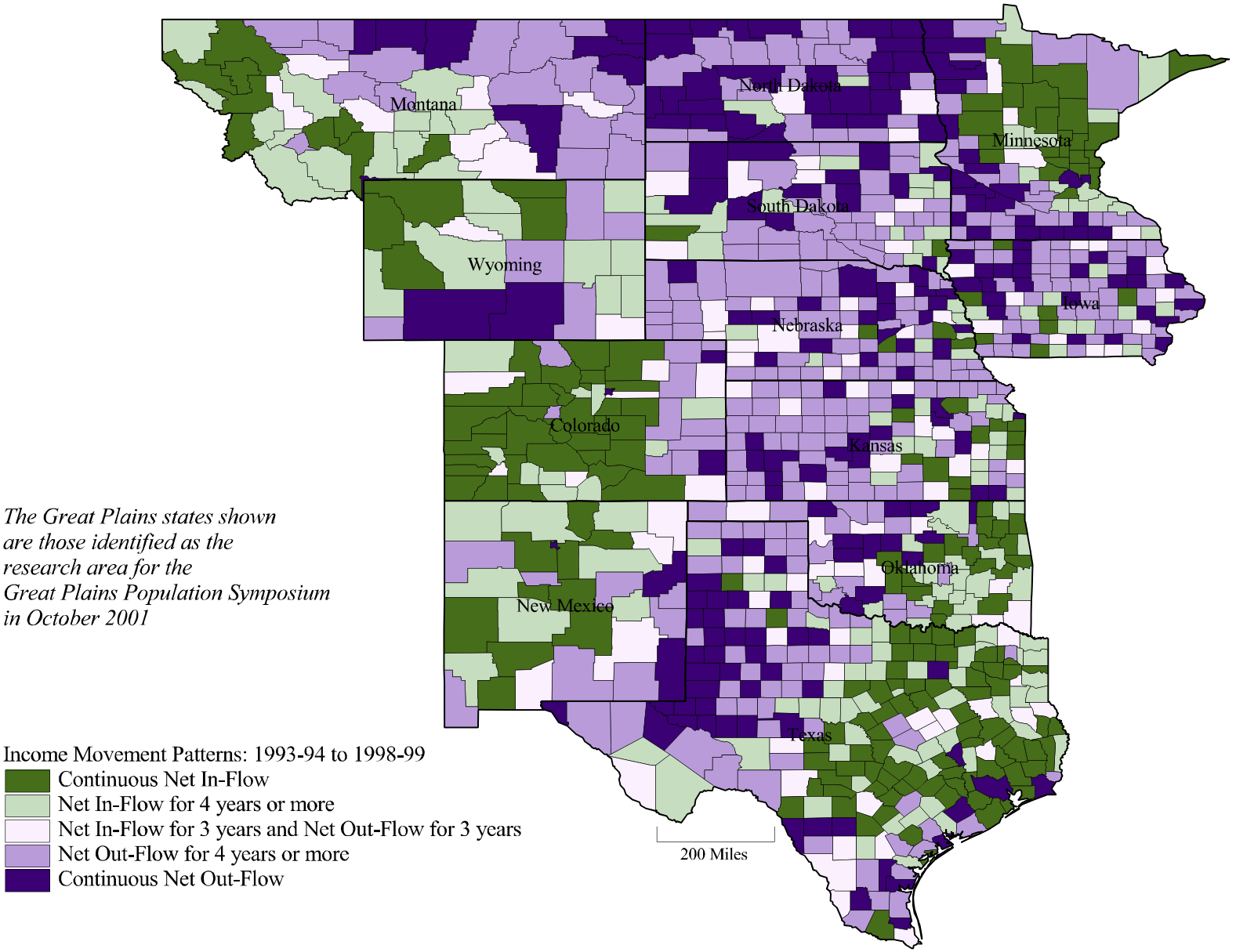

Table 21. Income Movement Patterns as a Result of Migration in the Great Plains States: 1993-94 to 1998-99

Note: For purposes of this study, the Great Plains is defined as all counties in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. Percentages that do not sum to 100 percent are the result of counties that had less than 10 returns (which were not included in the analysis) or had neither a positive nor negative net income flow. Income refers to that reported on tax returns.

Source: Internal Revenue Service, Sample Flow Files

States in the Great Plains	1993-1994			1994-1995			1995-1996			1996-1997			1997-1998			1998-1999		
	Percent of Counties			Percent of Counties			Percent of Counties			Percent of Counties			Percent of Counties			Percent of Counties		
	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)	With Net Income In-Flow	With Net Income Out-Flow	Net Income Flow ($1,000)
CO	74.6	25.4	905,920	87.3	12.7	987,371	74.6	25.4	772,535	74.6	25.4	849,434	68.3	31.7	895,407	65.1	34.9	1,038,036
IA	37.4	62.6	-116,992	41.4	58.6	-85,575	35.4	64.6	-153,170	28.3	71.7	-219,780	29.3	70.7	-217,749	19.2	80.8	-241,878
KS	49.5	50.5	4,193	44.8	55.2	-84,498	42.9	57.1	-131,184	33.3	66.7	-127,282	25.7	74.3	-35,347	21.9	78.1	-222,780
MN	49.4	50.6	8,600	55.2	44.8	52,547	54.0	46.0	-29,759	39.1	60.9	-257,227	40.2	59.8	-320,259	43.7	56.3	-170,228
MT	60.7	39.3	130,665	57.1	41.1	129,463	55.4	44.6	102,099	46.4	53.6	32,949	35.7	64.3	52,484	39.3	60.7	66,199
NE	39.8	55.9	-55,926	39.8	57.0	1,532	35.5	60.2	-23,046	21.5	73.1	-127,714	23.7	74.2	-193,984	16.1	80.6	-243,617
NM	78.8	21.2	282,440	75.8	24.2	217,004	63.6	36.4	64,288	45.5	54.5	-42,132	51.5	45.5	-94,586	48.5	51.5	-162,809
ND	17.0	79.2	-37,365	22.6	73.6	-33,468	17.0	79.2	-38,450	11.3	84.9	-73,050	9.4	84.9	-97,070	9.4	90.6	-100,391
OK	66.2	33.8	-11,141	68.8	31.2	-14,429	55.8	44.2	26,344	53.2	46.8	-41,649	50.6	49.4	-92,900	46.8	53.2	-209,146
SD	47.0	53.0	52,342	59.1	40.9	31,695	40.9	59.1	14,395	22.7	77.3	-20,315	13.6	86.4	-29,401	28.6	71.2	39,574
TX	62.2	36.2	1,105,265	64.6	34.3	800,089	59.8	39.4	838,926	51.2	47.6	984,958	50.0	48.4	1,249,470	46.5	52.4	1,059,149
WY	82.6	17.4	53,095	60.9	39.1	23,371	73.9	26.1	36,304	60.9	39.1	67,051	43.5	56.5	57,997	47.8	52.2	135,309
Total	53.9	45.1	2,321,096	56.2	42.9	2,030,621	50.2	49.0	1,479,282	40.7	58.3	1,067,173	38.0	61.1	1,414,326	36.0	63.4	1,316,371