

Title: Country Road Take me Home—Migration Patterns in the Appalachia America and Place-Based Policy.

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Abstract: One of the most persistently poor places in the United States is the Appalachian Mountain region that runs from Western New York state to Northeast Mississippi. This beautiful region is also the site of one of the few large-scale regional development agencies in the United States, the Appalachian Regional Commission. This research will try to fill a void in the regional development literature by assessing whether natural labor force migration is facilitating regional adjustment in peripheral regions, or whether it is exacerbating the problem. Specifically, we will examine migration patterns for the over 400 counties in the Appalachian region as well an additional 100 counties immediately adjacent to the region. We will assess whether migration patterns are consistent with a brain drain where more skilled workers are leaving the region, but are replaced by less-skilled individuals. Indeed, such a pattern may further impoverish the remaining residents creating a 'poverty trap,' which may suggest a need for place-based interventions. However, if poor residents are leaving for better opportunities and they are being replaced by wealthier new residents, this would suggest that there is little need for further policy intervention besides people based policies to improve the skills of low-skilled migrants.

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