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[Article in Spanish]

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PIP: This work argues for a new and broader approach to measurement of internal spatial mobility that would place it in the context of interaction with other social processes. Spatial mobility is not an isolated event that can be considered an independent variable; it is instead a process that can only be fully understood through its interaction with the other demographic, economic, political, and social elements that form part of the life of a human being. This work attempts to demonstrate the necessity of considering changes in these processes simultaneously, and briefly describes different methods of measurement. The study of migration has traditionally focused on a restricted concept of change of residence of individuals and has ignored other forms of population movement, such as commuting or repeated short-term movements not entailing permanent change of residence. Explanatory models of migration have been essentially cross-sectional, but a longitudinal approach is needed to analyze spatial mobility simultaneously with other events in the family and professional life. Retrospective studies may provide data on events in the past. They have the advantage of requiring only 1 visit, but the disadvantage that interviews may be quite lengthy. Some attempts to verify the quality of data collected in comprehensive retrospective biographical surveys in Belgium have yielded promising results. Respondents appear to remember the order of events better than the exact dates. It is more difficult to conduct retrospective surveys in developing countries because of the usual lack of population registers and other documentation. Prospective surveys appear more appropriate for obtaining longitudinal data on spatial mobility, but difficulties of following the sample for long periods of time then arise. Visits must be repeated at short enough intervals to avoid errors of memory, and arrangements must be made in advance for locating respondents who migrate. A hypothetical example of analysis of data on marital status and migration using data from a prospective study illustrates the use of nonparametric statistical techniques for this type of analysis. Parametric methods generalize the procedures of multiple regression, allowing functional dependencies to be identified. A large number of explanatory variables can be analyzed in parametric models, making them very useful for understanding interactions between migration, family life, professional life, etc. Semi-parametric models are a synthesis of parametric and non-parametric and offer advantages of each. A broader focus on spatial mobility could be enhanced by a closer cooperation of demography with other social sciences.

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