Residential Expectations of Young Adults in New York’s Southern Tier

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Purpose of the Research

- To examine where well prepared young adults expect to live at age 30
  - After completing school
  - As they start families
  - As they become professionally established
- To understand the factors that affect their residential expectations
  - Economic, community, environmental
  - Other regional and/or community attributes
- Upstate New York, like many rural areas, has problem retaining and attracting young adults
Research Strategy: Multiple Methods

- Study reflects diversity in school/community size
- First stage
  - Key informant interviews
  - 3 focus groups with high school seniors
    - 1 college bound
    - 1 not college bound
    - 1 mixed
- Survey of 2008 graduating class of the 4 high schools
  - Contact via Facebook/Myspace and mail.
High Schools in the P4P Region

We are collecting data in 4 high schools:
- 1 metropolitan city
- 1 small city
- 2 rural
Respondents interviewed in sophomore year of college

Data source: New York State Office of Real Property Services.
Some Observations from Key Informant Interviews

- Who was interviewed?
  - 4 school district superintendents, 2 BOCES supervisors, 2 local employer’s HR managers, 2 h. s. guidance counselors, staff of Rural Schools Research Institute

- Jobs, Jobs, Jobs, but also:
  - Inadequate Infrastructure affects worker’s location decisions
    - Housing
    - Transportation
    - Community resources

- Role models who have returned to region are lacking

- Educational and residential decisions should involve cooperation between education, employers and students and their families, and these links should be developed early in a student’s life
  - Counselors often lack training and time to do much
  - Employers are insufficiently linked with education
  - Some exceptions: Corning Inc, Lockheed Martin, and Wegmans
  - Internships can be an effective method for linking students and careers
Decision Making “Infrastructure”

How effective are these links?

Young people often make important life decisions on their own!
Who Responded to the Survey?

- Response rate was 38%
  - No evidence of bias in response

- Characteristics of respondents
  - Size of high school attended
    - 38% went to metropolitan high school;
    - 32% small city high school;
    - 30% rural high school
  - Grades in High school
    - 61% mostly A’s, or As and B’s
    - 18% Mix of Bs and Cs, or lower
  - 85% of high school graduates attend 2 or 4 year college in 2009
Post-High School Education of Respondents*

* All respondents, N = 123
Residential Expectations at Age 30*

- In region of home town: 24.6%
- A region other than the one where they graduated: 50.8%
- Don't know: 24.6%

All respondents, N = 123

*Out of region is anywhere outside of the P4P Region
Who Is Most Likely to Expect to Live Elsewhere at Age 30?

- Type of community where high school is located
- Type of college attending
- Perception of regional economy and job prospects
- Perception of efforts to improve region
- Perception of and satisfaction with regional characteristics
Residential Expectations at 30 of College Bound Graduates by Type of Hometown

* College bound only, N = 104
Residential Expectations at 30 by Post-High School Education*

*Respondents who have an opinion on where they expect to live at 30 by post high school education. N = 88
Perceived economic conditions and job prospects in respondent’s hometown*

- Outstanding/Good: 15%
- Neither good nor bad: 36%
- Poor/Awful: 49%

*College bound respondents with residential expectations, N = 74
Association of Perceived Economic Conditions and Residential Expectations at 30°

*College bound respondents with residential expectation, N = 74
Association of Perceived Efforts to Improve Region and Residential Expectations at 30 *

* College Bound Graduates with a residential expectation, N = 74
Satisfaction and Perceived Importance of Community Characteristics

**Economic**
- Good paying job
- Cost of living
- Chances to get ahead

**Environment**
- Clean environment
- Outdoor recreation

**Community**
- Good quality schools
- Proximity to family
- Opinions valued
Residential Expectations by Hometown Characteristics: Economic

College bound respondents with residential expectation, N=74, Chi² = .04
Residential Expectations by Hometown Characteristics: Environment

College bound respondents with residential expectation, N=65, $\chi^2 = .02$
Residential Expectations by Hometown Characteristics: Community

College bound respondents with residential expectation, N=68, Chi² = .03
Conclusions

- Young adults have a clear idea of what they want to do, and where they expect to live early in their college careers
  - Local college students expect to be geographically mobile
    - Most expect to live outside of this region at age 30
- Expectations to live elsewhere at age 30 respond to:
  - Local economic conditions and perceived lack of job prospects
  - Lack of confidence in local leaders efforts to improve conditions
  - Dissatisfaction with community resources
- Not just jobs, jobs, jobs
  - Social factors like proximity to family and friends is an anchor
THANK YOU