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# CONTRIBUTIONS OF RECENT METRO/NONMETRO MIGRANTS TO THE NONMETRO POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

By Gladys K. Bowles\*

## INTRODUCTION

Some 6.2 million people 5 years old and over who lived in nonmetro localities in 1975 had moved in from metro areas after 1970. They represented about one-eighth of the nonmetro population in 1975 and also about one-eighth of the nonmetro labor force.

This article highlights some characteristics of these people and presents an assessment of their contributions to the nonmetro population and labor force. The data used are based on special tabulations from the March 1975 Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Bureau of the Census and reflect metro designations through 1975 and assigned values for persons for whom mobility status was not reported originally. Thus, they are somewhat different from those published in the *Current Population Reports* (16).

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Some 6.2 million, or one-eighth, of the 1975 nonmetro population lived in metro areas 5 years earlier. Metro/nonmetro migrants more than replaced the 5.1 million persons moving in the opposite direction, except among young adults, blacks, and the college educated. In their occupation, industry, and income attributes, migrants did not have a negative impact on the nonmetro population. High proportions were in white-collar occupations and industries, and average income was no less than that of the total nonmetro population. Nor did the nonmetro population suffer in exchanges with metro areas on earning capacity of migrants. Remarkable similarity was noted in the incomes of metro/nonmetro migrants and persons moving in the opposite direction.

### Keywords:

Metro/nonmetro  
Migrants  
Labor force

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANTS

Except for one recent article (17), little has been written on the characteristics of the metro/nonmetro migrants, although many people have treated other aspects of the recent nonmetro population and migration turnaround in the United States and other countries (2-5, 7-9, 11, 13, 18,

Institute for Behavioral Research, in the development of materials on which the article was based is acknowledged. The article is patterned to some extent after the design developed by Anne S. Lee for an article appearing in *Agricultural Economics Research* some years ago which assessed certain aspects of the rural-to-urban migration stream (10).

Note: Italicized numbers in parentheses refer to items in the Bibliography at the end of this article.

19). With the special tabulations from the March 1975 CPS, it is possible to gain a clearer picture of characteristics of this migrant group and to make comparisons with persons in other mobility status categories. Mobility status of each individual 5 years old and over was based on a comparison of place of residence at the time of the survey and 5 years earlier. In this article, *nonmovers* are persons living in the same house in 1975 as in 1970. *Movers* lived in different houses but in the same county at both dates, and *migrants* lived in different counties at the beginning and end of the period.

The vast majority of the metro/nonmetro migrants were whites; only about 6 percent were blacks or persons of other minority races. Neither males nor females predominated among metro/nonmetro migrants. Each sex was just about one-half the total. The median age was 27.3 years and the median years of school completed were 12.6. About 42 percent lived in the South in 1975.<sup>1</sup> The great majority had moved from metro to nonmetro areas within the two broad regions of the country, the South, and the North and West, combined. But about a fifth had moved from one of these broad regions to the other.

<sup>1</sup> The South includes Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The remaining States, including Alaska and Hawaii, are grouped together in the North and West region.

Although direct information on family migration versus that of single individuals is not available, it is obvious that most of the metro/nonmetro movement involved families or persons who had formed families after moving. The proportions of migrants living alone or with others to whom they were not related was no greater than in the general nonmetro population.

About 5 percent of the males were in the Armed Forces, a higher proportion than in the total nonmetro population. About 75 percent of the males were in the labor force. Of those in the civilian labor force, about 10 percent were unemployed. Nearly 45 percent of the females were in the labor force and 14 percent were unemployed. The labor force participation rate of male metro/nonmetro migrants was higher than that of the larger population they had joined, and the unemployment rate, nominally so. Female newcomers participated in the labor force at about the same rate as other nonmetro women, but a somewhat larger proportion did not hold jobs.<sup>2</sup>

### REPLACEMENT OF NONMETRO POPULATION LOST THROUGH OUTMIGRATION

In considering contributions of these migrants, perhaps the first is the extent to which they have replaced or exceeded the number of persons of similar characteristics who left for metro areas.

According to the CPS figures, persons 5 years old and over moving to nonmetro from metro areas between 1970 and 1975 exceeded by 1.1 million the number moving away (table 1). People moving to the nonmetro areas more than offset the metro-directed losses of whites, but replaced only three-fourths of the blacks. Losses were exceeded to about the same degree among males and females and among persons living in each of the two broad regions of the country. For those moving within the South, the losses were offset less than in the North and West. Inter-regionally, metro areas of the South gained at the expense of the nonmetro North and West and nonmetro areas of the South also gained at the expense of the metro North and West:

Movement	Number
South metro to North and West nonmetro	405,000
North and West nonmetro to South metro	544,000
Net gain by Southern metro	139,000
South nonmetro to North and West metro	557,000
North and West metro to South nonmetro	937,000
Net gain by Southern nonmetro	380,000

<sup>2</sup> Tests for significance were made at the 2.0 and 1.6 standard error levels following procedures recommended by the Bureau of the Census for the March 1975 Current

Numbers of people involved in the metro/nonmetro exchanges and degree of replacement varied considerably by age. While young adults, 18-34 years, led in each stream (2.5 million to nonmetro and 2.7 million to metro), they were only two-fifths of those moving to nonmetro areas compared with over half those moving away. This fact was true partly because only three-fourths of the loss of young adults, 18-24 years, was replaced, although at every other age category shown in table 1, losses were more than offset.

As has been pointed out by others, retirement has influenced nonmetro migration and population turnaround (4). Persons aged 55 and over exceeded those who had moved in the opposite direction to a somewhat greater extent than at other ages. Even so, they were under-represented in the nonmetro population of these ages in 1975. Although metro/nonmetro migrants had a nominally higher median age than those moving in the opposite direction (25.4), the former group nonetheless had a larger percentage of children under age 18. Metro/nonmetro movers were disproportionately weighted with both children and persons aged 55 or over.

Indexes of dissimilarity indicate that, in their distribution among the age categories, metro/nonmetro migrants were most like other people of metro origin who either moved or migrated between 1970 and 1975 (figure).<sup>3</sup> They were least like people who had not moved at all, either metro or nonmetro, and next least like the migrants in the opposite stream.

Metro/nonmetro migrants were somewhat less well educated than persons in the opposite stream. A smaller number had college experience and a larger number had less education. Another researcher has pointed out an interesting interaction of age and education:

At ages 18-24, there is a strong preponderance of movers with a high school education or less in the metropolitan-to-nonmetropolitan stream, and an equally strong preponderance of 1 to 3 years of college and 4 years or more of college in the opposite stream. This supports the suggestion that a portion of the educational differential in these two streams is due to the migration of two-year and four-year college graduates into SMSA's after completion of education in nonmetropolitan colleges (17).

Metro/nonmetro migrants were most like other people of metro origin who had moved or migrated within SMSA's. People moving from one SMSA to another were generally better educated. They were least like nonmetro-origin people who did not move or who had moved to a

Population Survey. In comparative statements, the word "nominally" is used if the difference was statistically significant at the 1.6 but not at the 2.0 level.

<sup>3</sup> Indexes of dissimilarity measure the extent to which mobility categories differ (or are similar) on their percentage distributions on given characteristics (12). When two distributions are very much alike, the index is close to zero.

Table 1—Exchanges between metro and nonmetro areas, by selected characteristics, 1970-75

Characteristic	Metro to nonmetro migrants	Nonmetro to metro migrants	Net	Ratio
	1,000			
Total, 5 years old and over	6,217	5,074	1,143	1.23
Whites	5,865	4,611	1,254	1.27
Negro and other races	352	463	-111	.76
Males	3,065	2,501	564	1.23
Females	3,152	2,573	579	1.23
South	2,625	2,140	485	1.23
North and West	3,592	2,934	658	1.22
Within the South	1,687	1,596	91	1.06
Within the North and West	3,187	2,377	810	1.34
South to North and West	405	557	(See the text)	
North and West to South	937	544		
Age (years):				
5-14	1,407	961	446	1.46
15-17	331	211	120	1.57
18-24	925	1,295	-370	.71
25-34	1,589	1,434	155	1.11
35-44	742	454	288	1.63
45-54	415	332	83	1.25
55-64	416	178	238	2.34
65 and over	393	208	185	1.89
Total, 18 years old and over	4,479	3,902	577	1.15
Elementary school	571	411	160	1.39
High school 1-3 years	732	445	287	1.64
4 years	1,654	1,344	310	1.23
College 1-2 years	746	777	-31	.96
4 years	497	604	-107	.82
5 years and over	279	321	-42	.87
	Years			
Median age	27.3	25.4		

Source: Special tabulations made from the Bureau of the Census March 1975 *Current Population Survey* for cooperative research of ESCS and the University of Georgia.

different house but stayed in the same county, who were somewhat less well educated.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO NONMETRO OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRY

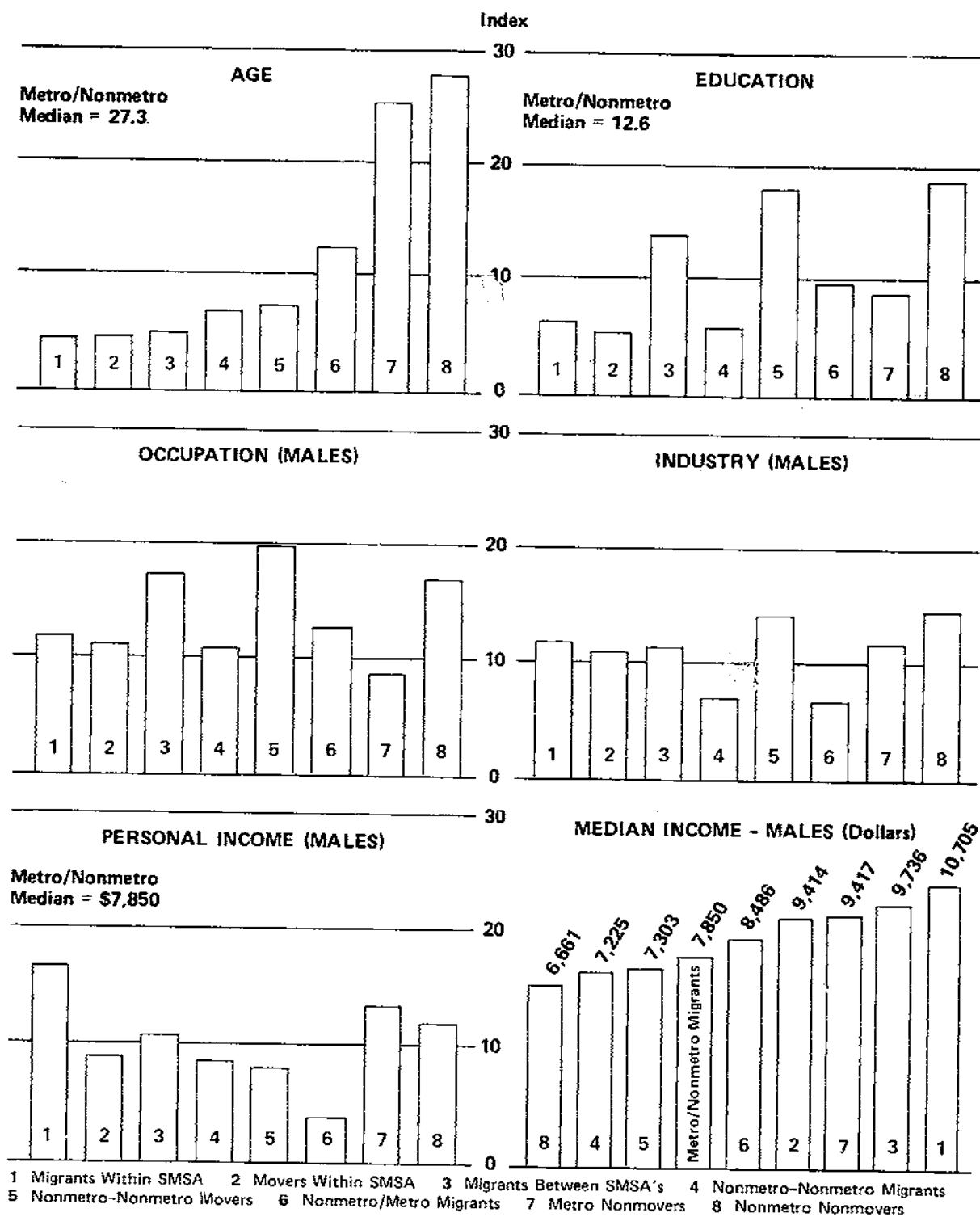
Just over two-fifths of the employed white male metro/nonmetro migrants were in white-collar occupations and two-fifths were in blue-collar jobs (table 2). About a tenth worked in service occupations and the remainder were in farming. White male migrants were over-represented in white-collar and service occupations and under-represented in blue-collar and farm-work compared with the overall nonmetropolitan population. About one-fifth of the nonmetro males with a profes-

sional, technical, and sales jobs were recent newcomers from metro areas.

Over two-thirds of the employed white female metro/nonmetro migrants held white-collar jobs, a considerably higher proportion than among all nonmetro women. One-fifth were in the service occupations, not too different from nonmetro women in general. One in ten had blue-collar employment, considerably below the rest of the employed nonmetro women.

Among the industry categories, as would be expected from the above information, over-representation existed in industries primarily employing white-collar people (table 3). These were finance, insurance, and real estate, and, for white males, professional services. Men were under-represented in the extractive industries and manufacturing. Women metro/nonmetro migrants were

**A Comparison of Metro/Nonmetro Migrants and Other Migrant and Nonmigrant Groups  
(Index of Dissimilarity)\***



\*The lower right-hand block shows median income rather than indexes of dissimilarity.

under-represented in these industries, also, and in transportation, communications, and related industries.

In industrial employment, male metro/nonmetro migrants were most similar to other persons in the nonmetro population who had moved away from their origin county either to another nonmetro county or to a metro county. They were less similar to the nonmetro-origin population who were still in their origin county in 1975. This latter group includes most of the men engaged in farming and the other extractive industries, where metro/nonmetro migrants were under-represented. But in industrial employment, they were more similar to these nonmetro people who had not moved than to most of the migrants and movers in the metro-employed population.

Male metro/nonmetro migrants were most similar in their occupational attachments to men in the metro population who had not moved. They were next most similar to nonmetro men who had moved from their home county to another nonmetro area or to a metro area. In their occupational attachments, women metro/

nonmetro migrants were closest to women in the opposite stream and to nonmetro migrants. They were least like the nonmetro people who were living in the same county in 1975 as in 1970, both movers and nonmovers. In their distribution among the industry categories, they were closest to nonmetro migrant women and least like nonmetro movers and nonmovers, as they had been on occupations.

Although estimates for blacks and other minorities are included in the tables, the numbers of metro/nonmetro migrants are so small that analysis is not included here. About three-fifths of the men were in blue-collar or service jobs, and the women were mainly in white-collar or service jobs.

### INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Metro/nonmetro migrants generally did not earn less income than the nonmetro population they had joined. The median for men migrants earning income in 1974 appears higher than that of other men in the nonmetro

Table 2—Nonmetropolitan population and 1970-75 metro/nonmetro migrants 16 years old and over, by race, sex, and major occupation, 1975

Race and major occupation group	Males			Females		
	Nonmetro-politan population, 1975	Metro/nonmetro migrants, 1970-75		Nonmetro-politan population, 1975	Metro/nonmetro migrants, 1970-75	
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
<b>White:</b>						
Total employed, 16 years old and over	12,460	1,498	12.0	7,555	849	11.2
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	1,325	277	20.9	1,137	188	16.5
Managers and administrators, except farm	1,575	208	13.2	366	58	15.8
Clerical and kindred workers	550	60	10.9	2,148	253	11.8
Sales workers	599	109	18.2	539	69	12.8
Crafts and kindred workers	2,652	305	11.5	128	10	7.8
Operatives, except transport equipment	1,654	144	8.7	1,041	63	6.1
Transport equipment operatives	790	63	8.0	55	3	•
Laborers, except farm	958	99	10.3	124	13	10.5
Service workers	836	135	16.1	1,814	181	10.0
Farm operators	1,051	45	4.3	49	3	•
Farm laborers	471	53	11.3	153	8	5.3
<b>Negro and other races:</b>						
Total employed, 16 years old and over	888	54	6.1	683	55	8.1
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	32	2	•	62	14	•
Managers and administrators, except farm	17	5	•	12	2	•
Clerical and kindred workers	6	4	•	59	7	•
Sales workers	7	4	•	20	1	•
Crafts and kindred workers	158	14	8.9	6	0	•
Operatives, except transport equipment	129	3	2.3	169	8	4.7
Transport equipment operatives	95	5	5.3	4	2	•
Laborers, except farm	203	4	2.0	3	0	•
Service workers	112	7	6.2	337	21	6.2
Farm operators	44	0	•	0	0	•
Farm laborers	84	5	6.0	8	0	•

\*Base less than 75,000.

Source: See table 1.

Table 3—Nonmetropolitan population and 1970-75 metro/nonmetro migrants 16 years old and over, by race, sex, and major industry, 1975

Race and major industry group, 1970-75	Males			Females		
	Nonmetro politan popula- tion, 1975	Metro/nonmetro migrants, 1970-75		Nonmetro- politan popula- tion, 1975	Metro/nonmetro migrants, 1970-75	
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
<b>White:</b>						
Total employed, 16 years old and over	12,460	1,498	12.0	7,555	849	11.2
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	1,634	108	6.6	258	14	5.4
Mining	397	48	12.1	21	2	*
Construction	1,229	150	12.2	65	12	*
Manufacturing	3,221	327	10.2	1,347	95	7.1
Durable goods	2,000	200	10.0	530	37	7.0
Nondurable goods	1,221	127	10.4	817	58	7.1
Transportation, communications, and so on	976	117	12.0	203	12	5.9
Wholesale and retail trade	2,209	288	13.0	1,801	225	12.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	359	70	19.5	380	61	16.1
Business and repair services	607	88	14.5	785	83	10.6
Professional services	1,164	212	18.2	2,385	317	13.3
Public administration	665	90	13.5	310	27	8.7
<b>Negro and other races:</b>						
Total employed, 16 years old and over	888	54	6.1	683	55	8.1
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	137	5	3.6	8	0	*
Mining	10	0	*	0	0	*
Construction	89	10	11.2	5	0	*
Manufacturing	299	12	4.0	175	10	5.7
Durable goods	172	4	2.3	43	5	*
Nondurable goods	127	8	6.3	132	5	3.8
Transportation, communications, and so on	67	6	*	11	4	*
Wholesale and retail trade	128	7	5.5	79	3	3.8
Finance, insurance, and real estate	10	2	*	4	0	*
Business and repair services	32	1	*	192	13	6.8
Professional services	78	8	10.3	190	26	13.7
Public administration	38	3	*	19	0	*

\*Base less than 75,000.

Source: See table 1.

population (but this difference was not statistically significant in terms of the CPS sample). The median for women in each group was about the same:

Status	Median income in 1974	
	Men	Women
	<i>Dollars</i>	
Nonmetro population	7,072	2,620
Metro/nonmetro migrants	7,850	2,650
Nonmetro/metro migrants	8,486	3,313

While the median income for males moving in the opposite direction appears somewhat higher than that of metro/nonmetro males, the difference was not statis-

tically significant. The indexes of dissimilarity also indicate that the two groups were distributed very similarly among income classes. About the same proportions of men moving between metro and nonmetro areas, whatever the direction, earned low, medium-sized, and high incomes. They ranked between their populations of origin and destination, as is often the situation of migrants moving from one type of environment to another (see figure, median income block).

Metro/nonmetro migrant men were considerably closer on their distribution among the income categories to other nonmetro movers and migrants than they were to nonmovers in this population (see figure, index block). More nonmovers' incomes were in the lower brackets. Compared with the population they left, these male migrants had incomes closer to people who had moved in their original SMSA county than to SMSA migrants or nonmovers. The median income of women metro/nonmetro migrants, although apparently lower (as reported

in the CPS), did not differ statistically from that of women moving in the opposite direction. Their income distribution most resembled that of nonmetropolitan women who had not moved between 1970 and 1975.

## CONCLUSION

Metro/nonmetro migrants more than replaced persons moving in the opposite direction, except among young adults, blacks, and persons with college education. They more than replaced persons who were high school graduates or had less education, but did not completely cover the loss of persons with some years of college. Replacement was nominally higher among people remaining within the North and West than in the South, but in the regional exchanges, the South gained at the expense of the rest of the country.

In terms of occupation, industry, and income attributes, metro/nonmetro migrants have not had the negative impact on the nonmetro population that some people feared would occur. Although a higher proportion of migrants were unemployed in 1975, there was over-representation among the employed in the white-collar occupations and industries. On the average, migrants' income was no less than that of the nonmetro

population as a whole and it may actually have been somewhat higher. Moreover, the nonmetro population appears not to have suffered in the exchange of population as far as in earning capacity of migrants. There was remarkable similarity in the income distributions among metro/nonmetro migrants and persons who had moved in the opposite direction.

It is indeed fortunate that the more positive impacts predominate in the movement of people to nonmetro areas. The most recent bulletins of the Census Bureau indicate that the pattern of more people moving to than away from nonmetro areas is continuing (14, 15). And, Calvin Beale, demographer with ESCS, said recently to the House Select Committee on Population, he believed that, "the net flow of people to the South and West and to the rural areas will continue to be seen in the 1980's" (1).

Even if the pattern reverses eventually as far as the net result is concerned, investigations of the exchange of population between the highly urbanized and rural populations should continue. There will always be large numbers of people moving in either direction between metro and nonmetro areas. Their characteristics and the impact of their movement on the populations they left and joined merit continuing attention.

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In spite of the fact that we live in a universe of law and order, fluctuations in both weather and crop yields, whether short- or long-range, are almost universally looked upon as matters of chance. Practically all statistical studies that have raised the question of regularity in fluctuations in crops and weather conclude negatively; that is, they find that fluctuations of crops and weather are essentially similar to what might be expected in series of random numbers. My observations with regard to the existence of trends and patterns in both monthly and yearly data make it difficult to accept this common attitude.

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Based on several standard tests, yields of corn after allowing for trend, give no evidence of departing significantly from a random series. However, using the same tests, a constructed series based essentially on a regular pattern superimposed on a regular cycle also gave no evidence of significant departures from a random series. The pattern used for the constructed series resembles those which Bean believes he has found in crop-yield series. Thus, the standard tests do not appear to be sensitive in distinguishing between a random series and one made up of repeating patterns.

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