Commuter couples and careers

Moving together for him and apart for her

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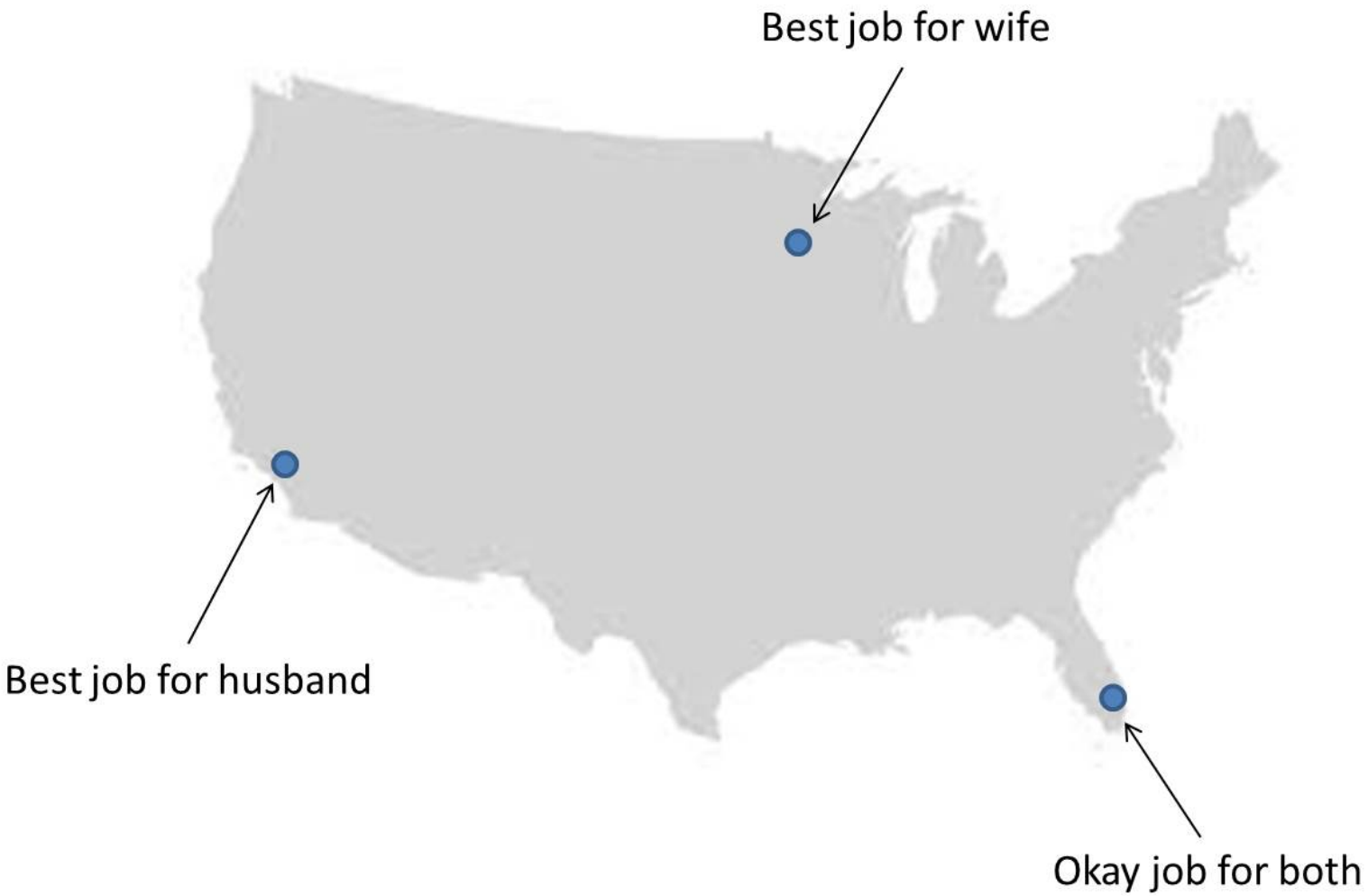
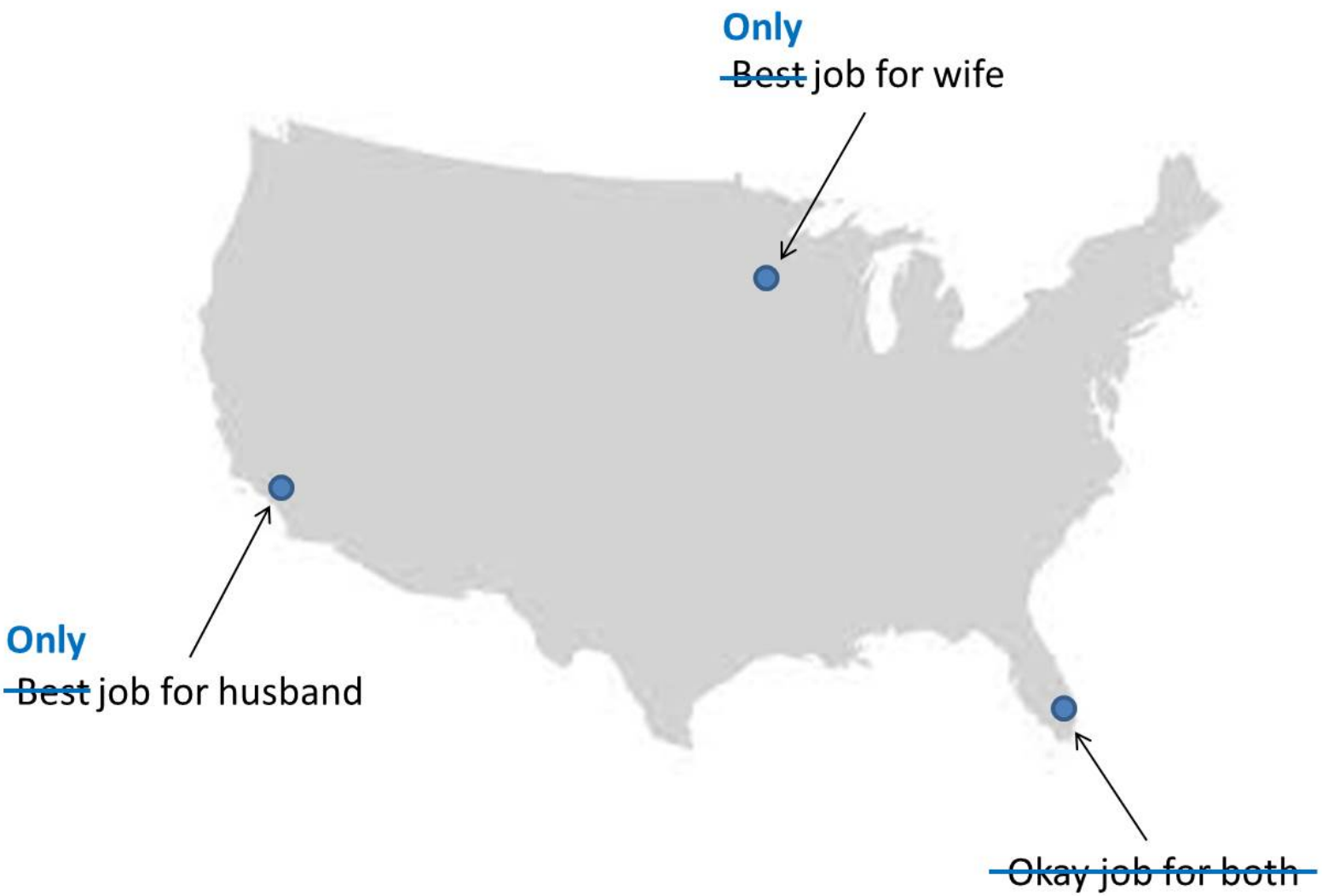
Marriage: A universal institution that involves a man and a woman living together, engaging in sexual activity, and cooperating economically (George Murdock,1949)

The co-location problem



The two-body problem



Co-residential couples prioritize men's employment

- Men's human capital predicts migration more strongly than women's (Compton and Pollak, 2007; McKinnish, 2008)
- Family migration harms women's employment and earnings (Smits, 1999; McKinnish, 2008; Cooke et al., 2009)

Why do couples prioritize men's employment?

- Human capital (Sandell, 1977; Mincer, 1978; Guler et al., 2012)
- Gender-role attitudes (Bielby and Bielby, 1992; Jürges, 2006; Cooke, 2008)

Living apart may level the playing field

- "Commuter couples" express egalitarian commitments (Gross, 1980; Gerstel and Gross, 1982; van der Klis and Mulder, 2008; van der Klis and Karsten, 2009)
- But don't know if
  - Qualitative findings are representative
  - Commuter couples are more egalitarian than others
- To test competing models, need representative data with
  - Noncohabiting and cohabiting couples
  - Information about both spouses

Preview

- Question: Does specialized human capital increase the probability of marital noncohabitation more for women than for men?
- Method: Use data from the ACS to construct a sample of previously noncohabiting couples.
- Answer: Yes.

Hard to find data on commuter couples

- Need large dataset
- Need information about living arrangements
- Need information about both partners

Previous work on commuter couples

"Living Apart, Advancing Together: Commuter Couples and the Tenure-Track Gender Gap in the US Economics Job Market"

- Question: Do the cause and consequences of commuting differ by gender?
- Data: Longitudinal survey of new entrants to US junior PhD job market in economics
- Method: Regressions controlling for academic background, partner education, and family circumstances
- Results: Commuting predicts tenure-track employment more strongly for women
- Results: PhDs with egalitarian gender-role attitudes are more likely to commute

Help from the American Community Survey?

Can identify people who are

1. Married
2. In a household without their spouse

- Pro: Captures all noncohabitors in the cross section
- Con: Know nothing about absent spouse

Help from the American Community Survey?

Can identify couples who are

1. Married
2. Living in the same household
3. Lived in different locations one year ago
4. Were married one year ago

- Pro: Have matched information about spouses
- Con: Captures only noncohabitors who reunite
- Con: Underrepresents long-term noncohabitors

Data

Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)

$\hookrightarrow$ American Community Survey (ACS)

$\hookrightarrow$ 2008-10 three-year sample

Baseline sample includes people

- Age 25 to 59
- Employed in last five years
- Last worked in civilian occupation
- Lived in US last year

What qualifies as living in different locations?

Proportion migrating in last year

Highest degree	Migration defined as moving to different...		
	PUMA	Metro area or non-metro PUMA	State
Less than bachelor's	0.048	0.039	0.019
Bachelor's	0.058	0.046	0.028
Master's	0.058	0.048	0.032
Professional	0.065	0.054	0.038
Doctoral	0.079	0.068	0.051

Note: Sample for second definition excludes people currently or previously living in PUMAs that cross metropolitan boundaries.

Prevalence of marital noncohabitation

Proportion living apart from spouse

Highest degree	Definition of living apart		
	Different households now	Different PUMAs last year	Different states last year
Less than bachelor's	0.0525	0.0040	0.0019
Bachelor's	0.0270	0.0035	0.0019
Master's	0.0246	0.0041	0.0023
Professional	0.0249	0.0047	0.0029
Doctoral	0.0371	0.0083	0.0059

Notes: Sample for first definition is married men and women in baseline sample. Sample for second and third definitions is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Baseline model

$$\log\left(\frac{P(E=1)}{P(E=0)}\right) = \beta_0 + \boldsymbol{Ed_h}\boldsymbol{\beta_1} + \boldsymbol{Ed_w}\boldsymbol{\beta_2} + \boldsymbol{X_c}\boldsymbol{\beta_3}$$

$\boldsymbol{X_c}$ contains

- husband's and wife's race and ethnicity
- husband's and wife's age and age squared
- presence of children age 0-5, age 6-12, and age 13-17
- state and metropolitan status one year ago

Baseline controls: Race and ethnicity

Relative risk ratios from logistic regressions

Race and ethnicity	Migration	Noncohabitation
White husband	1.246*	0.818
	(0.056)	(0.095)
White wife	1.185*	0.888
	(0.053)	(0.103)
Non-Hispanic husband	1.137*	1.038
	(0.060)	(0.145)
Non-Hispanic wife	1.189*	0.798
	(0.062)	(0.108)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *Estimate is statistically significant, $p < 0.05$. Models include demographic controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Baseline controls: Children

Relative risk ratios from logistic regressions

Children in household	Migration	Noncohabitation
Child(ren) age 0-5	1.017	0.636*
	(0.026)	(0.050)
Child(ren) age 6-12	1.012	0.817*
	(0.027)	(0.063)
Child(ren) age 13-17	0.881*	0.889
	(0.029)	(0.078)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *Estimate is statistically significant, $p < 0.05$. Models include demographic controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Baseline model

Relative risk ratios from logistic regressions

	Migration		Noncohabitation	
Highest degree	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Bachelor's	1.555*	1.252*‡	0.943	1.049
	(0.047)	(0.037)	(0.084)	(0.092)
Master's	2.052*	1.140*‡	1.244*	1.301*
	(0.079)	(0.044)	(0.135)	(0.142)
Professional	2.040*	1.253*‡	0.807	1.761*‡
	(0.115)	(0.080)	(0.153)	(0.298)
Doctorate	3.158*	1.253*‡	1.299	2.290*†
	(0.196)	(0.100)	(0.226)	(0.429)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Estimate is statistically significant, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Estimates for husbands and wives are statistically different, $^{\ddagger}p < 0.05$,$^{\dagger}p < 0.10$. Omitted category is less than bachelor's. Models include demographic controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Sex differences in occupation within education

Proportion in occupation by education and sex

Highest degree	Men	Prop.	Women	Prop.
Less than bachelor's	Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	0.058	Secretaries and admin. assistants	0.064
	Construction laborers	0.034	Health aides	0.039
Bachelor's	Managers, not elsewhere classified	0.049	Elementary and middle school teachers	0.093
	First-line supervisors of sales workers	0.044	Registered nurses	0.075
Master's	Elementary and middle school teachers	0.064	Elementary and middle school teachers	0.208
	Managers, not elsewhere classified	0.063	Postsecondary teachers	0.041
Professional	Lawyers, judges, and other judicial workers	0.315	Lawyers, judges, and other judicial workers	0.255
	Physicians and surgeons	0.242	Physicians and surgeons	0.181
Doctoral	Postsecondary teachers	0.236	Postsecondary teachers	0.257
	Physicians and surgeons	0.072	Psychologists	0.062

Notes: Table shows two most common occupations for men and women with each level of education.

Baseline model + occupational controls

$$\log\left(\frac{P(E=1)}{P(E=0)}\right) = \beta_0 + \boldsymbol{Ed_h}\beta_1 + \boldsymbol{Ed_w}\beta_2 + \boldsymbol{X_c}\beta_3 + \boldsymbol{Occ_h}\beta_4 + \boldsymbol{Occ_w}\beta_5$$

$\boldsymbol{Occ_h}$ and $\boldsymbol{Occ_w}$ contain

- Measure of occupational location constraints
- Average wage in occupation

Measuring occupational location constraints

- Migration rate (McKinnish, 2008).
- Geographic clustering (Benson, 2015).
- Urban concentration (Compton and Pollak, 2007).

- Proportion not in birth state.

Measuring occupational location constraints

Largest occupations with very high proportion (between 0.49 and 0.72) of workers not in birth state:

postsecondary teachers • computer scientists, systems analysts, and web developers • managers in marketing, advertising, and public relations • lawyers, judges, magistrates, and other judicial workers • software developers • physicians and surgeons • management analysts • computer and information systems managers • clergy • editors, news analysts, reporters, and correspondents • electrical and electronics engineers • engineers, not elsewhere classified • artists and related workers • actors, producers, and directors • writers and authors

Baseline model

Relative risk ratios from logistic regressions

	Migration		Noncohabitation	
Highest degree	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Bachelor's	1.368*	1.200*‡	0.866	1.025
	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.081)	(0.092)
Master's	1.700*	1.070‡	1.077	1.233
	(0.069)	(0.043)	(0.125)	(0.140)
Professional	1.452*	1.172*†	0.541*	1.458‡
	(0.098)	(0.087)	(0.120)	(0.292)
Doctorate	2.392*	1.112‡	1.007	1.847*†
	(0.158)	(0.093)	(0.188)	(0.370)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Estimate is statistically significant, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Estimates for husbands and wives are statistically different, $^{\ddagger}p < 0.05$,† $p < 0.10$. Omitted category is less than bachelor's. Models include demographic and occupational controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Baseline + occupational controls

Relative risk ratios from logistic regressions

	Migration		Noncohabitation	
Highest degree	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
High proportion not in birth state	1.332*	1.133*‡	0.964	0.834
	(0.046)	(0.038)	(0.100)	(0.087)
Very high proportion not in birth state	1.029	1.064	1.183	1.648*†
	(0.037)	(0.046)	(0.127)	(0.207)
Average wage	1.005*	0.997*‡	1.009*	0.999
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Estimate is statistically significant, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Estimates for husbands and wives are statistically different, $^{\ddagger}p < 0.05$,† $p < 0.10$. Omitted category is less than bachelor's. Models include demographic and occupational controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Conclusions

- Used ACS data to construct sample of previously noncohabiting husbands and wives who reunited in last year
- Consistent with previous research, men's human capital predicts migration
- In contrast, women's human capital predicts noncohabitation

Have we seen this before?

- Professional commitments carry a personal cost for women
- Commuter partnerships are like women keeping their names at marriage (Goldin and Shim, 2004)

- We need better data on multi-household families
- Commuter marriage challenges traditional definitions

Thank you!

Baseline model

Average marginal effects from logistic regressions

	Migration		Noncohabitation	
Highest degree	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Bachelor's	0.0563*	0.0294*‡	−0.0009	0.0007
	(0.0040)	(0.0039)	(0.0014)	(0.0013)
Master's	0.1002*	0.0167*‡	0.0039	0.0045*
	(0.0060)	(0.0050)	(0.0021)	(0.0020)
Professional	0.0992*	0.0295*‡	−0.0031	0.0112*†
	(0.0093)	(0.0088)	(0.0025)	(0.0042)
Doctorate	0.1816*	0.0294*‡	0.0047	0.0188*†
	(0.0123)	(0.0111)	(0.0035)	(0.0059)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Estimate is statistically significant, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Estimates for husbands and wives are statistically different, $^{\ddagger}p < 0.05$, $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$. Omitted category is less than bachelor's. Models include demographic controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.

Baseline model + occupational controls

Average marginal effects from logistic regressions

	Migration		Noncohabitation	
Highest degree	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Bachelor's	0.0399*	0.0238*‡	−0.0023	0.0004
	(0.0041)	(0.0040)	(0.0015)	(0.0014)
Master's	0.0724*	0.0085‡	0.0013	0.0035
	(0.0060)	(0.0051)	(0.0021)	(0.0020)
Professional	0.0484*	0.0205*†	−0.0079*	0.0069‡
	(0.0096)	(0.0100)	(0.0023)	(0.0042)
Doctorate	0.1316*	0.0136‡	0.0001	0.0127*†
	(0.0119)	(0.0110)	(0.0032)	(0.0052)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Estimate is statistically significant, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Estimates for husbands and wives are statistically different, $^{\ddagger}p < 0.05$, $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$. Omitted category is less than bachelor's. Models include demographic and occupational controls. Sample is co-residential married couples with both spouses in baseline sample.