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Gender, gender role attitudes and migration motives, Sweden 1999-2009

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Conference version – please do not quote

Abstract: The aim of this article is to study whether there are gender differences in the propensity to move for one's own career and for one's partner's career in Sweden, 1999-2009. Further, the study aims at answering whether gender differences, if any, can be explained by bargaining power, career ambitions, and/or gender roles. Panel data including 1147 young adults is analyzed using multinomial logistic models. The results indicate that children function as a larger tie for women's career migration propensities compared to men's. Having children also affects men's career migration negatively, but they continue moving due to career reasons to a much larger extent than women with children do. The pattern cannot be explained by differences in the effect from educational level between men and women, or by lower career ambitions among women with children. Gender role attitudes surprisingly and in contrast to studies on the Germany and the United States neither have any effect on the pattern nor any effect per se. The higher career mobility among men with children compared to women with children is not reflected in a higher mobility for a partner's career among women with children.

Introduction

A wide range of studies find that women do not benefit from regional mobility to the same extent as men do (see e.g. Cooke et al. 2009; Åström and Westerlund 2009; Nilsson 2001). They are tied movers, moving for the sake of their partner and not themselves. Further, in e.g. the United States women seem to be reluctant to move for the sake of their own career if it does not benefit their partner, and have larger probability of being tied stayers than men (see e.g. Bielby and Bielby 1992).

To be a tied mover or a tied stayer is a large sacrifice, indicating putting one's own career and interests on the benchmark for the partner's career. It risks reinforcing gender roles (with the man's paid work continuing being seen as more important than the woman's) and risks making the woman more economically dependent on her partner. Tied staying also risks having negative consequences on gender equality on the labor market, since it risks reinforcing structures of statistical discrimination where employers see women as non-committed and unwilling to relocate for the sake of career advancement (see e.g. Halfacree 1995). Couple migration (and non-migration) is therefore an essential question for demographic studies with a focus on gender.

The aim of this article is to study whether there are gender differences in the propensity to move for one's own career and for one's partner's career in a quite gender equal context: Sweden, 1999-2009. To the best of my knowledge, gender and migration motives have never been studied for the Swedish context. Further, the study aims at answering whether gender differences, if any, can be explained by gender differences in bargaining power and/or career ambitions, and examine the role of gender roles in the equation.

Research background

Theories on couple's migration for a long time had a utility maximizing approach, arguing that couples move when the joint (monetary and non-monetary) utility of a move exceeds the utility of staying (Mincer 1978). The approach assumes that the utility for the woman is as highly valued as the utility of a man. If a couple move, and the woman lose from it, it is also seen as the result of joint utility maximizing, where the man's gains are high enough to compensate for the woman's loss. The approach has been questioned by scholars arguing that this is a gender blind way to view the migration process (see e.g. Lundberg and Pollak 2003). Lundberg and Pollak acknowledge the need to see migration decisions more like a bargaining process, where it's essential to take into account men's and women's different bargaining power. The main premise of this approach is that a relationship is an arena of constant bargaining regarding many everyday practices. The two partners therefore do not necessarily see their pooled income and well being as their main interest. Rather, their own income and well being is prime focus. Because of this, the distribution of the bargaining power of the two partners becomes crucial to understanding why couples act the way they do. In the case of couples' migration, it is the partner with the most bargaining power (often the man) who will decide the new home region, and the other partner will risk becoming a tied mover/stayer adapting to the partner's wishes (Lundberg and Pollak 2003).

Looking at bargaining power, it can be seen as consisting of three different kinds of resources: economic, social and gender ideological (Takahashi 2003). The distribution of power in the couple, and hence the outcome from disagreement, is the result from how much the man and the woman has of each resource. Economic resources are the monetary resources each partner has control over, whereas social resources include factors that are not monetary but which still work as a resource in bargaining, such as education or social networks. Also, the gender order between men and women functions as a resource in couples' bargaining regarding migration decisions, Takahashi calls this a gender ideological resource. Men would according to this have greater power in couple's decisions

purely by being men living in a society where men's work is considered more important than women's. However, this pattern implies that the couple adheres to traditional gender roles. For a couple with more modern views on men and women's roles, the pattern might weaken.

Accordingly, both resources and gender roles have been found to be of importance in couples' migration. Bielby and Bielby (1992) use data from 1977 and find that couples are more willing to relocate if it benefits the man's career (even if the woman would lose from the move) than vice versa. The pattern is strongest for couples with traditional views on men's and women's roles in families, even if also remains for more egalitarian couples. Jürges (2006) study the period 1985-2003 and divide German couples into traditional and egalitarian (based on actual division of housework on weekends) to study if women's secondary role in migration decisions is connected to traditional gender roles. He finds that for single households there are no gender differences in migration propensities (he do not separate between reasons of migration). For dual-earner couples, traditional couples' mobility is more affected by male job-related characteristics than women's. In egalitarian couples, no such gender bias is found. For example, male and female background characteristics, such as seniority at work and education, have the same impact on family migration behavior if the couple shares housework equally (Jürges 2006). Markham et al. (1983) find that one main reason for the gender differences in migration propensities is that men see themselves as primary providers while most women do not. Women who did see themselves as a primary provider move long distances to the same extent as men.

Not many newer studies have been made on gender and gender roles' effect on migration motives. Research however is being made on the gender differences in economic outcomes from migration, were economic gains from migration is a common way of locating career moves in studies using register data and not surveys. Cooke et al. (2009) find that in the United States and Great Britain, women's earnings fall at the time of a move, and then slowly recover. Migration is however associated with an increase in earnings on a family level, indicating a partner who gain enough to

compensate for the woman's loss in earnings. In general a move hence seems to benefit the man, and is likely to take place because of the man's career with the woman as a "trailing spouse". For Sweden, the results follow roughly the same pattern, although are somewhat contradictory. Åström and Westerlund (2009) find no evidence of increased earnings gap between men and women from migration, however, they find that whereas men in general gain from regional mobility, women only do so when they have high education and partnered with someone with lower education. Nilsson (2001) finds similar patterns for Sweden as Cooke et al. find for the United States and Great Britain. Men's earnings are more positively affected by regional mobility than women's, who often neither benefit nor lose from regional mobility. For women with children, internal migration was even shown to be disadvantageous on earnings. It hence seems as if the pattern of women as trailing spouses still remains, even today in such a gender equal context as Sweden. These explanations are however only assumptions based on men's and women's economic outcomes from a migration. No studies have however to the best of my knowledge so far been made on the Swedish context on the actual self reported motives men and women have for migration.

The questions asked in this study are:

1. Are men more prone to move due to career reasons than women?
2. Are women more likely to move for a partner's career than men?
3. What impact do assets, gender attitudes and career ambitions have on the propensity to become a tied mover/stayer?

Data and methods

The Young Adult Panel Study (YAPS) is a longitudinal study, based on surveys conducted in 1999, 2003 and 2009. One main aim of YAPS is to collect data on the way young people in Sweden form their lives, their attitudes on children and work, and how they combine work and family. It also

contains date and motive of the last long distance move, if any (collected in 2009), and information on gender role attitudes and other background variables both 1999 and 2003.

The respondents in the sample used for this study are born to two Swedish parents in 1968, 1972, 1976 and 1980, and have participated 2009 and any of the two waves 1999 and/or 2003. They must be cohabiting or married at the 1999/2003 wave. One respondent can be included more than once, if s/he is in a relationship in both 1999 and 2003.

In 2009, the respondents were asked to list the year and month of their last long move. They were also asked to list the reason of the move. Due to the few cases in some categories, and the aim of this study, the alternatives are grouped as (1) Move due to own work/studies, (2) Move due to partner's work/studies, (3) Reason for move missing/other. I also separate out separation as an event (if it occurs before a move, or if no move occurs during the studied period), since separation is another way to deal with competing interests of two spouses.

The model is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1



All cohabiting/married individuals are collected in 1999, when I collect information on their attitudes, education etc. Then their migration propensities are studied up until 2003. In 2003, the procedure is repeated, to get more recent estimates on the variables on attitudes, and I then measure their migration propensities up until 2009. Attitudes and background variables are hence

collected before migration is measured, which distinguishes this study compared to others, where longitudinal data rarely is available. In total, the data include 1147 unique individuals, whereof 605 are included in both the 1999 and the 2003 sample.

Since we only ask about the last move, if a move has occurred after 2003 we do not know if a move also has occurred between 1999 and 2003. For individuals who have moved after 2003, I therefore measure migration between 1999 and 2003 by whether a change of NUTS (Sweden divided in 8 regions) has occurred between the two points in time, and set the reason of migration to missing. See Appendix for the division of NUTS. A preferred division would have been counties or local labor markets. This was however all that was possible with regard to the data.

I use a multinomial logistic model separating between four different outcomes. (0) Stay, (1) move for own work/studies, (2) move for the partner's work/studies, (3) move, reason missing/other, (4) separation. I make the estimates robust and cluster by individuals to control for that some of the individuals are included more than once.

Main independent variables

Gender attitudes are measured by how the respondent believes men and women should share the responsibility of children.

It is captured by the question; "What arrangements do you think would be best for a family with pre-school children?" The possible alternatives are

1. Only the man works, while the woman has main responsibility for the home and the children,
2. Only the woman works, while the man has main responsibility for the home and the children,

3. Both work, but the woman works part time and has the greater responsibility for the home and the children,
4. Both works, but the man works part time and has the greater responsibility for the home and the children, and
5. Both parents work about as much and share the responsibility for home and children equally.

A dichotomous variable has been constructed, indicating egalitarian (alternative 2, 4 and 5) or non-egalitarian (alternative 1 and 3) individuals.

A measure on career ambitions is constructed by using four separate questions ranging 1-5 to construct an index ranging between 4 and 20. 4-11 indicate low career ambitions, 12-15 indicate medium career ambitions, and 16-20 indicate high career ambitions. The questions are;

1. How important is it to achieve the following in your life: to be successful at your work?
2. How important is work for you, in total?
3. What is a good work for you: that I have good possibilities to advance
4. What is a good work for you: that I have a high salary and/or other benefits

Results

Table 1 show the distribution of outcomes by sex.

Table 1; distribution of outcomes by sex

	Men	Women
Stay	69.1%	71.7%
Move for own work/studies	5.4%	3.1%
Move for the partner's work/studies	1.6%	1.8%
Move, reason missing/other	11.5%	8.4%
Separation	12.4%	15.0%
N	680	1072

Men are more mobile due to own work/studies than women. However, this does not reflect in women being more mobile for a partner's work/studies. Only a small fraction of moves take place because of the partner's work/studies. This pattern indicates that just because one individual moves because of his/her own work/studies, it does not mean that his/her partner would say that the move took place because of the partner's work/studies.

We now move on to multinomial logistic models on migration propensities and reasons. Table 2 include estimates from stepwise multinomial logistic models, measuring the propensity to stay (in the same region and in the same relation) vs. the propensity to (1) move due to own work/studies, (2) move due to partner's work/studies, (3) move due to other reason/reason missing, and (4) separating. The results are presented as relative risks, using STATA's rrr-command, and the tables only include the estimates for moving due to own work/studies and moving due to partner's work/studies.

Table 2; Multinomial logistic models on migration propensities

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Move due to own work/studies				
Sex*Children	Man, no children	10,70 ***	9,03 ***	8,50 ***
	Man with children	5,73 ***	6,25 ***	6,07 ***
	Woman, no children	8,49 ***	7,90 ***	7,59 ***
	Woman with children (ref.)	1	1	1
	Married vs. cohabiting	1,10	1,03	1,03
	Age 30+	0,58 *	0,56 *	0,58 *
Man's education	Education missing		0,82	0,84
	Elementary school		0,56	0,56
	Upper secondary school (ref.)		1	1
	University		1,69 *	1,67 *
Woman's education	Education missing		2,08	2,20
	Elementary school		1,03	1,04
	Upper secondary school (ref.)		1	1
	University		1,44	1,49
Career ambitions	Low			1,01
	Medium (ref.)			1
	High			1,50
Move due to partner's work/studies				
Sex*Children	Man, no children	1,39	1,16	1,13
	Man with children	0,64	0,68	0,68
	Woman, no children	1,09	0,94	0,92
	Woman with children (ref.)	1	1	1
	Married vs. cohabiting	1,26	1,10	1,10
	Age 30+	0,51 *	0,48 *	0,48 *
Man's education	Education missing		1,25	1,25
	Elementary school		0,79	0,79
	Upper secondary school (ref.)		1	1
	University		4,04 ***	4,00 ***
Woman's education	Education missing		0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Elementary school		1,30	1,31
	Upper secondary school (ref.)		1	1
	University		0,97	0,98
Career ambitions	Low			0,92

Medium (ref.)	1
High	1,12

Model 1 show significant gender differences in the propensity to move for the sake of one's own work/studies. The differences are mainly between men and women with children, where men are more than five times as prone to move for the sake of their work/studies compared to women. Children functions as a strong tie regarding the propensity to move due to work/studies, both for men and women but especially for women who are a lot more affected by having a child than men are. Evidence of this is also found in the absence of significant gender differences among men and women with no children.

In model 2, a measure on social, and to some extent economic, bargaining power is included by a measure of the man's and the woman's educational levels. The inclusion of this variable does not affect the gender differences in migration propensities among men and women with children at all. In model 3, a measure on career ambitions is included, to capture differences in career ambitions, if any, between men and women with children. The variable in itself is showing results in the anticipated direction (the higher the career ambition, the higher the propensity to move due to work/studies). However, the estimates are non-significant, and the gender differences between men and women with children remain unaffected by the inclusion of the variable.

Contrary to expectations from the results discussed above, there are no gender differences in the propensity to move for the sake of a partner. The estimates are in the anticipated direction (Man with children with a relative risk of 0.64 compared to women with children) but non-significant. This might seem surprising since the men who move for the sake of their work/studies also move with their partner (otherwise they would end up in the outcome separation). It is very uncommon to state that the move took place because of a partner's work/studies, which might be a reason for the large standard errors in this model. Further, as discussed above, partners' migration motives might not necessarily correspond. Because one individual moves because of his/her own work/studies, it does

not mean that his/her partner would say that the move took place because of the partner's work/studies.

Due to the large differences between men and women with and without children, Table 3 includes separate estimates for childless individuals and individuals with children. In model 4, a variable measuring non-egalitarian gender role attitudes is added to model 3. In model 5, an interaction between sex and non-egalitarian gender role attitudes is added, because we expect contrary effects from men's and women's gender role attitudes on the propensity to move due to own or partner's work/studies. As in Table 2, the table only include estimates for moves for own work/studies and moves for partner's work/studies.

Table 3; Multinomial logistic models on migration propensities

		Without children		With children	
		Model 4	Model 5	Model 4	Model 5
Move due to own work/studies					
	Woman	0,88	0,99	0,15 ***	0,16 **
Gender role attitudes	Non-egalitarian	0,97	1,33	1,28	1,41
	Women*Non-egalitarian		0,50		0,68
	Married vs. cohabiting	0,83	0,82	1,28	1,27
	Age 30+	0,51 *	0,50 *	0,81	0,80
Man's education	Education missing	1,26	1,26	0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Elementary school	1,12	1,12	0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Upper secondary school (ref.)	1	1	1	
	University	1,60	1,55	1,84	1,83
Woman's education	Education missing	3,01 *	3,12 *	0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Elementary school	1,01	0,97	0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Upper secondary school (ref.)	1	1	1	
	University	1,31	1,34	1,93	1,95
Career ambitions	Low	0,67	0,70	2,57	2,55
	Medium (ref.)	1	1	1	

High

1,26

1,24

2,08

2,03

		Move due to partner's work/studies			
	Woman	0,76	0,76	1,12	1,34
Gender role attitudes	Non-egalitarian	0,55	0,51	0,89	1,57
	Women*Non-egalitarian		1,22		0,47
	Married vs. cohabiting	0,78	0,78	1,25	1,25
	Age 30+	0,41	0,41	0,41	0,40
Man's education	Education missing	0,00 ***	0,00 ***	9,55	9,57
	Elementary school	0,00 ***	0,00 ***	5,01	4,89
	Upper secondary school (ref.)	1	1	1	
	University	2,30	2,30	16,64 **	16,64 **
Woman's education	Education missing	0,00 ***	0,00 ***	0,00 ***	0,00 ***
	Elementary school	0,00 ***	0,00 ***	6,47 *	6,79 *
	Upper secondary school (ref.)	1	1	1	
	University	0,50	0,50	3,04	3,18
Career ambitions	Low	1,06	1,05	1,13	1,10
	Medium (ref.)	1	1	1	
	High	0,90	0,91	1,43	1,38

Looking at childless individuals, we see that gender role attitudes have no effect on the propensity to move because of work/studies. Neither is the interaction between sex and gender role attitudes significant, although in the anticipated negative direction. Among individuals with children, women are less prone to move because of work/studies even after controlling for gender role attitudes. Gender role attitudes have no significant effect on the propensity to move because of work/studies, and neither is the interaction between sex and gender role attitudes significant (although in the same anticipated negative direction).

For the propensity to move due to a partner's work/studies, sex has no significant effect on neither childless individuals or on individuals with children, as discussed above. Gender role attitudes have no effect and neither has the interaction between sex and gender role attitudes.

Discussion and conclusions

Children function as a much larger tie for women's career migration propensities compared to men's. This is shown in that when women have children, they stop relocating for the sake of their own career. Having children also affects men's career migration negatively, but they continue moving due to career reasons to a much larger extent than women with children do. The pattern cannot be explained by differences in the effect from educational level between men and women, or by lower career ambitions among women with children. Gender role attitudes surprisingly and in contrast to studies on the Germany and the United States neither have any effect on the pattern nor any effect per se.

For childless couples there are no gender differences and no evidence for tied staying among women. Jürges (2006) finds the same absence of gender differences for single households in Germany as I find for childless couples in Sweden. There is evidence of Swedish men and women becoming more traditional when having children (see e.g. Ahrne and Roman XXXX). One possible explanation of the difference between countries might be that Swedish and German couples differ in the timing of adapting a gender normative behavior in the relation.

The higher career mobility among men with children compared to women with children is not reflected in a higher mobility for a partner's career among women with children. This is interesting, since the men with children who move have partners who move with them. The pattern might reflect a complexity in couples' migration decisions, where the argument for one partner is not necessarily the same as the argument for the other partner. It might also be the consequence of a reluctance to state a partner's work/studies as a reason for a long distance move. Increased insights

in this pattern would be given if one looked at the correspondence/discrepancy between partner's migration motives.

The main conclusions from this study are that women suffer a larger risk of being a tied stayer than men. Men's higher career mobility after having children gives indications on women also being under larger risk of being tied movers. This however does not reflect in the analyses. The results further emphasizes the need of looking at couples' migration as a complex process where both partner's arguments not necessarily match, making it important to try addressing both partners' reasons for a move.

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