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Abstract:

Predictors and causes of high divorce and separation rates are important in studying how marital status influences economic decisions. Certain labor market characteristics such as commuting distance may affect marital separation. Two of the possible factors causing high marital separation rates are long commute time and long commuting distance. However, commuting decisions and marital separation may be influenced by unobserved omitted variables. To solve this problem, I propose two identification strategies in connection with German Socio-Economic Panel data. One strategy entails using employer-induced changes in commuting distance. A second strategy uses geographic codes and merges them with information about major road repairs and railroad construction projects. My findings could further understanding of how long commutes may affect separation rates. My preliminary results show that employer-induced commuting distance does not seem to have an effect on the probability of separation.