Introduction

Divorce is an important social phenomenon with economic implications.

- There were 4.2 marriages and 2.0 divorces per 1000 inhabitants of the BE3 in 2011. (Statistics 2011)

Long commutes may influence family stability.

Negative effects of long commutes

- Less time for household production
- Less time to enjoy the family public goods

Positive effects of long commutes

- Compensation by higher wages (Middico, Van Ophemien, and Palopori 2014)
- Higher likelihood of employment
- Scarcer time together could be valued higher

Challenges for the research on the effects of commuting

- The commuting decision may consider marital stability expectations
- Spouses with more stable marriages may be more in control of their jobs and commutes

My main contribution

- I use sources of variation which are plausibly exogenous to marital quality, extending the observational study of Kueh and Bahakan (2017).
  1. Employee-induced variation in commuting distance.
  - by removing variation from moving residence or changing employer, what is left is variation from relocations within the same company.
  2. Introduction of the high-speed passenger rail (HSR) in Germany

Materials and Methods

- The employer-induced variation is identified using employer and residence fixed effects using SOEP data.
  - The remaining change in commuting distance should come from relocations which are considered employer-induced.
  - The commuting time would also be interesting to focus on. However, the commuting distance is available annually in SOEP while commuting time was collected only in 5 survey years.

- The introduction of HSR caused shorter travel times between cities with HSR stations.
  - A second strategy uses timing of introduction of high-speed rail in different countries. My preliminary results show that employer-induced commuting distance may increase the probability of separation in the first year and decrease it in the long run. The increase in separation is manifest in the rural regions and the decrease in separation in the urban regions.

Results of the first specification

Effect of employer-induced variation in commuting distance on separation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1.longDist 0.0041*** 0.0032 0.0062*** (0.0017) (0.0022) (0.0028)</td>
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<tr>
<td>L2.longDist -0.0062 0.0000 -0.0008 (0.0018) (0.0024) (0.0029)</td>
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<tr>
<td>L3.longDist -0.0047** -0.0015** -0.0032 (0.0017) (0.0022) (0.0028)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant -0.0065 -0.0012 0.0008 (0.143) (0.199) (2.253)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N = T 131,320 87,350 43,970</td>
<td>23,876 16,142 8,213</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schupp et al. 2017, own calculations

Alternative empirical specifications

1. Employer-induced changes in commuting distance

\[ y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_{1}\text{longDist} + \beta_{2}\text{regtyp} + \epsilon_{it} \]

- \( \beta_{1} \) denotes probability of separation. The indices i and t denote individual and time. CD is commuting distance. E is the year before current employment and R is year moved in the dwelling.
- E is used to approximate the employer fixed effect and R to approximate the residence fixed effect.

2. High-Speed Rail extension

\[ y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_{1}\text{HSR} + \beta_{2}\text{regtyp} + \epsilon_{it} \]

- HSR as a natural experiment treatment
- Using second wave (1999-2010) when the ICE stations were added in smaller cities
- The decision about HSR station location were based on expected demand for commuting

Conclusions

- The use of employer-induced variation in commuting distance allowed estimation of the effect of long distance commuting on separation from pure.
- Found a small increase in separations in the short run. It impacts mostly the rural regions.
- In the long run, there is either no effect of long distance commuting on separation on a small scale. Qualitative explanations are that a wage increase in compensation for the relocation may take a few years.

Forthcoming Research

I am currently working on the second part of the project, studying the influence of variation in commuting from the introduction of high-speed rail in counties of Germany on the marital stability. I am considering several specifications of the instrument representing the HSR introduction and studying the possible heterogeneity of the effects.

Selected References


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