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# **For whose sake do couples relocate?**

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WORKING PAPER 2011:3

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ISSN 1651-1166

# For whose sake do couples relocate?

## Gender, career opportunities and couples' internal migration in Sweden\*

by

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February 7, 2011

### Abstract

The aim with this study is to examine how career possibilities in the man's and the woman's occupations – in the country as a whole, as well as in the region where the couple resides – affect heterosexual couples' regional mobility. The context is Sweden – a country with a strong dual earner norm combined with a very sex segregated labor market. In the analyses we perform logistic regressions on Swedish register data, 1998–2007. We study how four dimensions of career possibilities affect couples' geographical mobility and are interested in if their effect varies by gender. The dimensions are geographical wage differences, current career, occupational level and wage compression in occupations. In summary, our findings indicate that male and female career opportunities affect the couple in different ways when one moves beyond focusing on the level of their occupations. In particular the effect from wage compression in occupations seems to be dependent on gender, with a clear effect for men and no effect for women. Even when including measures of career opportunities *within* professions, there exist some non-egalitarian patterns in whose career couples adjust to. It hence seems as if couples adapt somewhat more to the man's career possibilities than the woman's, even when we adjust for the underlying gender differences in career possibilities.

Keywords: Regional mobility, internal migration, sex segregation, career, gender  
JEL-codes: R23 J16

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\* We are grateful to Martin Lundin, Olof Åslund and Christofer Edling for valuable comments and suggestions. We also want to thank Gunnar Andersson and the participants at the IFAU internal seminar. Finally, we want to acknowledge the “Stockholm University SIMSAM Node for Demographic Research (SUNDEM)”, for providing us with data and financial support.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and research motive

For many years, research has acknowledged that couples' internal migration seems to follow a gender specific pattern. All evidence point in the same direction: it is mainly due to the man's career that couples move to a new region (see e.g. Markham and Pleck 1986; Shihadeh 1991; Bielby and Bielby 1992; Gordon 1995; Jacobsen and Levin 2000; Boyle et al. 2001; Smits 2001; Mulder and van Ham 2005; Clark and Huang 2006; Jürges 2006). Despite the fact that Sweden often is considered a quite gender egalitarian society, the pattern also exists in Sweden. It is common to move because of career reasons (see e.g. Niedomysl 2006; Eliasson et al. 2007; Brandén 2010, also see Garvill et al. 2002 for an alternative view of the matter), and occupational possibilities is a factor individuals consider important when choosing a region (Niedomysl 2008). But there are also clear differences in whose career couples choose to move for. Men with partner and children are significantly more prone to move because of career reasons than women in the same life course stage (Brandén 2010) whereas women often become tied movers (Forsberg 1989). Focusing on co-residing couples, it is only men who gain economically from moving to another region (Åström and Westerlund 2009; Nilsson 2001). Further, it is mainly the man's educational level that determines couples' migration propensities (Lundholm 2007). In sum, this supports the conclusion that couples more often move for the man's sake. When studying how career possibilities affect migration, an often neglected fact is that men and women inhabit different positions on the labor market. Hence, the aim with this study is to examine how career possibilities in the man's and the woman's occupations in the country as a whole, as well as in the region where the couple resides, affect heterosexual couples' regional mobility in Sweden. Throughout the study an emphasis will be on the couple rather than the individual, and on the gender aspect of couples' regional mobility. From here on, the terms migration, moves and regional mobility are used interchangeably and synonymously.

## 1.2 Why do couples move?

A general point of departure in migration research is that individuals move when they perceive it as more beneficial to move than to stay, and when there are no obstacles that make the move impossible (Lee 1966). A benefit with a move can be financial advantages with the new region, for example higher wages than in the current region (Fischer and Malmberg 2001). Another possible benefit is career advancement in the new region. Education can also function as a mobility incentive, because it is associated with higher career possibilities and is an investment that might require regional mobility to gain sufficient returns. Similarly, one can assume that individuals in high level occupations are regionally more mobile than individuals in occupations on lower levels.

However, environmental and social aspects are also important. Some regions, where it is expensive to live and hard to find a dwelling, still have an attractiveness beyond the strictly economically rational, making people still wanting to live or move there. Further, when discussing advantages with the present region, it is important to consider what stage of the life course an individual is in. The longer one has lived in a region, and the more settled one is, for instance in terms of partner and (age of) children, the larger is the sacrifice from a move (Fischer and Malmberg 2001). Similarly, being established on the labor market in a region or having a career could increase the ties to a region, and hence lower the migration propensities.

When translating common theories on individual's migration to also include couples' migration there are a number of aspects to consider. Mincer (1978) used Lee's (1966) perspective as starting point, but argued that when considering couples it is the couple's pooled benefits with a move that determines the couple's migration propensities. The couple is hence seen as a single entity, with common interests and goals. If one of the partners would gain so much from a move that the net outcome for the couple would be positive, the couple would hence move, even if it meant the other partner experiencing a financial loss from the move. The probable gains one partner is expected to experience with the move must exceed the loss the other partner would make (Mincer 1978). Couples would hence leave bad regions and move because of better career possibilities in other regions, and adjust to career possibilities in the partners' occupation. But it is

essential to take into account both partners' possibilities, since couples consider the net possibilities.

In addition to this, the bargaining position of the man and the woman might be of importance (Lundberg and Pollak 2003). With a starting point in theories on bargaining power within couples, the woman's secondary role in migration decisions could also be explained by her generally weaker bargaining position compared to the man. An important determinant of bargaining power is economic resources, and the economic independence one has compared to a partner. Because of this, it is important to consider wage differences within the couple when studying couples' migration.

But it is not only gender differences in bargaining power that are important to consider, according to the literature. General expectations on men and women, as well as how men's and women's normative characteristics are valued in society, could also be important to take into account. In the literature on gender, much has been written about the gender order in society, where men and women are expected to have different properties and thus are assigned different tasks, in the private and the public spheres. Women are expected to be best designated to take the main responsibility of the family, relationships and children whereas men are expected to take the greatest responsibility for paid work (see e.g. Connell 1987). The consequence might be that men's paid work is likely to be considered more important for couples than women's, which in turn makes it likely that couples adjust geographically for the sake of the man's career than the woman's.

### **1.3 The importance of the sex segregation on the labor market**

From previous studies we can conclude that there is plenty of evidence pointing towards couples moving rather for the man's than for the woman's sake. But there is an institutional factor of importance that needs to be considered in these kinds of studies; the fact that men and women have different positions in the labor market (Halfacree 1995). If one wants to understand why women get to play the secondary role in migration decisions, one needs to be aware of the fact that women often have a secondary role in the labor market at large. Women's reluctance to move because of career reasons, and their propensity to move because of their partner's career is hence not necessarily due to women adjusting to a partner. Another possible explanation is

that women are overrepresented in occupations with no career possibilities regardless of region: jobs with low status, no wage trajectories and high geographic ubiquity, for instance in the care sector (Halfacree 1995). Long (1974) has even argued that being able to move with a partner can be part of the reason behind women's occupational choices, since traditional female dominated occupations often have in common that they exist all over the country.

This makes it essential to include good measures of career possibilities *within occupations and regions* when studying how couples respond to migration incentives. This is necessary if we want the full picture of whether couples adapt geographically to the man's, the woman's or both partner's career possibilities. If couples more often adjust to the man's career because men more often work in occupations with better career possibilities, gender differences in migration propensities would disappear when taking this into account. In relation to this, research has found that occupational prestige (Duncan and Perucci 1976), whether the occupation exists all over the country, wage spread, and tradition of mobility in the occupation (Shauman and Noonan 2007) have significant effects on couples' regional mobility, for both men and women. But these effects are still not sufficient to explain why women get such a secondary role in couples' migration decisions (also see Gordon 1995; McKinnish 2008; Shauman 2010).

#### **1.4 Sweden, gender and the labor market**

In Sweden, there are yet no studies on couples' regional mobility from an occupational perspective (even if Hedberg 2005 and Lundholm 2007 address the need for this). Sweden is however a highly interesting case from this perspective, not least because of the large scale register data making it possible to separate between a wide range of regions and occupations. But Sweden is also an interesting case because of the country's reputation as being a gender egalitarian society. Do we find gender differences in couples' migration also in Sweden? So far, all evidence point in this direction (Nilsson 2001; Lundholm 2007; Åström and Westerlund 2009). Despite Sweden's flattering reputation, the context is not entirely unproblematic and requires some discussion.

Sweden is often considered a forerunner regarding gender egalitarianism. This is partly true. Gender egalitarianism is often an explicit goal of Swedish family policies.

Split taxation, parental leave instead of maternal leave and the availability of public child care are all factors aimed at encouraging women as well as men to be both earners and carers (Evertsson et al. 2009). Sweden is also one of the countries that most actively encourage both parents to take parental leave. A majority of Swedish fathers take at least some parental leave (Duvander et al. 2010). However, to view Sweden only as a gender egalitarian society based on this wide spread dual earner dual carer norm is to simplify matters.

For instance, women in Sweden have difficulties reaching the highest positions in companies. They hit the so called glass ceiling (Albrecht et al. 2003). Even though both men and women are active in the labor market to almost the same extent, women (with the exception of highly educated women) more often work part time than men (Evertsson et al. 2009). Further, even though Swedish women on average in fact have a slightly longer education than men, the fields that men and women are educated in differ widely. Whereas men more often have degrees in engineering and other technical fields, women more often have degrees in care related fields, and in teaching (<http://hsv.se>). The result is a highly sex segregated labor market with women crowded in the public sector; in care, teaching, and service occupations. Male dominated occupations in general have higher career possibilities, as well as higher status, than female dominated occupations with similar educational requirements (Bygren and Kumlin 2004; Charles and Grusky 2005).

With that being said, the image of Sweden as a gender egalitarian society needs to be nuanced. From a comparative perspective, it might be true that Sweden is a quite gender egalitarian society regarding the dual earner dual carer aspect. But focusing on the labor market and on men's and women's career possibilities there, there still exist clear non-egalitarian patterns.

## **2 Research questions and hypotheses**

The aim with this study is to examine how career possibilities in the man's and the woman's occupations in the country as a whole, as well as in the region where the couple resides, affect heterosexual couples' regional mobility. We use four indicators of career possibilities; (1) wage levels in the present region, (2) wage position in one's

occupation, (3) level of the occupation and (4) the wage compression in the occupation. We study how these factors affect couples' regional mobility, and the interplay they have with gender.

To live in a region with relatively low wages in the man's' and the woman's occupations, would lower their possibilities for a career in the region. This is likely to increase geographical mobility.

*H1: To live in a region with low wages for the man and the woman's occupations increase the couple's migration propensities.*

Being in an early stage of one's career indicates weak ties to the present region, and increase probable benefits with a move. Hence, we expect migration propensities to be higher in early stages of the career, when the man and the woman have relatively low wages, compared to others in the same occupations.

*H2: The man and the woman being in early stages of their careers increase the couple's migration propensities.*

High level occupations imply greater career possibilities and women and men working in these kinds of occupations are assumed to be more willing to invest in their career than others, hence having a higher migration propensity.

*H3: The man and the woman working in high level occupations increase the couple's migration propensities*

In occupations with high wage compression, i.e. where the differences between the lowest and the highest wage levels are small, the possible benefits with a move are also smaller than they are in occupations characterized by lower wage compression. Hence, we expect higher migration propensities for couples in occupations with low wage compression.

*H4: The man and the woman working in occupations with low wage compression increase the couple's migration propensities.*

Previous research shows that men often get the beneficial position in couples' regional mobility. This is in line with theories on the gender order, with couples considering the man's career more important than the woman's. Because of this gender order, we expect the man's career possibilities to be of greater importance for couples' regional mobility than the woman's. We assume this is the case also when we take the sex segregation on the labor market into account.

*H5: We expect that for all hypotheses, the man's characteristics have a larger impact than the woman's.*

### **3 Data, methods and variables**

#### **3.1 Data**

For the analyses we use a combination of Swedish official registers: STAR (Sweden in Time: Activities and Relations). STAR is put together on initiative by, and administered

by, Stockholm University Demography Unit (SUDA) and the Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) at Stockholm University. Among other things, we have access to links between partners (if they are married or have common children), information on monthly wage, occupation and migration. For this study, we use data for the period 1997–2007.

We include cohabiting or married couples with at least one common child, and where both partners are 16–65 years of age. Both the man and the woman must exist in the earnings structure statistics in the year in question. Couples in which any of the partners have more than one occupation are excluded, since we do not know which the primary occupation is. The reason for only including couples with common children is that this currently is the only way to connect cohabitants in Swedish registers. For this study, it is essential that married and cohabitants are included on the same conditions. All together, the data set include more than 650 000 unique couples, and almost 2.8 million couple-years.

### **3.2 Data considerations**

The earnings structure statistics is in principle a population study. However, for private companies with less than 500 employees Statistics Sweden collects data based on a stratified sample of workplaces. In total about 50 percent of all those employed in the private sector are included. This implies that employees at small private workplaces are underrepresented in the data. Since we study couples this in particular means that couples where both the man and the woman work in small private companies are underrepresented. We include a control variable for sector with the aim to compensate for this. However, the results presented in this study are likely to be somewhat more valid for employees in the public sector or in large private companies compared to employees in smaller private companies.

### **3.3 Method**

We use logistic regression and study the effect men's and women's career possibilities have on couples' migration propensities.

### Figure 1. Simple effects

$$\begin{aligned} \log\left(\frac{P(\text{Move} = 1)}{P(\text{Move} = 0)}\right) = & \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Reg\_wage\_man} + \alpha_2 \text{Reg\_wage\_woman} + \alpha_3 \text{Career\_man} \\ & + \alpha_4 \text{Career\_woman} + \alpha_5 \text{Occ\_level\_man} + \alpha_6 \text{Occ\_level\_woman} \\ & + \alpha_7 \text{Wage\_compr\_man} + \alpha_8 \text{Wage\_compr\_woman} + \text{Controls} \end{aligned}$$

### Figure 2. Fixed-effects

$$\begin{aligned} \log\left(\frac{P(\text{Move} = 1)}{P(\text{Move} = 0)}\right) = & \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Reg\_wage\_man} + \alpha_2 \text{Reg\_wage\_woman} + \alpha_3 \text{Career\_man} \\ & + \alpha_4 \text{Career\_woman} + \alpha_5 \text{Occ\_level\_man} + \alpha_6 \text{Occ\_level\_woman} \\ & + \alpha_7 \text{Wage\_compr\_man} + \alpha_8 \text{Wage\_compr\_woman} + \text{Controls} + \alpha_9 \text{Municipality} \end{aligned}$$

**Move** indicates that the couple moves during the year, **Reg\_wage** measures regional wage levels for the man's and the woman's occupations, **Career** measures in what stage of their careers the man and the woman are, **Occ\_level** measures the occupational level for the man and the woman, and **Wage\_compr** measures the wage compression in the man's and the woman's occupations. Municipality separates between Sweden's ~290 municipalities (the exact number of municipalities varies somewhat by year).

The results are throughout the study presented as odds ratios, which approximately is the same as probabilities, when studying such uncommon events as couple migration. To test hypotheses 1–4 we study the simple effects of the man's and the woman's career possibilities, whereas we for hypothesis 5 compare direction, strength and significance of the effect of the man's career possibilities to those of the woman.

We have access to longitudinal annual data for all our independent variables. Since we want to be certain that all independent variables are measured before a potential move, we use information on the independent variables the year before we study migration propensity. All independent variables are hence measured 1997–2006 whereas we study moves the years after, 1998–2007. Since the same couples are included in the data set more than one year, we adjust the standard errors using STATA's cluster-command.

## 3.4 Variables

The outcome in the logistic regressions is *internal migration*. This is measured yearly, 1998–2007, with the *Register of internal migration*. If a couple has moved over a

municipality border during the year and the new municipality is located in a new local labor market, we define this as migration. The definition of local labor markets is based on whether a group of municipalities can be defined as self-sufficient in terms of labor force. Statistics Sweden constructs the regions yearly, based on the amount of commuting between municipalities. In 1995 there were 106 local labor markets in Sweden, and 2003 it had decreased to 87 because of increased commuting. Using this measure of migration instead of focusing on the distance moved makes it independent of differences in population density in different parts of Sweden.

We focus on how men's and women's career opportunities, in both a geographical and occupational sense, affect couples' migration propensities. We study four dimensions of career possibilities; geographical wage differences, current career, occupational level and wage compression in occupation, and examine how these aspects affect couples geographical mobility, and how it interacts with gender. All variables are constructed separately by occupation (divided into 40 occupations, see appendix) and year. All the variables are constructed in a non-sex specific way. They are based on all individuals included in the earnings structure statistics, with weights included to compensate for the sample principles discussed above. With the term wage we refer to monthly wage adjusted to full time for individuals working part-time.<sup>§</sup>

To measure *geographical wage differences* we calculate median monthly wages separately for each occupation, year and local labor market. Based on these median wages, we group regions in deciles; the ten percent regions with the highest wage levels in a certain occupation, the ten percent regions with the second highest wages and so on, for the man and the woman respectively.

To be able to study how an already achieved career affect regional mobility we include a measure of how far one is wage wise in one's occupation. We call this variable *wage position in occupation*. We separate between being in the quintile with the lowest wages in the occupation, being in any of the middle three quintiles and being in the quintile with the highest monthly wage in one's occupation, i.e. being in an established stage of one's career.

The occupation's *level* is based on the demand of qualification normally demanded to work in the occupation. We separate between (1) legislators, senior officials and managers, (2) professionals, (3) technicians and associate professionals, and (4) other kinds of occupations. The difference between the occupation's level and the wage position in occupation is hence that the level separate between different occupations' general demands of qualification whereas the wage position measures how far one has advanced in the occupation in question.

The *wage compression* in an occupation measures how large the difference is between the lowest and the highest wage levels. It hence indicates the possibility to make a wage wise career within an occupation. Here, wage compression is measured yearly, as the difference between the lowest and the highest monthly wage deciles in the occupation, as  $\frac{10\%}{90\%}$ . If the value is ~1 this indicates a high wage compression whereas a lower value indicates larger differences between the highest and the lowest wages, hence a lower degree of wage compression.

Except for the variables discussed above, we include controls for the man's and the woman's age, the age of the oldest common child, the sector the man and the woman works in, if the man or the woman has received study grants during the year, civil status (married vs. cohabiting), year and if the couple has moved any of the previous years they have been included in the analyses. To make sure the results are not due to gender differences in economic bargaining power we also control for the man's and the woman's monthly wages, i.e. a not occupational based measure of monthly wages. We also control for non-observable municipality effects in "fixed effects" models. In the results section, we will not discuss the effects from the control variables.

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<sup>§</sup> There are of course a number of alternative ways to define career opportunities, and we encourage future research to focus on alternative dimensions.

### 3.5 Descriptive statistics of the independent variables

*Table 1* includes descriptive statistics of the career possibilities of the men and the women.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of career possibilities (percent)

		Women	Men
<b>Wage levels in region</b>	Best 10% regions	16.7	20.3
		10.9	16.3
		10.0	11.7
		10.9	12.2
		10.7	10.0
		10.4	9.2
		10.3	7.9
		8.8	5.9
		6.7	4.0
	Worst 10% regions	4.5	2.5
<b>Wage position in occupation</b>	Low	15.1	8.2
	Medium	68.9	60.2
	High	16.1	31.5
<b>Level</b>	Legislators, managers, etc.	3.0	10.5
	Professionals	24.0	24.9
	Technicians, associate professionals	24.0	21.9
	Other	49.0	42.7
<b>Wage compression</b>	Min	0.26	0.26
	Max	0.76	0.76
	Mean	0.65	0.58
	Standard deviation	0.10	0.11
<b>N</b>		2 775 216	2 775 216

Interesting patterns with regard to gender appear already in the descriptive statistics reported in *Table 1*. The fact that more men than women are positioned at higher wage levels is previously well known. This is also the case for the case that more men than women have managerial positions. But we also observe interesting patterns regarding the wage levels in the region. 20 percent of the men and 17 percent of the women live in one of the 1/10 regions with the highest wages for their occupation. Hence, couples slightly more often live in a region with beneficial conditions for the man than the woman. If we instead study the 1/5 regions with the highest wages for the occupation, about 37 percent of the men are already settled there, compared to 28 percent of the women. It hence seems as if couples often have settled in regions that are more

beneficial for the man than the woman. The wage compression within the men's and the women's occupations further show that women more often than men work in occupations with a higher degree of wage compression, hence lower wage wise career possibilities.

## **4 Results**

*Table 2* includes logistic regressions where the outcome is migration propensities. *Model 1* contains simple effects and *model 2* contains fixed-effects on municipalities. The standard errors of both models are adjusted by using STATA's cluster command to compensate for couples often occurring in the data more than one year. By performing fixed effects models, we can adjust for municipality specific factors that are not a direct consequence of the career possibilities in the municipality but still might mediate the effect career possibilities have on migration propensities.

**Table 2.** Logistic regression on couples' migration propensities 1998-2007 (odds ratios, standard errors in brackets)

		Model 1	Model 2
		Simple effects	Fixed effects
<b>LL</b>		-78648.4	-77751.1
<b>N</b>		2775216	2775216
<b>Constant</b>		0.10***	0.12***
		Odds ratios (SE)	Odds ratios (SE)
Wage levels in region, woman	Best 10% municipalities	1	1
		1.02 (0.04)	1.05 (0.04)
		1.01 (0.04)	1.05 (0.04)
		1.07 (0.04)	1.11* (0.05)
		1.09* (0.04)	1.13** (0.05)
		1.14*** (0.05)	1.17*** (0.05)
		1.07 (0.04)	1.10* (0.05)
		1.10* (0.05)	1.13** (0.05)
		1.13* (0.05)	1.08 (0.05)
	Worst 10% municipalities	1.26*** (0.07)	1.17** (0.06)
Wage levels in region, man	Best 10% municipalities	1	1
		1.10** (0.04)	1.10** (0.04)
		1.21*** (0.04)	1.17*** (0.05)
		1.25*** (0.05)	1.20*** (0.05)
		1.32*** (0.05)	1.23*** (0.05)
		1.31*** (0.05)	1.18*** (0.05)
		1.27*** (0.05)	1.15** (0.05)
		1.41*** (0.06)	1.21*** (0.06)
		1.45*** (0.07)	1.14* (0.06)
	Worst 10% municipalities	1.62*** (0.10)	1.15* (0.07)
Wage position in occupation, woman	Low	1	1
	Medium	0.85*** (0.02)	0.86*** (0.02)
	High	0.86*** (0.03)	0.87*** (0.04)
Wage position in occupation, man	Low	1	1
	Medium	0.96 (0.03)	0.98 (0.03)
	High	1.19*** (0.05)	1.26*** (0.05)
Level, woman	Legislators, managers, etc.	1	1
	Professionals	0.91 (0.05)	0.91 (0.05)
	Technicians, associate professionals	0.75*** (0.04)	0.75*** (0.04)
	Other	0.57*** (0.04)	0.56*** (0.04)
Level, man	Legislators, managers, etc.	1	1
	Professionals	0.89** (0.03)	0.93* (0.03)
	Technicians, associate professionals	0.71*** (0.03)	0.72*** (0.03)
	Other	0.57*** (0.03)	0.57*** (0.03)
Wage compression, woman		1.19 (0.16)	1.22 (0.16)
Wage compression, man		0.21*** (0.03)	0.21*** (0.03)

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1. In the models, we control for age of man and woman, age of oldest common child, sector of man and woman, studies during the year, civil status, calendar year, previous moves and for the man's and the woman's monthly wages.

*Table 2* shows the results from logistic regressions on couples' migration propensities. *Model 1* includes the effect the man's and the woman's career possibilities have on couples' migration propensities. *Model 2* adjust the results for the fact that different regions have different attractiveness by other reasons than the regional wage differences we include here, i.e. is a fixed-effects model on municipalities.

From *model 1*, we see that regional wage differences have a clear effect on couples' regional mobility, and that the effect is in the anticipated direction. The higher the wage levels are in the current region, the less prone couples are to leave it. *Hypothesis 1* is hence supported, which is in line with previous research (see e.g. Fischer and Malmberg 2001). The effect is especially articulated for men, where the pattern is almost linear. Couples' migration propensities is approximately 62 percent higher if the couple live in one of the man's worst regions, compared to if they live in a region that is one of the best for the man. For women, the pattern fluctuates somewhat more. The difference in migration propensities when the couple lives in one of the best regions compared to one of the worst regions is 26 percent. This supports *hypothesis 5*. In *model 2*, we see that a substantial part of the effect regional wage differences have on migration propensities disappear when we adjust for unobservable municipality effects. We also see that the gender differences are weakened when other municipality effects are controlled for. There are hence many other factors than high wages that make a region attractive. And it is to a large extent because of these other factors that the man's regional wage differences have a larger effect on couples' migration propensities. However, even when we take this into account, couples are more prone to stay in any of the regions that offer the highest wages within the partners' occupations, compared to other regions, and the estimates of the man is to a larger extent significant and perhaps somewhat stronger than the woman's. This indicates that the man's regional wage level is more important than the woman's, but one needs to be careful with making any strong conclusions.

We also see that how far one has gotten in one's career ("*Wage position in occupation*") has an effect on couples' regional mobility and that the effect is different for men compared to women. The woman's career affects the couple's regional mobility negatively. Couples have their highest mobility when the woman is in an early stage of her career, but when she has achieved medium wage, the couples' mobility decrease by

15 percent. The effect from men's career is almost the opposite. Couples are mainly mobile when the man already is high up the wage ladder in his occupation, the difference is approximately 20 percent compared to when the man is in an early or medium stage of his career. *Hypothesis 2* is hence only partially supported, namely by the effect of the woman's career. But for men, the pattern is the opposite, which contradicts our hypothesis. Also, the effect is about the same for both men and women, even if the direction of the correlation is the opposite. Hence, *hypothesis 5* is not supported. In relation to these results, it is worth noting that all measures are constructed jointly for men and women.

The *occupations' level* has the same effect for both men and women. To work as a legislator, manager, or as a professional is connected with a high migration propensity. The higher the occupational level, the higher are couples' migration propensities. This gives support to *hypothesis 3*. The effect is the same regardless of gender. The man's and the woman's occupational levels hence have the same effect on couples' regional mobility, which opposes *hypothesis 5*.

The *wage compression* is the variable showing the largest gender differences. It is also the variable that most explicitly indicates how high wage levels one can reach in an occupation, since it measures the difference between the lowest and the highest wages. If the man is in an occupation with a high wage compression the couple is less prone to move than if the man is in an occupation with a lower wage compression. This is in line with *hypothesis 4* ("the man and the woman working in occupations with low wage compression increase the couple's migration propensities"). We also see that the wage compression in the woman's occupation does not affect the couple's geographical mobility at all. If one does not include the man's and the woman's occupational levels in the model, the woman's wage compression has an effect in the same direction as the man's wage compression (not presented here). This is plausible, since high level occupations have such a high mobility, and also have higher wage spread. The fact that the man's wage compression has an effect even when adjusting for the level of the occupation indicates that also in low level occupations the man's wage compression has

an effect on the couple's migration propensities.<sup>\*\*</sup> *Hypothesis 5* hence gains support; it is mainly the man's wage compression that affects the couple's migration propensities.

In summary, the four indicators are pointing in somewhat different directions. Regional wage differences, own career and wage compression show different effect by gender. On the other hand, the level of the occupation has the same effect for men and women, when controlling for the other indicators of career possibilities in occupations. In the discussion below we will discuss how one can interpret the patterns these four dimensions of career possibilities show.

## **5 Discussion and final remarks**

The aim with this study has been to examine how career possibilities in the man's and the woman's occupations in the country as a whole, as well as in the region where the couple resides, affect heterosexual couples' regional mobility in Sweden. In summary, the results indicate that career possibilities are important for couples' regional mobility. However, the effect career possibilities have is to some extent dependent on whose career possibilities one is considering; the man's or the woman's. Couples adjust differently to the man's and the woman's career possibilities, which is in line with theories on the gender order in society (Connell 1987).

First, the results suggest that couples are reluctant to leave regions with high wage levels in the man's and the woman's occupations, which is in line with theories stating that migration propensities increase as other regions have more to offer than the current region (Mincer 1978; Lee 1966). Couples' geographical mobility is covarying with the regional wage levels of the man's as well as the woman's occupation. But the effect of the regional wage levels in the man's occupation seems to be more linear. We interpret this as if couples are more adaptive to the man's region dependent career possibilities. We however find that a substantial amount of the effect of the man's regional wage level disappear when other municipality effects are controlled for. The man's career possibilities in the current region are hence important for the couple's migration

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<sup>\*\*</sup> All results are robust also when only including couples with a mean age below 50, and if only including years after the year 2000. The results for wage levels in current region are robust even if we instead of median wages study the

propensities. But to a large extent, this is due to other factors that make a region attractive or unattractive. A possible explanation is that partners within couples coordinate their regional choices. They might choose regions that offer career possibilities for the man, but that also are attractive in other ways, maybe for the sake of the other partner or the family as a whole. These factors are also important for couples' choice of region.

Second, the wage position the man and the woman have reached in their occupations – the stage reached in their careers – affect the couple's regional mobility. The effect is however different for the man's wage position compared to the woman's. The pattern for women is consistent with our hypothesis: the regional mobility is higher at early stages of the career, when one might be less established in the current region and/or the current work place (Fischer and Malmberg 2001) and has more to gain from migration (Lee 1966). For men the effect from career stage is the opposite: couples become more mobile when the man is among the 20 percent with the highest wages of his profession. One possible explanation for the gender difference is that women's careers might be stagnating at lower wage levels compared to men. The reason for this is, in turn, that women are less likely than men to reach the absolute top positions in companies (the so-called glass ceiling, see e.g. Albrecht et al. 2003). One speculation is that the glass ceiling has the consequence that women do not get the same kind of offers of advancement in new regions as men do. Another explanation might be that men and women have different career strategies, where women are more dependent on local networks and rather focus on their career in their present region. Yet another explanation may be that we only study couples with children, that is, couples where the woman most likely has been on parental leave during a period. These couples may be polarized to invest in the man's career rather than the woman's, and adapt into more articulated gender roles (Ahrne and Roman 1997). This would be consistent with a study of Brandén (2010) showing that men continue to move due to career reasons even when they have children and partner while this stops women's propensity to move for career reasons.

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90<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Third, it is only the man's wage compression that affects couples' regional mobility, and not the woman's. The wage compression in an occupation is closely linked to the possibilities available to achieve a really high salary in the occupation. The wage compression in the woman's occupation does not covary with couple's migration propensities, while the wage compression in the man's occupation has a negative effect, thus indicating that the couple adapts more to the man's career possibilities than the woman's. This adds to the support of the hypotheses stating that couples' migration not only is the consequence of career possibilities, but also is affected by the gender order in society. However, also this pattern might reflect the glass ceiling: that the relationship between the real possibilities in an occupation and the wage compression in the same occupation is weaker for women than for men.

Finally, we find interesting patterns in terms of the effect occupational level has on couples' regional mobility. The higher the occupation's level is the more mobile is the couple. This is the case for both the man's and the woman's occupational level. This is in line with our hypothesis, and is probably among other things the consequence of greater career possibilities and a greater willingness to invest in ones' career when working in high level occupations. Occupational level is the only of our indicators of career possibilities in which the man's and the woman's career possibilities have the same effect on the couple's migration propensities. This is the case when we adjust for the other career opportunities there is in the occupation, in terms of wage compression, own career in the occupation, and wage levels in the current region. If one compares men and women in identical situations regarding wage compression, own career in the occupation, and wage levels in the current region, the occupation's level as such has the same effect, regardless of gender.

In summary, our results show that male and female career opportunities seems to affect the couple's migration propensities in different ways, except regarding the occupational level. The pattern is especially articulated for the variable wage compression. The results indicate that there exists an inequality in couples' migration patterns, where it seems as if couples adapt more to the man's career possibilities than the woman's. This pattern exists even after taking the sex segregated labor market into account by constructing all measures of career possibilities *within* occupations. It hence

seems as if couples adapt somewhat more to the man's career possibilities than the woman's', even when we adjust for the underlying gender differences in career possibilities.

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## 7 Appendix: Categorization of occupations

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
1	Armed forces	Armed forces	Militärer	Militärer
111	Legislators and senior government officials	Legislators and senior government officials	Högre ämbetsmän och politiker	Politiker
246	Religious professionals	Religious professionals/ associate professionals	Präster	Präster och pastorer
348	Religious associate professionals		Pastorer	
100		Managers, senior officials, directors		Chefer
112	Senior officials of special-interest organizations		Chefstjänstemän i intresseorganisationer	
121	Directors and chief executives		Verkställande direktörer, verkschefer m.fl.	
122	Production and operations managers		Drift- och verksamhetschefer	
123	Other specialist managers		Chefer för särskilda funktioner	
124				
131	Managers of small enterprises		Chefer för mindre företag och enheter	
211	Physicists, chemists and related professionals	Physicists, chemists, mathematicians, statisticians, life science professionals	Fysiker, kemister m.fl.	Fysiker, kemister, matematiker, statistiker, specialister inom biologi, jord- och skogsbruk
212	Mathematicians and statisticians		Matematiker och statistiker	
221	Life science professionals		Specialister inom biologi, jord- och skogsbruk m.m.	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
244	Social science and linguistics professionals (except social work professionals)	Social science and linguistics professionals (except social work professionals)	Samhälls- och språkvetare	Samhälls- och språkvetare
242	Legal professionals	Legal professionals	Jurister	Jurister
214	Architects, engineers and related professionals	Architects, engineers and related professionals	Civilingenjörer, arkitekter m.fl.	Civilingenjörer, arkitekter m.fl.
222	Health professionals (except nursing)	Medical doctors, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists, speech therapists	Hälso- och sjukvårdsspecialister	Läkare m.m.
223	Nursing and midwifery professionals	Nursing and midwifery professionals	Barnmorskor; sjuksköterskor med särskild kompetens	Barnmorskor; sjuksköterskor med särskild kompetens
249	Psychologists, social work and related professionals	Psychologists, social work and related professionals	Psykologer, socialsekreterare m.fl.	Psykologer, socialsekreterare m.fl.
243	Archivists, librarians and related information professionals	Archivists, librarians and related information professionals	Arkivarier, bibliotekarier m.fl.	Arkivarier, bibliotekarier m.fl.
247	Public service administrative professionals	Administrative professionals and associate professionals	Administratörer i offentlig förvaltning	Administratörer i offentlig förvaltning och intresseorganisationer+ administrativa assistenter och redovisnings-ekonomer
248	Administrative professionals of special-interest organizations		Administratörer i intresseorganisationer	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
241	Business professionals	Business professionals	Företagsekonomer, marknadsförare och personaltjänstemän	Företagsekonomer, marknadsförare och personaltjänstemän
213	Computing professionals	Computing professionals and associate professionals	Dataspecialister	Dataspecialister, datatekniker, dataoperatörer
245	Writers and creative or performing artists	Writers and creative or performing artists, artistic, entertainment and sports associate professionals	Journalister, konstnärer, skådespelare m.fl.	Journalister, skådespelare, tecknare, underhållare, idrottsutövare, m.m.
347	Artistic, entertainment and sports associate professionals		Tecknare, underhållare, professionella idrottsutövare m.fl.	
231	College, university and higher education teaching professionals	Teaching professionals	Universitets- och högskolelärare	Lärare
232	Secondary education teaching professionals		Gymnasielärare m.fl.	
233	Primary education teaching professionals		Grundskollärare	
234	Special education teaching professionals		Speciallärare	
235	Other teaching professionals		Andra pedagoger med teoretisk specialistkompetens	
330		Teaching associate professionals		Förskolelärare, fritidspedagoger, fritidsledare, behandlingsassistenter

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
331	Pre-primary education teaching associate professionals		Förskollärare och fritidspedagoger	
332	Other teaching associate professionals		Andra lärare och instruktörer	
333				
334				
346	Social work associate professionals		Behandlingsassistenter, fritidsledare m.fl.	
320		Health and nursing associate professionals		Sjukgymnaster, sjuksköterskor, tandhygienister
322	Health associate professionals (except nursing)		Sjukgymnaster, tandhygienister m.fl.	
323	Nursing associate professionals		Sjuksköterskor	
324	Life science technicians	Life science technicians	Biomedicinska analytiker	Biomedicinska analytiker
311	Physical and engineering science technicians	Physical and engineering science technicians, safety and quality inspectors, optical and electronic equipment operators	Ingenjörer och tekniker	Ingenjörer, tekniker, ljud- och bildtekniker, sjukhustekniker
313	Optical and electronic equipment operators		Fotografer; ljud- och bildtekniker, sjukhustekniker m.fl.	
312	Computer associate professionals		Datatekniker och dataoperatörer	
315	Safety and quality inspectors		Säkerhets- och kvalitetsinspektörer	
314	Ship and aircraft controllers and technicians	Ship and aircraft controllers and technicians	Piloter, fartygsbefäl m.fl.	Piloter, fartygsbefäl m.fl.

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
341	Finance and sales associate professionals	Finance and sales associate professionals, business services agents and trade brokers	Säljare, inköpare, mäklare m.fl.	Säljare, inköpare, mäklare, agenter, förmedlare, m.m.
342	Business services agents and trade brokers		Agenter, förmedlare m.fl.	
343	Administrative associate professionals		Redovisningsekonomer, administrativa assistenter m.fl.	
344	Customs, tax and related government associate professionals	Police officers and detectives, customs, tax and related government associate professionals	Tull-, taxerings- och socialförsäkringstjänstemän	Poliser och tull-, taxerings- och socialförsäkringstjänstemän
345	Police officers and detectives		Poliser	
512	Housekeeping and restaurant services workers	Restaurant services workers, helpers, housekeepers and related	Storhushålls- och restaurangpersonal	Restaurangpersonal, biträden, slaktare och konditorer m.m.
741	Food processing and related trades workers		Slaktare, bagare, konditorer m.fl.	
913	Helpers in restaurants		Köks- och restaurangbiträden	
421	Cashiers, tellers and related clerks	Cashiers, tellers, client information, demonstrators, vendors	Kassapersonal m.fl.	Försäljare, kassapersonal, kundinformatörer
422	Client information clerks		Kundinformatörer	
521	Fashion and other models		Fotomodeller m.fl.	
522	Shop and stall salespersons and demonstrators		Försäljare, detaljhandel; demonstratörer m.fl.	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
911	Street vendors and market salespersons		Torg- och marknadsförsäljare	
400		Office clerks in occupations which demands secondary school at most		Diverse kontorsarbete, kräver högst gymnasiekompetens
411	Office secretaries and data entry operators		Kontorssekreterare och dataregistrerare	
412	Numerical clerks		Bokförings- och redovisningsassistenter	
413	Stores and transport clerks		Lager- och transportassistenter	
414	Library and filing clerks		Biblioteksassistenter m.fl.	
419	Other office clerks		Övrig kontorspersonal	
513	Personal care and related workers	Personal care and related workers	Vård- och omsorgspersonal	Vård- och omsorgspersonal
511	Travel attendants and related workers	Other personal and protective services workers	Resevärdar m.fl.	Övrigt service-omsorgs- och säkerhetsarbete
514	Other personal services workers		Frisörer och annan servicepersonal, personliga tjänster	
515	Protective services workers		Säkerhetspersonal	
321	Agronomy and forestry technicians	Agricultural, animal and crop producers, forestry technicians, fishery workers and laborers	Lantmästare, skogsmästare m.fl.	Djurskötare, skogs- och växtbrukare, fiskare, jägare, lantmästare, m.m.
611	Market gardeners and crop growers		Växtodlare inom jordbruk och trädgård	
612	Animal producers and related workers		Djuruppfödare och djurskötare	
613	Crop and animal producers		Växtodlare och djuruppfödare, blandad drift	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
614	Forestry and related workers		Skogsbrukare	
615	Fishery workers, hunters and trappers		Fiskare och jägare	
921	Agricultural, fishery and related laborers		Medhjälpare inom jordbruk, trädgård, skogsbruk och fiske	
723	Machinery mechanics and fitters	Machinery, electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters	Maskin- och motorreparatörer	Maskin-, motor- och elektronikreparatörer, elmontörer
724	Electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters		Elmontörer, tele- och elektronikreparatörer m.fl.	
731	Precision workers in metal and related materials	Handicraft workers, precision workers in metal and related materials, potters, glass-makers, garment, leather and shoemaking trades workers	Finmekaniker m.fl.	Hantverkare; snickare, konsthantverk, grafiker, skräddare, drejare, garvare, glasblåsare m.m.
732	Potters, glass-makers and related trades workers		Drejare, glashyttarbetare, dekorationsmålare m.fl.	
733	Handicraft workers in wood, textile, leather and related materials		Konsthantverkare i trä, textil, läder m.m.	
734	Craft printing and related trades workers		Grafiker m.fl.	
742	Wood treaters, cabinet-makers and related trades workers		Möbelsnickare, modellsnickare m.fl.	
743	Garment and related trades workers		Skräddare, tillskärare, tapetsrare m.fl.	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
744	Pelt, leather and shoemaking trades workers		Garvare, skinnberedare och skomakare	
721	Metal molders, welders, sheet-metal workers, structural-metal preparers and related trades workers	Metal molders, blacksmiths and related	Gjutare, svetsare, plåtslagare m.fl.	Metallhantverkare
722	Blacksmiths, tool-makers and related trades workers		Smeder, verktygsmakare m.fl.	
828	Assemblers	Assemblers, manufacturing laborers	Montörer	Manuellt fabriksarbete
932	Manufacturing laborers		Handpaketerare och andra fabriksarbetare	
700		Miners, builders and construction laborers		Gruv - och bygnadsarbetare
711	Miners, shot firers, stonecutters and carvers		Gruv- och bergarbetare, stenhuggare	
712	Building frame and related trades workers		Byggnads- och anläggningsarbetare	
713	Building finishers and related trades workers		Byggnadshantverkare	
714	Painters, building structure cleaners and related trades workers		Målare, lackerare, skorstensfejare m.fl.	
931	Mining and construction laborers		Grovarbetare inom bygg och anläggning	
821	Metal- and mineral-products machine operators	Machine operators	Maskinoperatörer, metall- och mineralbehandling	Maskinoperatörer
822	Chemical-products machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, kemisk-teknisk industri	
823	Rubber- and plastic-products machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, gummi- och plastindustri	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
824	Wood-products machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, trävaruindustri	
825	Printing-, binding- and paperproducts machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, grafisk industri, pappersvaruindustri	
826	Textile-, fur- and leatherproducts machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, textil-, skinn- och läderindustri	
827	Food and related products machine operators		Maskinoperatörer, livsmedelsindustri m.m.	
829	Other machine operators and assemblers		Övriga maskinoperatörer och montörer	
811	Mineral-processing-plant operators	Processing-plant operators and related	Malmförädlingsoperatörer, brunnsborrhare m.fl.	Processoperatörer m.m.
812	Metal-processing-plant operators		Processoperatörer vid stål- och metallverk	
813	Glass, ceramics and related plant operators		Processoperatörer, glas och keramiska produkter	
814	Wood-processing- and papermaking-plant operators		Processoperatörer, trä- och pappersindustri	
815	Chemical-processing-plant operators		Processoperatörer, kemisk basindustri	
816	Power-production and related plant operators		Driftmaskinister m.fl.	
817	Industrial-robot operators		Industrirobotoperatörer	
831	Locomotive-engine drivers and related worker	Drivers and mobile-plant operators	Lokförare m.fl.	Fordonsförare
832	Motor-vehicle drivers		Fordonsförare	
833	Agricultural and other mobile-plant operators		Maskinförare	
834	Ships' deck crews and related workers		Däckspersonal	

	English		Swedish	
SSYK	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here	Occupation in SSYK	Occupation here
415	Mail carriers and sorting clerks	Transport laborers, freight handlers, deliverers, mail carriers and related	Brevbärare m.fl.	Godshanterare, brevbärare, expressbud, tidningsutdelare, vaktmästare
914	Doorkeepers, newspaper and package deliverers and related workers		Tidningsdistributörer, vaktmästare m.fl.	
933	Transport laborers and freight handlers		Godshanterare och expressbud	
900		Helpers, cleaners, garbage collectors, other services elementary occupations		Städare, renhållnings- och återvinningsarbete samt övrigt servicearbete

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