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A dynamic analysis of conditions under which internal migration impacts on female occupational sex-segregation in Britain.

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Short summary

Are long distance residential changes and internal migration drivers of the occupational sex-segregation of women? This is the main question driving our research. It goes further than the widely addressed and well documented negative effect of migration of married women on their employment outcomes. In particular we focus on answering two more detailed questions: Under what conditions occupational mobility of migrant women is likely to be aligned with occupational sex-segregation? Is migration driving women occupational sex-segregation to low-skilled occupations? We make use of longitudinal data for Britain (BHPS) and estimate dynamic models for the probability of ending up in an occupation with a significantly higher share of females. We analyse to what extent occupational sex-segregation is related to partnership situation, partner's occupational status and women's occupational sex-segregation before the move took place. The analyses are extended to different points in time after residential move took place and results compared to those of men. Finally, we identify whether this pattern is characteristic of a particular 'branch' of the occupational structure or whether it spreads across occupations. This analysis offers novel insights on how residential change impacts women's occupational dynamics.

Longer description

The literature on residential change has widely addressed the question of how long distance residential relocations or internal migration undermine women's employment since the seminal work of Mincer (1978). Attention has been mainly paid to the consequences of migration for married women's occupational status. While individuals in partnership have a relatively lower probability to migrate, those who move in partnership tend to show different levels of education and employment conditions among couple members. In general, moving couples are normally composed of a man with qualitatively better educational or employment outcomes than the female counterpart. Therefore, in the majority of the cases motivation for undertaking a long distance residential change tends to be aligned with man's career aspirations. These women are known in the literature as tied-movers, but a more gender-specific term is 'trailer-wives' (Cooke, 2001). Generally speaking, the unequal bargaining power resulting from gender differences in the assignment of productive and reproductive household tasks among husband and wife has a negative impact on the employment opportunities of women or leads to poorer occupational conditions after residential change.

In the analysis of the association of women's spatial and job-mobility previous research places emphasis on the characteristics *ex ante* or pre-migration. In this way, research has focused on analysing how initial employment conditions of women and their weaker inclination towards labour market careers affect their probability to move for job-related reasons. However, little is still known about the conditions (further than wages) of re-employment of women, and the processes behind these outcomes, once migration takes place. Previous research shows that, in general, a return to previous employment situation (i.e. to be employed or unemployed) may occur some time (sometimes years) after the migration event. In this article we move further on the study of the conditions under which women are re-employed after migration.

Our research questions relate to the association between women's migration and their re-employment on sex-segregated occupations. Are migrant women more likely to be employed in occupations with higher percentage of women after migration? The question, further than descriptive, also aims to explain under what condition that should happen. This may have many possible answers that have to do with different mechanisms behind the employment of migrant women and the composition of such population group. Among the mechanisms we may find explanations on the fact that sex-segregated occupations are opportunities for migrant women as they are (a) more easy to get access, (b) they offer special conditions for those women who cannot be fully employed or (c) respond to the qualifications and skills that women acquired. These mechanisms may well explain or not occupational sex-segregation of migrant women depending on their partnership status, the previous occupational status and the relative educational and employment situation of partners.

For the analysis we use longitudinal data for British women from the British Household Panel Study (BHPS). The BHPS is a prospective longitudinal household survey that since 1992 interviews all household members over the age of 16 on an annual basis. The sample of this survey is nationally representative and it includes more than 10,000 households which allow for the quantitative analysis of relatively rare events, such as long distance residential change. The longitudinal design of the survey allows using dynamic techniques to measure occupational change over time. By means of hazard regression (the regression technique of Event History methods), we analyse the relative risk of occupational status change for a sample of employed women. Among other things, we are interested in the effects of migration on the level of occupational sex-segregation through time. One of the reasons is that one may wait some time before finding a job or 'the right job'. Another advantage of the time analyses

is that they enable the matching of residential mobility with other life course transitions (i.e. partnership formation and dissolution, childbirth or the end of a formal track of education).

The dependent variable in the regression analysis measures the change of occupational situation to three possible outcomes in a competing risk setting: (1) unemployment, (2) employment in a non sex-segregated occupation and (3) employment in a sex-segregated occupation. An indicator of time since residential change and interactions of this with other predictors are the variables of interest in the analyses. Moreover, we devise three different categories of women: (1) single women, (2) married (or cohabiting) women with a partner in similar or worse employment conditions and (3) married (or cohabiting) women whose partner clearly has better employment conditions. We look at changes in the level of occupational sex-segregation for movers and non-movers by comparing the proportion of females in the individual's 3-digit occupation. This is a highly disaggregated level of measurement and the gold standard in the occupational sex-segregation literature. Though the interaction between the before mentioned 'women' categories and the observed life-course transitions (i.e. family formation and career progress) may suffice to identify motivations behind residential change and the impact of couple bargaining power on these motivation, we also compare and contrast these with *post-hoc* responses on the specific motivation for the residential move provided by respondents in order to match the different categories of women to the reported reasons that motivated mobility. Some further analyses include a comparison with the occupational outcomes of migrant men, once they move, in order to capture gender differences. Finally, we also test whether occupational sex-segregation of migrant women does resemble the one of non-migrant women or whether it only concentrates in low-skilled occupations.