



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Social
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How do family changes and high commuting interact?

Evidence from a two-wave study in 4 European countries

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Research Questions

- 1) How becoming a parent/a change in the partnership impact a change in mobility behaviours and mobility willingness?
- 2) Do past mobility experiences/willingness influence the probability of experiencing later family changes?
- 3) What differences between men and women?
- 4) What differences between countries?



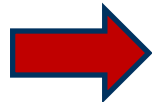
Previous Research

- Residential mobility and family events are often interrelated (e.g., Kulu & Milewski 2007; Mulder & Cooke 2009). But little is know about commuting.
- Difficulties for women to combine high mobility and family life (e.g., Schneider & Collet 2009)
- High mobility associated with higher risk of union dissolution (Boyle et al. 2008; Kley 2011; Sandow 2010)



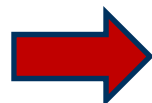
Gap of previous research

- Most evidence on residential mobility and migration



Little about various forms of mobility, like commuting and extensive travelling

- Cross-sectional data rather than longitudinal data



Little about mobility/family changes over the life course and their interaction



Strong proportion of recurring mobilities

Every fifth fulltime worker is highly mobile for job reasons and every second has been highly mobile at least once in his/her working life.

		EU6	EU6 Parents
Recurring Mobilities	Daily Long Distance Commuter	43	51
	Persons often away on business trips	20	23
	Weekend Commuter (Shuttler) 69%	3	2
	Long-Distance Relationship	3	2
Residential Mobilities	Long-distance Mover (last three years)	17	12
	Migrant-Expatriate (last three years)	3	1
Multi-Mobilities	Two or more mobilities at the same time	11	9
Total		100	100

78%

100% = working people aged 25-54

Hypotheses

- 1) Women stop being (ready to be) mobile when they have a child/new partner more often than men do.
- 2) Women's past mobility increases the risk of union dissolution more often than men's past mobility.
- 3) Women's past mobility increases the probability of having a child/a new partner more often than men's past mobility does.
- 4) Stronger gender effects in Switzerland and Germany (than in France), because of the persistence of the male breadwinner model.



Data

- Project 'Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe' (www.jobmob-and-famlives.eu)
- 4 countries: France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland
- Panel: respondents interviewed in 2007 and 2011.
- n=1360 working people randomly selected from residential population aged 25-54 (in 2007)



Mobility Definition

- **Long-time Daily Commuters**
≥ 2 hours home-workplace 2 ways, 3 times/week
- **Overnighters**
All forms of travel requiring ≥ 60 nights/year away from (main) home for job reasons
(weekend commuters, job trips, seasonal migrants)
- **People in long-distance relationship**
Separate homes for job reasons, distance ≥ 50 km



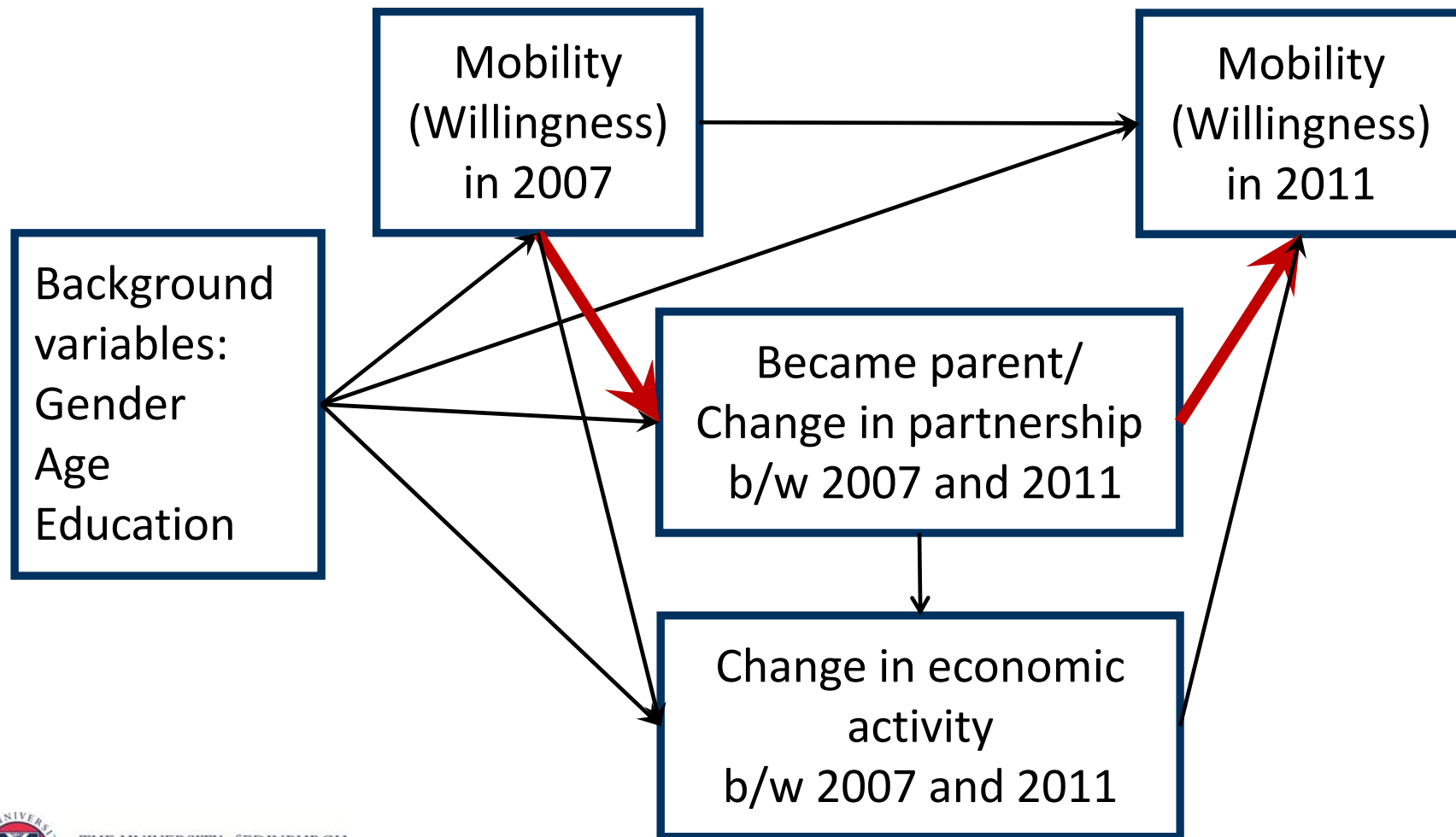
'Willingness' to be mobile

Definition

- **Declared willingness to become mobile for getting a (better) job in 5 different kinds of mobility**
 - To move to another region
 - To move abroad
 - To commute everyday long distances
 - To commute on a weekly basis (two homes)
 - To make frequent trips for job reasons



Conceptual Model



(1) Significant findings: parenthood

- Having a child decreases mobility and willingness to be mobile (stronger effect for women and Spain)
- In the case of men, fathers are less mobile because they have a more stable partnership.
- In the case of men, being ready to move to another region in 2007 increases the probability to have a child in the following years.

Population: aged 25-40 in 2007



(2) Significant findings: stopping a partnership

- Overall, no longer having a partner does not cause a change in mobility behaviour/willingness.
- But mothers stopping their partnership are more likely to become long-distance commuters.
- Mobile people in 2007 more likely to stop their partnership in the following years than non-mobile people. (childless women and men with children, in Germany and Switzerland)

Population: stable partner in 2007



(3) Significant findings: starting a partnership

- Starting a partnership increases mobility for women and increases their willingness to commute (on a daily or weekly basis).
- Women ready to relocate to another region are more likely to start a partnership in the following years.

Population: no stable partner in 2007



(4) Main Findings: partner change

- People who experienced a partner change tend to be more mobile (in comparison with those who stayed with the same partner).

Population: stable partner in 2007



Summary

- H1: Women stop being (ready to be) mobile when they have a child/new partner more often than men do.
 - True for parenthood, although having a child decreases also mobility (willingness) for men.
 - Wrong for partnership. Having a new partner does not decrease mobility for women. Instead, increase in mobility (willingness).



Summary

- H2: Women's past mobility increases the risk of union dissolution.
 - True for childless women but also for men with children.



Summary

- H3: Women's past mobility increases the probability of having a child/a new partner.
 - Rejected. Past mobility practice does not influence having a child/a new partner a few years later.



Summary

- H4: Stronger gender effects in Germany and Switzerland.
 - Hyp. not supported. Stopping being mobile after child birth more likely in Spain.
 - But the effect of high mobility on union dissolution is higher in Germany and Switzerland (for both men and women).



Conclusion

- Effective mobility and mobility willingness are linked differently to family changes.
- High mobility may put a strain on couples. No matter the mobile person is a man or a woman.
- More complex pattern of effects than simply stronger interactions in the case of women.
- Relationship creation/dissolution necessitates high mobility projects and practices.



Thank you for your attention.

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