

The effect of spatial mobility on partnered individuals' subjective well-being

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Motivation, theory and research questions:

- Job-related household migration: **Which partner benefits most?**
- Contrasting **theories**:
 - „*New home economics*“ (Mincer, 1978): Maximization of common utility function within the household, irrespective of individual costs → Increase in sum of subjective well-being (SWB) within household (not necessarily SWB increases for both partners)
 - Bargaining theories* (Ott, 1992): Both need to benefit individually – otherwise, the move is not undertaken → Increase in individual SWB for both partners (no difference)
- Empirical evidence**:
 - Generally: Positive income effects only for men (Cooke et al., 2009)
 - In Germany: Income gains for male and female partners (except for female East-West migrants) (Nisic & Melzer, 2016)
 - Inconsistent results regarding subjective well-being effects
- Advantage of SWB measurement** (VS economic indicators): Captures both the monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits of migration
- Also: Importance of **couple-level analyses** to analyse couple-level phenomena

Results:

- Benefits of migration on household level: **Sum of SWB increases with migration.**
- At the same time: **Increases in individual SWB for both partners**
 - SWB difference between partners remains the same with migration - **no partner benefits more than the other.**

Conclusion:

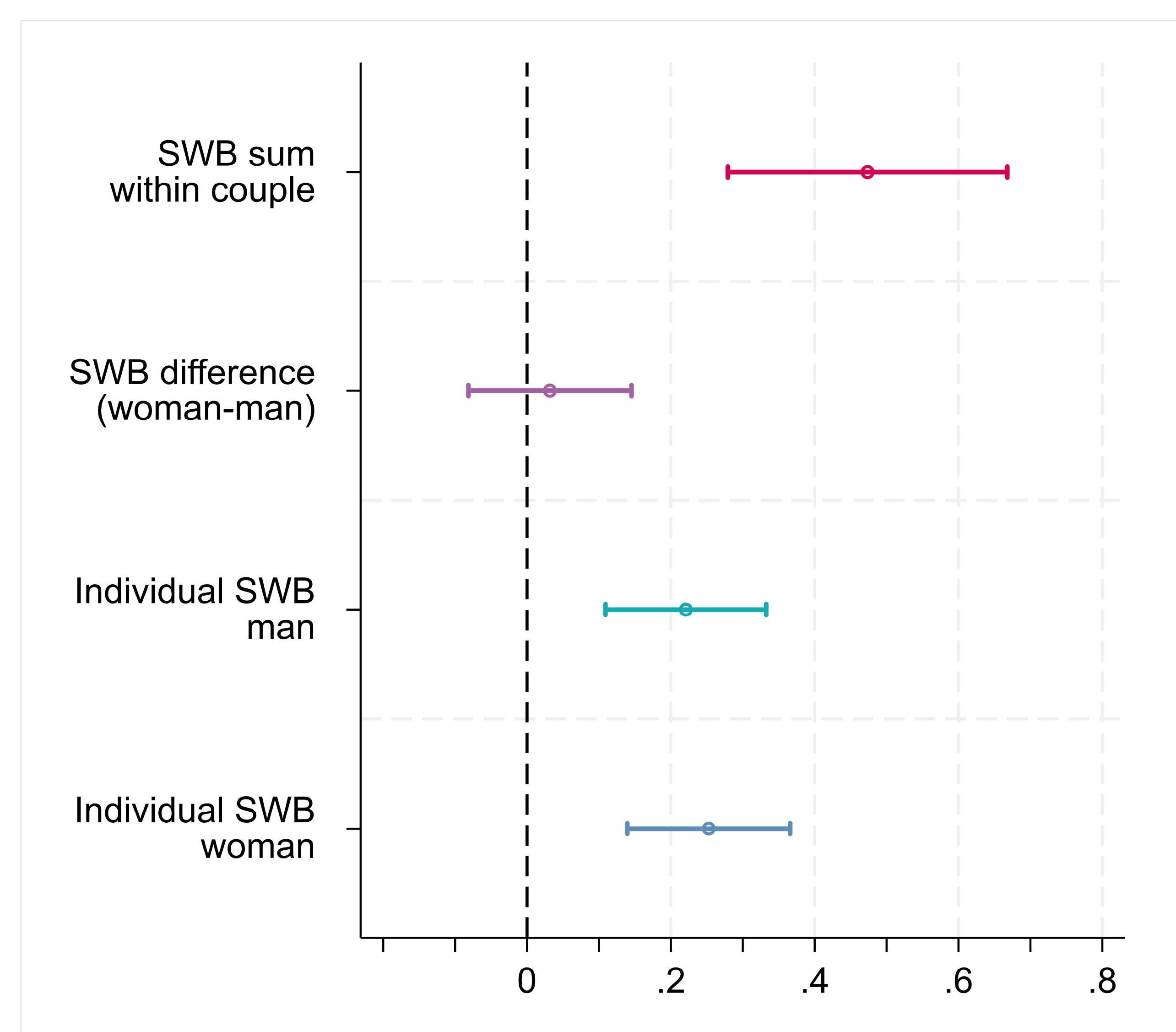
- Results in line with the expectation of the bargaining theory: Both partners **strive for their own good** and need to **benefit individually** from migration.

Next steps:

- Further explore the **conditions** under which this relationship holds (e.g., stratification by household/individual income, etc.)

Data and methods:

- Data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), 1991-2021 (excl. 2014 and 2016)
- Work-related migration of couples sharing a household, within Germany (n = 504 moves)
- Panel fixed-effects regressions (step impact function)
 - Outcome variables (separate models): Sum of SWB within household; Difference in SWB between partners (SWB_{woman} - SWB_{man}); Individual SWB_{woman}; Individual SWB_{man}
 - Event variable: Job-related household move
 - Controls: Average age between partners (linear, squared), GDP change since last year (in %), dummy first observation within panel



Effect of internal migration on SWB, SOEP v38, n=504 migration events, own calculations, 95% CI's.

Sources:

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- Nisic, N. & Melzer, S.M. (2016). Explaining gender inequalities that follow couple migration. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78(4), 1063–1082.
- Ott, N. (1992). *Intrafamily bargaining and household decisions*. Berlin, Germany.

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