

There And Back Again: Women's Marginal Commuting Costs*

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PRELIMINARY - PLEASE DO NOT CITE

Abstract: We use a partial-equilibrium model of job search with non-wage job attributes to estimate female workers' marginal willingness to pay to reduce commuting distance in Germany. This issue not only has implications for congestion policy, spatial planning and transport infrastructure provision, but is also relevant to our understanding of gender differences in labour market biographies in a more general sense. Gender differences in willingness to pay for job attributes could contribute significantly to observed disparities in a number of labour market behaviours and outcomes including wages. Using a Cox model on a large administrative dataset, we find that an average female worker is willing to give up €0.31 per kilometre to reduce commuting distance at the margin. Men's marginal willingness to pay as a share of their wage is 30% lower than women's. Our analysis uses a stratified model to take better account of unobserved individual heterogeneity than the previous literature has been able to do.

Keywords: Commuting, marginal willingness to pay for job attributes, on-the-job search, Cox relative risk model, partial likelihood estimation, gender and parenthood in job search models, heterogeneity in job mobility

JEL Codes: C 41, J 13, J 16, J 31, J 62

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