Poster session 4
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Title: Spouse effects on foreign-born immigrants' employment status

Description of Study

This study aims at measuring effects of spouse characteristics on occupational attainment of foreign-born spouses. Studies on the relationship between spouse's resources and success at work have shown that spouse's education and employment status have significant effects on spouse' s employment status (Bernasco, 1994; Bernasco, De Graaf, &Ultee, 1998). Among immigrants, little is known about impacts of spouse characteristics on employment status of foreign-born spouses. Existed studies show that human capital characteristics of foreign-born immigrants affect occupational attainment, and low transferability of human capital increase downward mobility and accumulation of human capital by learning work related skills and knowledge increase upward mobility (Chiswick, 2003; 2005). Preliminary results of this study are positive spouse effect was observed among immigrants who have jobs with higher occupational prestige score. Spouses' education that attained in country of origin has significant effect on foreign-born immigrants' occupational attainment. This study found that spouses' human capital characteristics significantly affect on occupational attainment of foreign-born immigrants.

Theoretical Background

I. Spouse Effects on Career

What is spouse effect on career? Spouse effect (i.e., partner effect) refers to a husband and a wife's interdependencies in their labor market career (Blosfeld and Drobnic, 2001). There

are positive and negative effects in spouse effects. Positive spouse effect is that one's partner's labor market career becomes a resource to one's own career. If one's spouse has resourceful networks, the spouse's networks become an important source of information about labor market opportunities. This idea is related to social capital theory that social capital of one's partner help to achieve one's career goal. Negative spouse effect, on the other hand, is that a partner's labor market career becomes restriction to one's career opportunities. For example, when a husband earns more money than the family needs, a wife of the husband has less incentive to work. This spouse effect is negative effect on wife's labor force participation. According to economic theory, this spouse effect increases division of labor in household, in which the partner who can earn more focus on paid work and the partner who earn less take care of home and the children.

In marriage theory, educational homogamy refers to that partners are similar with regard to their human capital (Kalmijn, 1991; 1998) and thus, labor market outcomes are similar (Bernasco, De Graaf, &Ultee, 1998). In this sense, when a husband and a wife are similarly highly educated, spouse effects for the couple should be positive rather than negative in terms of educational effects on career. On the other hand, when one partner is more educated than the other partner, spouse effect becomes negative because educational inequality between the couple increases division of labor.

II. Spouse Effects on Foreign-Born Spouses' Career

Studies on spouse effect on foreign-born spouses' career have reported that earnings of foreign-born who married natives increased (Fu, 2007; Meng and Gregory, 2005). Earning gap also increased between foreign-born spouses of native-born and foreign-born spouses of foreign-born partners by time. Marriages with native-born population increased earnings of foreign-born spouses, which imply that marriage with natives might accelerate foreign-born immigrants'

assimilation. Educational homogamy was observed among native-and foreign-born couples; however, earnings of natives who married foreign-born spouses have not increased. Thus, positive spouse effects from native-born to foreign-born spouse may exist, but no effects on earnings are found from foreign-born to native-born spouses.

Among foreign-born couples, majority of foreign-born husbands experience downward occupational mobility and decline on earnings because of low transferability of human capital. Thus, foreign-born wives are often forced to work to help family. This is called family investment model (Duleep, 1998; Duleep and Sanders, 1993), and in economic theory, this is negative spouse effect because foreign-born wives' labor force participation is due to financial lack as a sequence of migration rather than due to individual choice. Studies show that family investment model was dominated among Asian immigrants than immigrants from other regions because Asian immigrants experience low skill transferability and decline of occupational prestige in the United States.

Research Questions

Based on literatures of spouse effect, this study investigates what spouse's human capital characteristics affect occupational mobility of foreign-born immigrants. There are two major questions for this study: first, how does a spouse's human capital affect a foreign-born spouse's occupational prestige? Second, are there different spouse effects on occupational attainment of foreign-born spouses by spouses' nativity?

Data and Method

This study use data New Immigrant Survey-2003. The New Immigration Survey (NIS-2003) is designed for nationally representative longitudinal studies of immigrants and their children. Sample includes adult immigrants aged 18 years or older who admitted to legal permanent residence in 2003. Questions were asked both respondents and their spouses (Jasso, Massey, Rosenzweig, and Smith 2004; 2005).

First, to measure human capital effects on foreign-born immigrants' occupational attainment, variables used in this study are respondents' age, years of education attained in country of origin and in the United States, English language proficiency, and working experience. Also sex and possession of working visa are included because level of occupational attainment and mobility would be different by between a husband and a wife and legal permission. Second, to measure spouse effects, spouses' human capital variables included in this study are spouse's age, spouse's country of birth, country of marriage occurred, and spouse years of schooling in country of origin and in the United States. Analytical technique is ordinary least square regression (PLUM) to measure how spouse's human capital and status variables affect the other spouses' occupational mobility.

Preliminary Analysis

Table1:
Mean and Std. deviation of variables associated with occupational mobility

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male dummy variable (1=male, 0=female)	5057	0.553	0.497
Respondent's age recoded	5057	5.331	2.356
Years school completed recoded	5057	13.39	1.176
Years in school in us recoded	5057	0.422	0.535
Work visa (possession of working visa=1, no possession=0)	5057	0.225	0.418
English proficiency (1= not at all, 2= not well, 3=well, 4=very well)	5057	2.702	1.017
Year of started working (1= after 2000, 2=1990~1999, 3=1980~1989, 4=1970~1979, 5=1960~1969, 6=1959 or earlier)	5057	1.386	0.66
Spouse age recoded	5057	4.590	2.181
Spouse born in the U.S. (1= born in the U.S., 0= not born in the U.S.)	5057	0.071	0.257
Marriage occurred in the U.S. (1=married in the U.S., 0= not married in the U.S.)	5057	0.155	0.362
Spouse years of schooling in country of origin recoded	5057	13.25	1.007
Spouse years of schooling in the U.S. recoded	5057	2.194	1.431

Source: New Immigrant Survey-2003

Table 1 shows means and standard deviation of foreign-born population in this study. Note that only 7.1 percent of spouses of foreign-born population were born in the United States, and 15.5 percent of foreign-born immigrants married in the United States. Thus, majority of foreign-born population in this study married before migration. Mean years of education in country of origin is 13.39 years for respondents and 13.25 years for their spouses. Mean years of education attained in the United States is much less, which is about 4months for respondents and 2.2 years for their spouses.

Table 2:

Binary logistic regression to explain current employment status: employment vs. non-employment

	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Male	0.911	0.067	0.000	2.487
Years of schooling in country of origin	0.125	0.034	0.000	1.133
Years of schooling in the U.S.	0.105	0.080	0.189	1.111
English proficiency	0.225	0.039	0.000	1.253
Year of employment started	0.899	0.067	0.000	2.458
Age	-0.196	0.016	0.000	0.822
Work visa	0.520	0.900	0.000	1.687
Children	-0.074	0.082	0.370	0.929
Constant	-0.849	0.186	0.000	0.428

Note R^2 =0.724, Cox & Snell R square = 0.171, Nagelkerke R square =0.238
Significance level at 0.05
N=5057
Source: New Immigrant Survey-2003

Table 2 shows current employment status. Being male, years of education in country of origin, English proficiency, and possession of working visa are positively associated with the tendency to have a job. For one unit of increase in years of education in country of origin and English proficiency, the expected employment rate increase by 12.5% and 22.55 respectively. Presence of biological children and education attained in the U.S. were not significant for employment status. Overall, as previous studies reported, higher education attainment, good English skill, and possession of legal permit for working increase employment rate among foreign-born immigrants.

Table 3: Spouse effect by occupational prestige

	Higher prestige (N=776)			Middle Prestige (N=733)			Lower prestige (N=812)		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
constant	8.134	0.467	0.000	0.499	0.302	0.098	-3.827	0.342	0.000
Male	0.100	0.127	0.434	0.151	0.103	0.140	-0.337	0.111	0.002
Respondent's age	-0.027	0.046	0.559	-0.024	0.035	0.498	0.028	0.038	0.458
Years of schooling in country of origin	0.824	0.087	0.000	-0.040	0.059	0.498	-0.413	0.065	0.000
Years of schooling in the U.S.	0.484	0.104	0.000	-0.307	0.096	0.001	-0.346	0.122	0.005
Work visa	0.913	0.121	0.000	-0.387	0.109	0.000	-0.577	0.123	0.000
English proficiency	0.600	0.071	0.000	0.007	0.057	0.897	-0.472	0.062	0.000
Year of employment started	0.315	0.101	0.002	-0.213	0.079	0.007	-0.139	0.086	0.104
Spouse's age	-0.056	0.037	0.127	0.023	0.027	0.389	0.022	0.029	0.462
Spouse born in the U.S.	0.352	0.242	0.146	-0.137	0.189	0.468	0.072	0.219	0.742
Marriage occurred in the U.S.	-0.364	0.164	0.026	0.238	0.132	0.070	0.232	0.149	0.120
Spouse's years of schooling in country of origin	0.500	0.078	0.000	0.018	0.054	0.736	-0.349	0.059	0.000
Spouse's years of schooling in the U.S.	-0.306	0.070	0.000	0.185	0.049	0.000	-0.047	0.057	0.412

Significant level at 0.05
Source: New Immigrant Survey-2003

Table 2 shows how spouse characteristics affect occupational prestige of foreign-born immigrants. Occupations are divided into higher, middle, and lower prestige tiers based on occupational prestige (Appendix A). Spouses' education attained in country of origin has significant effect for immigrants with higher prestigious jobs. This result implies that based on the theory of educational homogamy of marriage when foreign-born immigrants and their spouses have similar educational achievement, spouse effect become positive in labor market career. Thus foreign-born immigrants who have higher prestigious jobs also positively affect on their spouses' careers. Spouses' educational attainment in country of origin is also statistically significant for immigrants with lower prestige. Spouses' nativity is not statistically significant in every occupational prestige tiers. This is probably due to the fact that only small population of foreign-born immigrants married native-born population.

Conclusion

This study investigated what spouse characteristics affect foreign-born spouses' occupational prestige. Preliminary result is that spouses' education is statistically significant on foreign-born immigrants with higher prestigious jobs. This study confirms positive spouse effect on occupational achievement; however, a problem of this study is that due to the fact that majority of foreign-born population in this study married to foreign-born spouses, it is unable to measure how spouses' nativity affects foreign-born spouses' occupational achievement.

Appendix A

	Occupational categories
1	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
2	Building and Ground Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
3	Personal Care and Service Occupations
4	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
5	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations
6	Production Occupations
7	Sales and Related Occupations
8	Office and Administrative Support Occupations
9	Construction and Extraction Occupations
10	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
11	Protective Service Occupations
12	Healthcare Support Occupations
13	Business and Financial Operation Occupations
14	Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Medical Occupations
15	Community and Social Service Occupations
16	Education, Training, and Library Occupations
17	Management Occupations
18	Computer and Mathematical Occupations
19	Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations
20	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
21	Architecture, Engineering Occupations
22	Legal Occupation

Source: Census 2003: Earnings by education and occupation

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