Chapter 1: “Same-sex, same skills? Sexual orientation and human capital investments in marriage markets”

This paper argues that marriage-market incentives can motivate observed differences in work and family arrangements between sexual minorities and heterosexual men and women. Empirical economists have identified a sex-asymmetric relationship between sexual orientation and labor-market outcomes: Gay men earn less and work less in the market than heterosexual men, while lesbians earn more and work more than heterosexual women. At the same time, theoretical work on same-sex couples is scarce. Existing explanations for the impact of sexual orientation on labor-market outcomes reference theories developed with different-sex couples in mind and do not offer clear predictions about the division of labor in same-sex households. I show that marriage markets, which are important determinants of marital outcomes for heterosexual men and women, can also shape differences between sexual minorities and their heterosexual peers.

I develop the first formal model of a one-sided marriage market and identify a consequential structural difference between this market and the two-sided marriage markets economists have traditionally studied. In light of this structural difference, I argue that one-sided marriage markets engender stronger incentives than two-sided marriage markets for people of each sex to prepare for work in both the home and the market. In addition, I describe conditions under which the specialization patterns of same-sex couples are likely to resemble those of different-sex couples and conditions under which they are likely to diverge. Finally, I argue that, because specialized investments are more difficult to coordinate in one-sided marriage markets, the relative scarcity of children in same-sex households may be a consequence, as well as a cause, of less extensive specialization.

Chapter 2: “Moving out to move up? Tradeoffs between career and relationship outcomes among early-career economists” (with Brooke Helppie)

This paper is the product of an original data collection project that combines publicly available information about candidates on the junior faculty job market in economics with responses to a web-based survey. The project tracks the family and career trajectories of graduating cohorts of economists and provides a uniquely detailed picture of jointly evolving professional and personal lives. Joint migration constraints are a central focus of our data collection. Accordingly, our survey data contain rich information about the experiences of

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1We take issues of privacy and confidentiality seriously. The names and contact information of job candidates are stored separately from their survey responses and data from the project are used only to identify aggregate patterns. Data from the project are never used to learn about individual job candidates.
new economists with tied migration (moving with a partner to an individually sub-optimal location) and non-cohabitation (living apart from a partner for the purpose of career advancement). In this paper, we use data from the project to assess the impact of joint migration constraints on the initial placements and relationship outcomes of new economists.

We provide the first estimates of the prevalence of tied migration and non-cohabitation based on representative data from a known population. In addition, we describe the career and relationship costs associated with each outcome. We present evidence that non-cohabitation is an important margin of adjustment for couples facing joint migration constraints. In fact, new economists in our sample are more likely to live apart from their spouse or partner one year after the job market closes than to sacrifice a first-choice job in order to live together. Because the standard economic model of joint migration (Mincer, 1978) does not allow for non-cohabitation, it cannot account for these results. We develop a simple extension of the model and identify, theoretically and empirically, the conditions under which couples are most likely to live apart. We argue that, for couples who have invested heavily in the human capital of both partners and whose career opportunities are geographically diffuse, moving up sometimes means moving out.

Chapter 3: “Preferences, expectations, and experiences of new economists on the job market: Evidence from an original survey” (with Uniko Chen, Brooke Helppie, and Robert J. Willis)

In this paper, we use publicly available information and data from an original survey to provide a current, representative description of the job-market experiences of new doctoral-level economists. We summarize the demographic characteristics, educational background and professional accomplishments of three graduating cohorts of economists. We also describe their job-market decisions and outcomes at multiple time points, from applications to fly-outs and job-offers. Finally, in addition to objective outcomes, we report responses to questions about preferences and subjective expectations. This information, which includes the relative importance to economists of a range of professional and personal goals, as well as detailed information about preferences over different kinds of jobs, is not available in other studies of the economics job market.