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# **All tied up: Tied staying and tied migration within the United States, 1997 to 2007**

By [Thomas J. Cooke](#)

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## Abstract

**Background:** The family migration literature presumes that women are cast into the role of the tied migrant. However, clearly identifying tied migrants is a difficult empirical task since it requires the identification of a counterfactual: Who moved but did not want to?

**Objective:** This research develops a unique methodology to directly identify both tied migrants and tied stayers in order to investigate their frequency and determinants.

**Methods:** Using data from the 1997 through 2009 U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), propensity score matching is used to match married individuals with comparable single individuals to create counterfactual migration behaviors: who moved but would not have moved had they been single (tied migrants) and who did not move but would have moved had they been single (tied stayers).

**Results:** Tied migration is relatively rare and not limited just to women: rates of tied migration are similar for men and women. However, tied staying is both more common than tied migration and equally experienced by men and women. Consistent with the body of empirical evidence, an analysis of the determinants of tied migration and tied staying demonstrates that family migration decisions are imbued with gender.

**Conclusions:** Additional research is warranted to validate the unique methodology developed in this paper and to confirm its results. One line of future research should be to examine the effects of tied staying, along with tied migration, on well-being, union stability, employment, and earnings.

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