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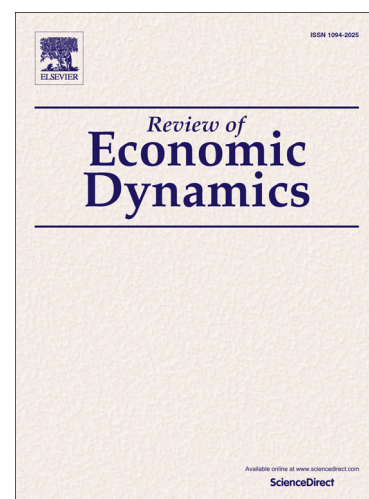
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Market Work, Housework and Childcare: A Time Use Approach *

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Abstract

Raising children takes considerable time, particularly for women. Yet, the role of childcare time has received scant attention in the macroeconomics literature. We develop a life-cycle model in which the time dimension of childcare plays a central role. An important contribution of the paper is estimation of the parameters of a childcare production function using data on primary and secondary childcare time as reported in the American Time Use Survey (2003–2015). The model does a better job matching the observed life-cycle patterns of womens' time use than a model without childcare. Our counterfactual experiments show that the increase in the relative wage of women since the 1960s is an important factor in the increase in womens' work time; changes in fertility associated with the baby boom play a smaller role, and changes in the price of durables are found to have a negligible effect. We consider the effects of cheaper daycare. Not surprisingly, this experiment leads to greater use of daycare and more time allocated to market work. A knock-on effect of cheaper daycare is a substantial decline in primary childcare time.

JEL: D13, E24, J13

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