

Family Time Allocations

over the last half century

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March 16, 2019

Abstract

Over the last half century, married American women doubled their labor supply and halved the time they spend on household chores. By contrast, married American men reduced their labor supply and increased their involvement in chores. Both increased the time they devote to children but men, especially the most educated, did so by far more. What explains these dramatic changes in family time allocations? I develop a dynamic collective model that incorporates family time use and features financial and human capital, rich earnings dynamics, and endogenous divorce. The model quantifies the role of (i) the wage and education gender gaps; (ii) fertility and the cost to raise children; (iii) labor market experience; (iv) technical change in the household; and (v) features of the marriage market such as the expansion of divorce in the early 1970s. Preliminary results suggest that -at least- the gender wage gap and the divorce option are important for the observed time allocation dynamics. The latter implied an improvement in intra-household bargaining power among women born in the 1950s and a transfer of non-market work to their husbands.

Keywords: collective model, lifecycle, labor supply, chores, childcare, limited commitment, endogenous divorce, simulated method of moments, PSID, MTUS.

JEL classification: D12, D13, D91, J12, J13, J22.

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