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Spousal employment and intra-household bargaining power

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Abstract

This article considers the relationship between work status and decision-making power of the head of household and his spouse. I used household fixed effects models to address the possibility that spousal work status may be correlated with unobserved factors that also affect bargaining power within the home. Consistent with the hypothesis that greater economic resources yield greater bargaining power, I found that the spouse of the head of household is more likely to be involved in making decisions when she has been employed. Similarly, the head of household is less likely to be the sole decision-maker when his spouse works.

Keywords:

intra-household | bargaining power | decision-making | gender | family

JEL Classification:

J12 | J16 | D13 | O15

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Notes

[1] Documentation and data are available at http://www.ennvih-mxfls.org/

[2] Arguably, a bivariate probit model with fixed effects would better account for the binary nature of the dependent variable and independent variable of interest. However, due to the large number of household fixed effects, estimation is computationally difficult. Results from logit and conditional logit estimation are qualitatively similar to those reported here.

[3] In this vein, Antman (2011) explores the impact of international migration of the head of household on expenditures within the home.

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