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Shoshana Grossbard-Shechtman

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Abstract

When Jacob Mincer and Gary Becker started the New Home Economics (NHE) at Columbia University in the early 1960s, they expanded on the field of family and consumption economics that Hazel Kirk and Margaret Reid began in the early 1920s. This paper studies forty years of household economics, the decisions that household members make regarding any allocation of resources. These decisions may regard consumption, labor supply, transportation, fertility, or health. A review of the history of the NHE shows that Jacob Mincer's original contribution tends to be underestimated. This paper also argues that the growth of the NHE benefited from the concentration of talent at Columbia, organizational support, the diversity of a student body that included many talented women, the ideological commitments that students, many of them married, had for the study of home production, a departmental policy de-emphasizing gender-related politics, and relatively high levels of civility.

Keywords:

Household Economics | History Of Economic Thought | Gender | Labor Supply

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