Migration and Subjective Well-Being of Left-behind Parents in Rural China: Evidence from Time Use Data

Abstract

Migration has been considered as an important strategy of raising income for rural households. The impact of migration on the well-being of the left-behind, however, is not straightforward. Using panel data of experienced well-being measured by Day Reconstruction Method in rural China, the study investigates the overall impact of migration of adult children on the subjective well-being of the left-behind parents. The instrumental variable estimates suggest parents left behind are worse off in experienced well-being when their adult children migrate, even though they are economically better off. The mechanism analyses on time allocation and activity specific affections suggest the left-behind parents spend more time on work and less time on social activity, why they experience lower well-being during activities.

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