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Divorce-Law Changes, Household Bargaining, and Married Women's Labor Supply Revisited

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Abstract

Divorce law changes made in the 1970s affected marital formation, dissolution, and bargaining within marriage. By altering the terms of the marital contract these legal changes impacted the incentives for women to enter and remain in the labor force. Whereas earlier work had suggested that the impact of unilateral divorce on female employment depended critically on laws governing property division, I show that these results are not robust to alternative specifications and controls. I find instead that unilateral divorce led to an increase in both married and unmarried female labor force participation, regardless of the underlying property laws.

Keywords

AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Assets, Bargaining power, Bargaining within marriage, Compensation, Cooperative bargaining models, Current Population Survey, Division of property, Divorce, Divorce law, Divorce reform, Employment, Female employment, Female labor force participation, Household allocation, Household decision making, Labor force, Labor supply, Laws, Marital aspirations, Marital behavior, Marital contract, Marital dissolution, Marital expectations, Marital formation, Marital partners, Marital property, Marriage, Property division, Property division laws, Property laws, Settlements, Statistics, Survey Data, Unilateral divorce

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