

Fertility, Household Labor Supply and Agricultural Production - Instrumental Variable Evidence from Uganda

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Abstract

Fertility is likely to affect agricultural production through its effect on household labor supply. Using the fact that in traditional, patriarchal societies sons are preferred to girls, we isolate exogenous variation in the number of children born to the mother and related it to labor supply and production outcomes in Uganda, a country that combines a dominant agricultural sector with one of the highest fertility rates in the world. We find that fertility has a strong negative effect on hours worked by the mother in the field. We also find some evidence of a negative effect for the father, but the size of the effect is only half that of the women. There is no effect on child labour. Households with lower fertility devote significantly more time to land preparation and weeding. This results in the fact that larger households grow less matooke and sweet potatoes.