

Accepted Manuscript

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Eva García-Morán, Zoë Kuehn

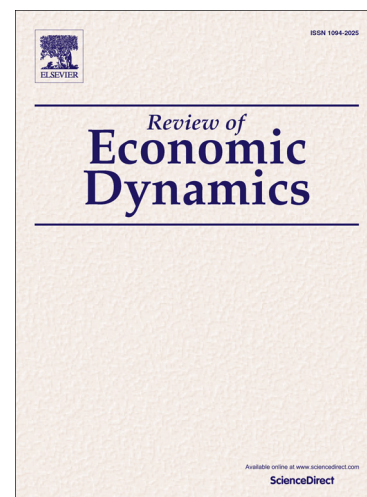
PII: S1094-2025(16)30029-1
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.red.2016.09.004>
Reference: YREDY 779

To appear in: *Review of Economic Dynamics*

Received date: 9 July 2014
Revised date: 13 September 2016

Please cite this article in press as: García-Morán, E., Kuehn, Z. With strings attached: grandparent-provided child care and female labor market outcomes. *Review of Economic Dynamics* (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.red.2016.09.004>

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With Strings Attached: Grandparent-Provided Child Care and Female Labor Market Outcomes*

Eva García-Morán[†]

Zoë Kuehn[‡]

September 2016

Abstract

Grandparents are regular providers of free child care. Similar to other forms of child care, availability of grandparent-provided child care has positive effects on fertility and mothers' employment. However, grandparent-provided child care requires residing close to parents or in-laws which may imply spatial restrictions for labor markets. We find that West German mothers who reside close to parents or in-laws have lower wages. We build a model of residence choice, fertility decisions, and female labor force participation that can account for the observed relationships. We simulate our model to analyze how women's decisions would change if the availability of grandparent-provided child care or family policies were altered. If out-of-pocket child care costs were lowered to the Swedish level, fertility, mothers' labor force participation, and geographical mobility would increase. If more households had access to free grandparent-provided child care, fertility and mothers' labor force participation would also increase, but geographical mobility would be reduced.

JEL classification: J13, J61, H42, R23

Keywords: grandparent-provided child care, fertility, employment, spatial restrictions, regional labor markets

*Previous versions of this paper have been awarded UWIN Unicredit's Prize for Best Paper in Gender Economics 2012 and the Etta Chiuri Prize 2012. We would like to thank all participants of the Workshop on Gender Equality at Bocconi University for their interesting comments and observations, especially Barbara Petrongolo and Alberto Alesina. We are grateful to Vincenzo Galasso for his helpful comments. We would also like to thank two anonymous referees for their very useful comments. Zoë Kuehn gratefully acknowledges financial aid by FEDEA (Fundación de Estudios de Economía Aplicada) in the context of the project "Evaluación de Políticas Públicas (ECO2011-30323-C03-01) of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Research.

[†]eva.garcia.-moran@uni-wuerzburg.de · Universität Würzburg · Sanderring 2 · 97070 Würzburg · Germany.

[‡]zoe.kuehn@uam.es · Universidad Autónoma de Madrid · Departamento de Análisis Económico: Teoría Económica e Historia Económica · Campus de Cantoblanco · 28049 Madrid · Spain.

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