May 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2014

Collegio Carlo Alberto (Moncalieri)
Time: 14.30
Room: Sala Rossa

SWELL-FER Seminar

“Do parents have a happier life than non-parents? The role of preferences”

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Abstract
This paper aims to investigate whether there is a causal relationship between parenthood and subjective well-being, studying the effect of first childbirth on an individual’s life satisfaction. Specifically, we aim at answering to the following research question: Is an individual who has a child more satisfied than his/her childless counterpart who has the same socio-economic characteristics and preferences? We adopt a longitudinal approach, within which we compare parents with their childless counterparts, who share not only the same socio-economic characteristics but also the same preferences. Using the British Household Panels Survey and engaging in a propensity score matching, we show that parents are significantly more satisfied than non-parents. However, the positive effect of childbearing seems to be mostly limited to the year before childbirth, which can be interpreted as a strong anticipation effect. We moreover find that family-oriented women are those who benefit more from childbearing in terms of increased life satisfaction. Career-oriented mothers show a decrease in life satisfaction in the long-run compared to career-oriented non-mothers. Childbearing seems to barely affect life satisfaction of adaptive women.