SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND CHILD LABOR – A
MODEL OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract
This article investigates how community attitudes affect school attendance and child labor and how aggregate behavior of the community feeds back on the formation of schooling attitudes. The theory takes aggregate and idiosyncratic poverty into account as an important driver of absence from school and provides an explanation for why equally poor villages or regions can display very different attitudes towards schooling. Distinguishing between three modes of child time allocation, school attendance, work, and leisure, the article shows how child labor productivity and the time costs of schooling contribute to the existence of a locally stable anti-schooling norm and how policy can exploit social dynamics and help a community to escape permanently from low attendance at school and child labor. (JEL: I20 I29 J13 O12)