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AN ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS
OF TIME USE IN FINNISH
HOUSEHOLDS

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Foreword

This thesis spans two centuries, two continents, two jobs and – three children. When I started my post-graduate studies in 1993, I never thought that the end would be achieved by the year 2004. After six years in non-academic professional life between the years 1997-2002, it was very difficult to believe it would be possible to return to academic life and to conclude a project that had been neglected all that time. Fortunately it turned out to be possible.

This thesis has benefited from the help of a multitude of people. It is, therefore, impossible to thank all those individuals who have encouraged, advised, criticised or blessed this project. Thank you all for being there.

In particular, however, I would like to thank my wife, Johanna, who made the actual writing of this thesis possible. By accepting a job offer in Uganda, she made it possible for me to take a two-year sabbatical and to concentrate on writing in our beautiful home in the hills of Kampala.

I also owe a huge debt to my long standing academic mentors Reija Lilja, Matti Pohjola and Pekka Ilmakunnas. Without their encouragement and confidence in my ability to return to my studies, I might not have had the courage. Reija and Pekka with Hannu Piekkola were also my supervisors, and they all did a tremendous job.

I would also like to thank the Research Institute for Finnish Economy for publishing this thesis in their series. Through the years Pentti Vartia has shown a great interest in the economics of time use and I hope this thesis fills in a modest way the paucity of such studies in Finland.

I wish to thank the Department of Economics of the Helsinki School of Economics for letting me finish my manuscript in their facilities after returning from Uganda with a new and a loudly expressive baby. At home the writing would have been impossible.

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Studying time use shows that there are painful trade-offs between different activities. My sons Rainer (6 years), Rurik (4 years) and Joel (10 months) have suffered the most from my involvement in this project. I hope that in the new time-use equilibrium the share of leisure devoted to them and to my wife will increase.

Helsinki, November 2004

Olli-Pekka Ruuskanen

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