

What drives mothers' working time in Europe ? A multilevel analysis

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Abstract

Across European countries, huge variations in mothers' working time still exist. Three main factors can explain these differences: mothers' characteristics, family policies design and the prevailing gender culture. Based on EU-SILC longitudinal data for 13 European countries and using multi-level models, this paper aims at explaining the role of these three factors on mothers' working time two years after a birth. We take into account two levels of analysis, the individuals and the countries. The results indicate that country-level variables explain about 16% of the difference in the number of hours worked by mothers. Regarding individuals' characteristics, older, single mothers and mothers in a relationship with a high educated partner tend to work less whereas richer and higher educated mothers are more likely to work more. At the country level, our results suggest that public spending but also the gender norms impact the number of hours worked.

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