

The labour supply of separated women: the impact of economic, cultural and institutional factors

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Among the numerous studies on the economic consequences of divorce for women little attention has been paid to changes in the labour force participation of women. In this paper, we examine women's labor supply changes after separation in a European perspective. We quantify these changes and study the impact of economic, cultural and institutional factors on these changes. Using data from 13 EU-countries of the European Community Household Panel (1994-2001), we demonstrate that women only modestly increase their labor supply after separation. Important individual-level determinants of the labor supply changes are human capital (positive), presence of children (negative), and living with parents (negative). On the macro-level, a country's egalitarian gender roles shows to have a positive effect on the labour supply. Institutional factors appear to have a contradictory effect: allowances for single parents discourage the labour supply of separated women, whereas public child care provisions encourage the employment of separated women with young children.