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Employment decisions of European women after childbirth

Abstract

This paper describes and compares transitions into employment of mothers of newborn children in several European countries. Although female labour participation has increased everywhere, women are still likely to interrupt their career, when they have a child, for a period of time longer than the basic maternity leave. Using data from ECHP, we select women who have a child during the survey and we observe how long they take to start working. The main purpose is to describe at which age of the child they are more likely to start participating (again) in the labour market in different countries and which kind of jobs they get; which characteristics, of the woman, of the household and of the labour market, make these transitions more likely. In order to estimate the factors which influence mothers' decision to work, we use a discrete hazard model. First results show that women in different parts of Europe take different amount of time, which depends, in different measures, on their human capital and on parental leave arrangements. While women in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and Germany work part time in order to reconcile work and family, a relevant part of mothers in Southern countries work in small family enterprises.