

Do Gender-Related Attitudes Explain the Child Penalty? The Case of Immigrants in France

Dominique Meurs, Paris Nanterre University and Ined,
Pierre Pora, Insee and Crest

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Abstract

In developed countries, gender inequalities in the labour market are largely due to the impact of motherhood on women's working lives. However, the intuitive assumption that an increase in childcare facilities would facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life is not supported by empirical studies (Pora, 2020; Kleven et al., 2024). It is therefore important to examine whether the weight of social norms and beliefs plays a role in these post-maternity labour market withdrawals. The present study tests this hypothesis using the French Insee-Ined TEO2 survey, conducted in 2019-2020. The survey focuses on immigrants and descendants of immigrants. In addition to a birth calendar and a retrospective calendar of employment, it provides information on personal opinions and family traditions. We use an event study approach to estimate the child penalty for a population of 7100 immigrants and descendants of immigrants. The results indicate that the average differences in activity rates between women and men are significantly larger for individuals with more traditional attitudes towards gender than for those with more egalitarian attitudes. Surprisingly, however, the direct negative effect of parenthood on mothers' participation is found to be similar in both groups, at around 15% over a 10-year period.

Keywords: Gender, Child penalty, Immigrants, Attitudes, Values

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