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Exploring the Gender Gap in Regular Teleworking from Home. The Roles of Worker's Characteristics, Working Conditions and Gender Equality in Societal Context

Before the Covid-19 pandemic urged working people to stay at home, telework in most countries was more a privilege than a necessity and was generally considered a flexible form of work that allowed for a better work-family balance. However, previous research indicates that fewer women than men are teleworking from home, indicating a gender gap in telework, although there is significant variation between European countries. This study explores how the gender gap in regular telework can be explained, by taking worker's individual and employment characteristics as well as the level of gender equality as a country characteristic into account. The analyses focus on workers for whom ICT use is a part of their work. Based on EWCS data from 27 European countries in 2015, logistic regressions with country fixed effects and two-level mixed-effects are estimated. The results show that before the pandemic, women were significantly under-represented in regular telework from home compared to men, even under control of demographic, family, and work-related characteristics. Neither working in part-time, nor having children or working over-hours did explain the gender gap among teleworkers. Higher gender equality at the country level increased the likelihood of teleworking in both, men and women. All in all, the findings support the view that in more gender-equal countries telework is more equally distributed among men and women with otherwise similar characteristics.