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More time or more money? Predictors of the length of working hours in the European Union

Dissertation thesis

Abstract

Present empirical study analyses important predictors of the length of working hours. It aims at integrating existing conceptions via an approach that would synthesize findings on the influence of different factors of the length of working hours at various levels into a consistent and complex model. For these purposes it uses explorative analytical methods applied on data from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS).

The thesis is based on two assumptions. First, it is more appropriate to study the length of working hours on the basis of its distribution than based on the average number of working hours. Second, the specific working hours are being established simultaneously at four different levels, the mechanisms of which need to be understood: at the national, sectoral and professional, establishment and household levels.

The analysis performed revealed the most important predictors of the length of working hours and their mutual ties. The integration of predictors that are effective at the individual levels resulted in a model which reflects the identified relevant factors when analysing patterns of the length of working hours. The complexity of the working time issue that is reflected in presented findings puts the potential of unified European regulation of the length of working hours into question.

Key words: working time, length of working hours, European Union, predictors, contextual level