

We are pleased to invite you to the presentation by the Paul Lazarsfeld Guest Professor Stefani Scherer:

When: 30.11.2021 at 17.00-18.30

Where: Online, via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/91808529136?pwd=Q3BPLzMzbGl5b0QvMDRoZU5Sek5tUT09>

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Equalizing or not? Public childcare and women's labour market participation*

Stefani Scherer (University of Trento, Italy; Paul Lazarsfeld guest professor University of Vienna)

Abstract

This paper investigates to what extent an expansion of formal childcare can help to increase women's labor market participation. Existing research on the topic has predominately focused on cross-national variation and has often been static in nature. The present contribution examines region-specific within-variation over time of public child care availability to assess effects on women's labor market participation and employment. Further the paper takes mothers' characteristics and contextual factors into account, allowing for heterogeneous effects. The study relies on data from the European Social Survey (2002–2018) that were integrated with an original collection of regional-level information on public childcare coverage. It finds a positive association between public childcare coverage and mothers' labor market participation that heavily depends both on the mothers' characteristics and on context. Low-educated mothers' profit most from an increase in public childcare, with positive employment effects being most pronounced at lower levels of childcare coverage. Moreover, in contexts in which traditional cultural values of gender roles are prevalent, increasing childcare is effective in supporting low-educated mothers' labor market participation, independent of their individual attitudes. This contribution highlights the importance of public childcare policies as an equalizer in society because expanding childcare fosters mothers' labor market participation, especially in contexts in which an intervention is most needed.

* the presentation is based on a paper co-authored with Emmanuele Pavolini (University of Macerata, Italy).