

# Is Mothers' Employment an Effective Mean to Fight Family Poverty? Lessons from Eight European Countries

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The fight against family poverty is a central issue for policy makers in all industrialized countries. Apart of easing the problem by targeted public transfers to families, another strategy is to support mothers' employment. With this respect, policy strategies differ substantially across countries.

In our paper, we analyse the impact of the type of welfare state on the effectiveness of mothers' employment as a family poverty protection strategy. Inspired by Solera (2001) and based on preliminary work by Orsini (2001) we analyse income and employment structures focusing on families with dependent children in an international comparison. Using data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) for the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, and Sweden we first analyse for each country separately relative income position, poverty rate, and public transfer recipience structure by various household types. The risk of being poor is then analysed by a set of probit models controlling for household structure and mothers' employment behaviour. In a second step we focus on the employment structure of household members. In a third step, we link the income and the employment issue by breaking down our income indicators by intensity of labour market participation of mothers. We end with analysing the country-specific determinants of mothers' employment to provide policy relevant suggestions to improve mothers' employment opportunities.

At the present stage of research, we can only report preliminary results. However, existing results reveal a strong impact of the type of the welfare state on the effectiveness of mothers' employment to prevent family poverty.