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Gender equality bargaining and the child penalty: Evidence from a French public-sector firm

This paper examines how the child penalty evolves alongside changes in gender equality bargaining within a French public-sector firm. While the literature has documented a large and persistent impact of parenthood on women's earnings and careers, less is known about how workplace-level gender equality policies may shape these outcomes. We address this question using comprehensive administrative data covering all permanent employees of a French public-sector firm, over the period 2013-2024. Using an event-study approach around the birth of the first child, we document a substantial earnings penalty for women relative to men. Reductions in working time account for a substantial share of the child penalty. Our findings then show that the child penalty declines with the strengthening of gender equality measures within the firm.

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