The Market for Part-Time Work and Maternal Participation in the Workforce

Women are over-represented in industries that feature shorter hours. This paper sheds light on the firm-side forces that give rise to this sorting. We study an immigration reform that markedly expanded the pool of commuting full-time workers in a pre-defined set of Swiss border localities using social security registers and business census data in a difference-in-differences design. We find that native mothers --- a group that predominantly works part-time --- exit the workforce following the reform. Fathers as well as prime-age men and women without children remain unaffected. We provide evidence that mothers drop out because firms change their worker mix towards jobs with longer hours: local employment shifts toward full-time positions, and job postings exhibit reduced demand for part-time workers. Our findings suggest that firms dynamically adjust non-wage components of jobs in response to supply, with reduced hours constituting an amenity that on average is costly to provide.