

Persistence of spatial differences of female labor force participation

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Female labor force participation (FLFP) increased significantly in the 20th century. Nevertheless, there are persisting spatial differences regarding FLFP. This paper demonstrates that regional differences in the abundance of white collar and clerical employment in the early 20th century that were due to industrialization explain spatial variation in FLFP in the 1920s but also almost 100 years later. The latter finding is not explained by persisting industry structures. Survey data show that women and men today reveal a higher social acceptance of working women in regions with a historically high FLFP while current FLFP is not associated with sex-role attitudes.

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