

The urban/rural differential in job quality. Evidence from EU countries

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The paper contributes to the broad literature on agglomeration economies by focusing on an under investigated aspect: job quality. Three mechanisms can affect the urban/rural differential in job quality: urban rat race, matching between demand and supply of labour and job quality externalities. In this work, job quality is looked at in a multifaceted way, by considering the following relevant traits: intensity at work; having career opportunities; autonomy at work; meaningfulness at work and job satisfaction. The data are at the individual-level and are gathered from the European Working Condition Survey 2010 and 2015.

Preliminary results show that after controlling for individual, firm, occupation, industry and country-specific characteristics, working in urban areas is more intense than in rural areas. At the same time, urban workers reported lower autonomy and meaningfulness at work and job satisfaction. No statistical difference is found for having career opportunities.

The preliminary results seem to corroborate that the detrimental mechanism associated to the urban rat race prevails on the other spatial determinants. This contribution has interesting echoes for the economic geography literature since it sheds light on an under-investigated aspect concerning labour and with relevant implication for the localization of firms.