

Job Insecurity and Entry into Parenthood: Complicating Inequalities across Gender, Birth Cohorts, and Education in a Lowest-Low Fertility Setting

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Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to analyse the relationship between labour participation and fertility from a gender perspective in a country with very low and very late fertility. In particular, we focus on analysing the effect of achieving labour stability on the birth of the first child, considering different profiles according to educational level and generation of birth. We expect to find different effects of job stability on fertility according to sex, educational level and birth generation.

The data source is the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey. This retrospective survey allows the application of survival models to analyse the birth of the first child over the life course.

The results show that the effect of job stability on the birth of the first child is different for men and women. On the one hand, although for both men and women job stability favours having a first child, for women working without job stability, their probability of becoming a mother is reduced with respect to women who have never worked. On the other hand, job stability only has a positive effect on the most recent generations of men and women, and at higher educational levels.

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the relationship between labour participation and fertility from a gender perspective in a country with very low and very late fertility. In particular, we focus on analysing the effect of achieving job stability on the birth of the first child. We expect to find different effects of job stability on fertility according to sex, educational level and birth generation.

The data source is the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey of the National Institute of Statistics (14,556 women and 2,619 men), to which we apply the Cox proportional hazards model to analyse the birth of the first child.

Theoretical framework

The interrelationship between labour participation and reproductive behaviour is a subject of study with a long tradition in sociology and demography (Bernhardt, 1993). Most studies have focused mainly on women and few studies have analysed the relationship between family formation and work in men.

Traditionally, a negative relationship has been observed between women's labour participation and fertility, based on the assumed incompatibility between family and work life (Adsera, 2005; Budig, 2003; Brewster and Rindfuss, 2000). This negative relationship has been explained by the increased opportunity costs of having children and women's greater educational investment, according to the theory of the New Economics of the Family (Becker, 1960); however, from the perspective of the Second Demographic Transition, fertility control was argued to be implemented due to increased needs for self-fulfilment, as opposed to exclusive reproductive aspirations (Van de Kaa, 1987).

In recent decades, the negative relationship between female labour force participation and fertility has weakened, and in some European countries a positive relationship has emerged between both indicators (Myrskylä, Kohler and Billari, 2009; Adsera, 2005). This is due to less incompatibility between the role of mother and the role of worker in more developed societies (Rindfuss, Guzzo and Morgan, 2003). Greater gender equality and the development of institutions, public policies and social norms that help reconcile work and family life favour fertility (Arpino, Esping-Andersen and Pessin, 2015; Goldscheider, Bernhardt and Lappegard, 2015; Baizán, 2009). For men, the relationship between labour participation and fertility is less evident and much less studied. Some studies indicate that men's labour participation is independent of family status (Bielby and Bielby, 1989); other studies indicate that fatherhood entails a greater work effort for fathers (Cooney and Uhlenberg, 1991; Kaufman and Uhlenberg, 2000) and even more recent studies indicate that having a child may entail a work "premium" for men and, conversely, a "penalty" for women (Mu and Xie 2016).

At the micro level, several research studies have analysed the effects of different work situations - of both women and men - on fertility (Vignoli, Drefahl and De Santis, 2012; Kreyenfeld, 2010), also in the Spanish case (Baizán, 2006; De la Rica and Iza, 2005; Ahn

and Mira, 2001). Although there are no conclusive findings in a single direction, these studies have pointed to the importance of the conditions and modalities of participation in the labour market and the variety of relationships according to the stages of the life cycle and the socio-economic characteristics of the population. It is in this perspective that our proposal is situated.

Our starting hypothesis is that we expect to find different results in the relationship between fertility and labour participation in men and women depending on their educational level and generation of birth.

Preliminary results

The descriptive results show important differences by gender and educational level in the transition schedules to parenthood (figure 1) and in the achievement of job stability (figure 2). Men have a later timetable for the birth of their first child than women (figure 1), but men achieve job stability earlier and in higher percentages than women (figure 2). In general, the higher the level of education, the later the transition to motherhood / fatherhood begins, but the earlier employment stability is achieved.

Figure 1. Transition to the first birth for men and women according to education level (Kaplan-Meier estimator).

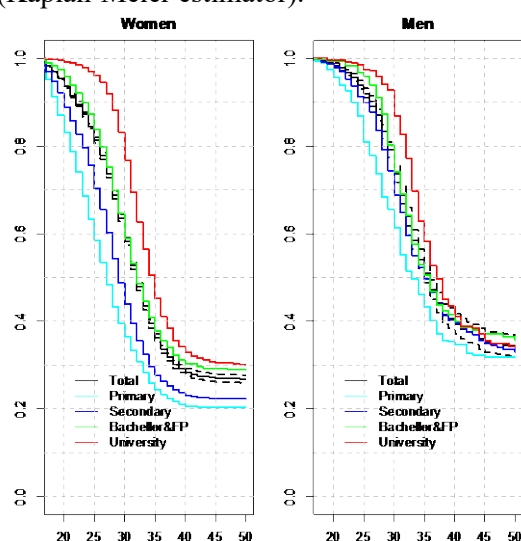
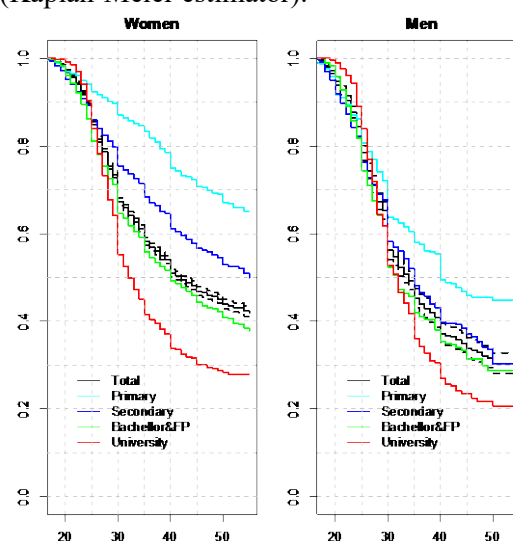


Figure 2. Transition to job stability for men and women according to education level (Kaplan-Meier estimator).



In the multivariate analysis we have applied Cox proportional hazards models, which allow us to look at the probability of having a first child as a function of a number of explanatory variables, and in particular considering the age at which job stability was achieved, the educational level and the generation of men and women. In the first model (table 1) the probability of having a first child for both men and women decreases with educational level and, in the case of women, also decreases among the most recent generations, which is not the case for men. When considering employment status, on the one hand, we observe that achieving job stability increases the probability of becoming a mother or father. On the other hand, women who work without achieving

job stability have a lower probability of becoming a mother than women who have never worked.

Table 1. Probability of having a first child for men and women (Cox proportional hazard model).

	Men			Women	
	Exp(B)	Pr(> z)		Exp(B)	Pr(> z)
EDUCATION LEVEL (r.c. Primary or less)					
Secondary	0,880	0,123		0,866	0,000 ***
Bachelor & FP	0,745	0,001 ***		0,619	0,000 ***
University	0,618	0,000 ***		0,452	0,000 ***
GENERATION (r.c. 1962-1969)					
1970-1979	0,957	0,512		0,948	0,039 *
1980-1989	1,095	0,284		0,929	0,025 *
1990-2000	0,944	0,841		0,542	0,000 ***
LABOUR STATUS (r.c. never worked)					
Job WITHOUT stability	1,494	0,176		0,898	0,018 *
Job WITH stability	5,022	0,000 ***		1,750	0,000 ***
RELIGION (r.c. catholic)					
Other religion	1,392	0,009 **		1,205	0,000 ***
Non-believers	0,836	0,011 *		0,818	0,000 ***
No answer	0,946	0,569		0,760	0,000 ***
ORIGIN (r.c. Spain)					
Abroad	1,276	0,013 *		1,348	0,000 ***
Nº OF SIBLINGS (r.c. 0)					
1-2	1,213	0,179		1,235	0,000 ***
3 or more	1,374	0,030 *		1,417	0,000 ***

In the following models we have interacted employment status with educational level (table 2) and with generation of birth (table 3). For men, no significant relationship is observed in the interaction between educational level and employment status. That is, among men the probability of having a first child is similar regardless of their educational level and employment status. For women, on the other hand, we observe several relevant situations: first, achieving job stability at higher levels of education increases the probability of having a first child, but not at lower levels of education; second, at lower levels of education we observe that women who work without job stability have a lower probability of having children than women with low education and who do not work.

The model with interaction between birth generation and employment status (Table 3) shows that in the most recent generations of men and women (born between 1990 and 2000) the achievement of employment stability increases the probability of having a child, and in the case of men, also in the 1980-1989 generation. On the other hand, in older generations of women, working with or without stability reduces the probability of becoming a mother relative to women who have never worked.

Table 2. Probability of having a first child for men and women: interaction between educational level and job stability (Cox proportional hazard model)^a

	Men		Women	
	Exp(B)	Pr(> z)	Exp(B)	Pr(> z)
EDUCATION & LABOUR STATUS (r.c. never worked & primary)				
Secondary & Job WITHOUT stability	0,612	0,446	0,815	0,047 *
High School & FP & Job WITHOUT stability	0,680	0,651	0,858	0,244
University & Job WITHOUT stability	382500,0	0,982	1,045	0,821
Secondary & Job WITH stability	0,671	0,540	1,041	0,778
High Scholl /FP & Job WITH stability	1,095	0,916	1,417	0,031 *
University & Job WITH stability	538200,0	0,982	2,254	0,000 ***

^a Models controlled by the rest of variables of model 1 (table1).

Table 3. Probability of having a first child for men and women: interaction between generation and job stability (Cox proportional hazard model)^a

	Men		Women	
	Exp(B)	Pr(> z)	Exp(B)	Pr(> z)
GENERATION & LABOUR STATUS (r.c. 1962-1969 & never worked)				
1970-1979 & Job WITHOUT stability	1,813	0,366	0,745	0,004 **
1970-1980 & Job WITH stability	1,917	0,324	0,769	0,018 *
1980-1989 & Job WITHOUT stability	5,026	0,153	0,563	0,000 ***
1980-1990 & Job WITH stability	9,198	0,050 *	0,941	0,648
1990-2000 & Job WITHOUT stability	3,060	0,336	1,379	0,109
1990-2000 & Job WITH stability	32,111	0,009 **	7,693	0,000 ***

^a Models controlled by the rest of variables of model 1 (table1).

Preliminary conclusions

The relationship between employment and fertility shows different results for men and women. For men, achieving job stability favors fertility, especially for the most recent generations, but no differences are found according to educational level. For women, in general, job stability favors fertility, but on the contrary, working without job stability reduces fertility with respect to women who do not work. Finally, when we differentiate women by educational level, the effect of job stability on fertility is only statistically significant at high educational levels. In other words, in women whose work career is a priority, job stability is key to having a first child, which is not the case for women with a low educational profile.

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