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The policy context of fertility in Spain: Toward a gender-egalitarian model?

Pau Baizán

Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA) and Universitat
Pompeu Fabra, pau.baizan@upf.edu

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Department of Political & Social Sciences

Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27
08005 Barcelona
<http://www.upf.edu/demosoc/>

Abstract

Fertility levels have remained very low in Spain since the mid-1980s, implying a future rapid aging of the population. The stagnation of fertility levels is closely linked to the substantial changes in the welfare regime experienced during this period, involving shifts in the share of the cost of children between social institutions. While exchanges of care and financial support across generations are still high, including a prolonged coresidence of young adults with their parents, the role of households as providers of care and other services has substantially declined. The rapid increase in women's labor-market participation has led the dual full-time earner model of family to become the norm, although this trend has not been matched by a similar increase in men's unpaid work. These processes have weakened the ability of households to provide care and have created a demand for both state intervention and market solutions. The resulting care gap has been partially filled by the expansion of non-family childcare, in which the state has had an important role both as provider and regulator of the market. At the same time, childcare within the family has been undermined by policies in the domains of parental leave, part-time opportunities, and child benefits/tax allowances that provide little support to parenthood. Moreover, labor-market deregulation, focused on the young, has brought with it an increase in uncertainty about income, leading to the postponement of family transitions and depressing fertility.

Keywords

Fertility; social policy; family policy; Spain; aging

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Introduction

When fertility in Spain dropped to “lowest-low” levels in the early 1990s, it surprised many demographers. So did the massive immigration rates and the high divorce rates recorded in the mid-2000s, which both reached the highest levels in Europe at that time. These changes illustrate the profound and rapid transformations experienced by Spanish society that, although shared to some extent with other advanced societies, also show several special features. This chapter will sketch the main trends in fertility and aging during the past few decades, followed by an overview of some of Spain’s family and gender policies. Support for childrearing from a variety of institutions is examined, including the labor market and the state, as well as from extended families and male partners. Based on existing theories of fertility, it is assumed that contextual conditions that lessen the costs of childrearing for parents and reduce gender inequalities will be associated with higher levels of fertility (McDonald 2000; Diprete et al. 2003; Rindfuss et al. 2003). Existing evidence for this assumption is summarized.

In order to evaluate the role of particular policies, it is useful to adopt a welfare-regime framework, including contributions from the gender perspective¹ (Orloff 1993; Esping-Andersen 1999; Mayer 2001; Lewis 1998; 2002). Together with other Southern European countries, the Spanish welfare model is often depicted as a particular version of the “conservative” regime, in which families retain a maximum of welfare responsibilities. In this model, active family policies are underdeveloped compared with the situation in other conservative welfare states, such as Germany or France. The low levels of state provision and the conspicuous gaps go hand in hand with the major role of kinship relationships (Ferrera 1996; Moreno 2006; Naldini 2003). These characteristics are rooted in long-standing cultural ideas prevalent in Spanish society, in particular the wide prevalence of strong family ties (Reher 1998; Dalla Zuanna 2001). Exchanges of care and financial support across generations are generally high, including an increasingly prolonged coresidence of young adults with

¹“A welfare regime can be defined as the combined, interdependent way in which welfare is produced and allocated between state, market, and family” (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 35).

their parents and a declining, but still important, role of grandparents in the care of children.

The Spanish welfare and gender regime has also been characterized by an unusually high prevalence of the male-breadwinner/female-housewife family model. Indeed, up to the 1970s, this family model was explicitly supported by the state and by the Catholic Church, which remained a central influence in policymaking (Nash 1991). Yet, the prevalence of this family model has progressively diminished. Crucial in this respect has been the rapid expansion of the education system, which has especially benefited women. Indeed, cohorts of women born since the 1970s clearly surpass men in educational attainment. The labor-market participation of women has also increased steadily since the 1980s, leading to a situation in which dual, full-time-earner households have become the norm. As a result, the caring capacity of families has been seriously weakened, undermining the foundations of familism. At the same time, men's roles have changed only marginally, and adaptation of the welfare state to these new gender roles has been slow and partial.

Parallel changes in family values and behavior, in line with “reflexive modernization”² (Giddens 1991), have pushed toward modification of many of the laws affecting the family. A decisive milestone was the democratic constitution of 1978, which introduced the principles of gender equality and the expansion of social rights that were developed in several laws issued subsequently. Some examples include the introduction of individual taxation (1979), a new divorce law (1981), as well as laws liberalizing abortion (1985) and the use of contraceptives (1978). Social policies aimed to consolidate and universalize the welfare state in the areas of education, health, and pensions (Guillén 2010).

A second wave of rapid and extensive policy change took place during the period 2004–2011, when the Social-Democratic Party was in government. Laws introduced during this period reflected changes in the values and norms of the Spanish population, for example facilitating divorce and shared custody of children by divorced parents,

²“Reflexive modernization” refers to a change in the principles of industrial society involving an increased capacity for individuals to pursue personal autonomy and to construct their own identities rather than having those identities defined for them by societal norms and institutions (Giddens 1991).

recognizing same-sex marriages, and introducing a new law on abortion, which received wide popular support. Another set of policies aimed to promote gender equality, primarily through enhancing women's integration into the labor market, and to a lesser extent to increase young people's autonomy. These policies included the introduction of a new universal scheme to assist dependent people in need of care (basically the elderly), provisions for the expansion of formal childcare, affirmative-action measures favoring gender equality in the labor market and in politics, and a cash benefit for housing directed to young people.³

Although the actual substantive impact of these policies has been uneven, they mark a path deviation in the principles and aims of the Spanish government (Naldini and Jurado 2013). The care of children and frail elderly is no longer seen as a family matter only, but as an issue requiring government financial support and involvement. Similarly, assistance to young adults is no longer seen exclusively as a family responsibility. Labor-market and economic-growth policies have been at the center of public debates, triggered by high rates of female and youth unemployment and stimulated by European Union (EU) directives and recommendations.⁴ By contrast, despite the persistence of very low fertility for more than two decades, support for raising children has been largely absent from public discussions, and fertility increase has not been a prominent issue in government policy.

This chapter will review fertility trends in Spain, policies changes, and the effects that policies might have on fertility. I will argue that the expansion of the dual-earner household norm and the weakening of familism since the 1980s, together with more recent policy reorientation, amount to a significant departure from the previous welfare regime. According to this interpretation, Spain is shifting toward a model that borrows several traits from both the liberal and the social-democratic regimes. The stagnation of fertility levels is closely linked to these changes in the welfare and gender regime.

³This means-tested cash benefit was introduced in 2008 and discontinued in 2010. It consisted of a subsidy for rented housing paid to young people (age 22–29). The amount paid was €210 (US\$240 as of 15 May 2015) per month in 2010 (Ministerio de Vivienda 2010).

⁴Pension-system reform has also been a recurring political debate, again stimulated by EU policies.

Fertility trends

The Spanish total fertility rate (TFR) has fluctuated at very low levels since 1988, remaining below 1.5 children per woman (Figure 1). Just as the post-World War II baby boom took place almost two decades later in Spain than in most other European countries, the subsequent fertility decline also arrived relatively late. Between 1958 and 1975, fertility hovered slightly above 2.8 but shortly after started a fast decline, reaching its lowest level, at 1.15, in 1998. As in many other developed countries, the first years after 2000 brought a modest recovery, with the TFR reaching 1.46 children per women in 2008 (Myrskylä et al. 2009). This trend was truncated by the “great recession,” leading to a fertility drop to 1.27 in 2013 which, considering the depth of the economic crisis in Spain, may be viewed as a fairly modest decline.

Figure 1 Period total fertility rate (TFR) and birth-cohort completed fertility, Spain 1900–2013 (Institut National d’Etudes Démographiques 2014; Myrskylä et al. 2012)

These changes in fertility levels, measured in terms of TFR, have been greatly influenced by a significant postponement of births in the life course. In 1980, women’s

mean age at first birth reached a low of 25.0 years in parallel with declining ages at marriage.⁵ By 2000, the mean age at first birth had jumped to 29 years, depressing cross-sectional fertility. The subsequent slowdown in the pace of fertility postponement has contributed to the partial recovery of TFR, although this process has not disappeared, with the mean age at first birth reaching 30.3 years in 2013.

Figure 2 Total fertility rate (TFR) by nationality (INE 2014b)

The large immigration wave experienced in 2000–2007, no doubt, helps explain both the slowdown in the postponement of births and the partial recovery of fertility levels. As can be seen in Figure 2, immigrants show higher levels of fertility than the native-born, albeit fertility among immigrants is also low and seems to rapidly converge with

⁵Both the lowest age at marriage (23.3) and at first birth for the whole 20th century were recorded around 1980 (Cabr 1989).

the native-born level. The processes of migration and family formation appear to be closely interrelated, resulting in fertility peaks around migration time or shortly after (Gonzalez-Ferrer 2011; Bledsoe et al. 2007). Given the relatively small proportion of immigrants in the population, however, rising from 1.6 percent in 1998 to 12.2 percent in 2010, their overall contribution to the increasing TFR is only about 0.082 children per woman (Castro-Martín and Rosero-Bixby 2011). Birth statistics for 2011, however, indicate that nearly one out of four newborns in Spain (23.1 percent) had at least one foreign-born parent. The timing of fertility is substantially younger among immigrants than among the native-born, particularly among immigrants from Latin America and Africa who made up more than one-half of all immigrants during this period. More recently, the increasing importance of immigration from Eastern Europe (mainly Romania and Bulgaria) seems to be related to a trend toward lower and later immigrant fertility.

Figure 1 depicts the trends in completed birth-cohort fertility, providing a complementary perspective to the one given by the TFR. Lifetime family size has been declining almost continuously since the cohorts born at the beginning of the 20th century, from 3.4 children for women born in 1900 to 1.6 for women born in 1965. Projections for the 1975 birth cohort foresee a continuation of this trend, reaching 1.4 children per women (Myrskylä et al. 2012). An almost monotonic reduction of parity three or higher-order births across birth cohorts is the main factor behind the family size reduction (INE 2014b; Castro-Martin and Martin-Garcia 2013). Only 12.5 percent of women born in 1965 had three or more children, compared with 60.7 percent of women born in 1940. Births have been increasingly concentrated in parities one and two: About 28 percent women born in 1965 had one child and 46 percent had two. Childlessness has risen among recent birth cohorts (13 percent for the 1965 birth cohort), although the rate is still low compared with most other West European countries.⁶

⁶Figures of definitive childlessness are likely to be underestimated, possibly by as much as 5 percent of total births. Thus, according to Devolder et al. (2008), official registry data misclassify multiple births and unknown-order births, resulting in a wrong attribution of births by order. Demographic data used in this chapter come from the website of the National Institute of Statistics (INE 2014b) unless stated otherwise.

The family context of childbearing has been substantially altered in the past few decades. In 2012, 39 percent of births were to non-married women, a sharp increase from 1980 (4 percent) and 1995 (11 percent). Most of this increase is attributable to childbearing in cohabiting families, which accounted for 23 percent of all births in 2011. By the age of 35, 39 percent of women born in the 1970s had entered their first conjugal union through cohabitation, compared with 17 percent of women born in the 1960s and 6 percent of women born in the 1950s (Domínguez-Folgueras and Castro-Martín 2013).

Population aging

In Spain, as in other European countries, fertility and mortality rates have been falling for more than a century. In 1900, 5.2 percent of the population was age 65 and above, compared with 17.4 in 2012, while the population under 15 was 33.2 percent and 15.2 percent, respectively. The suddenness and magnitude of the fertility decline experienced since the end of the 1970s has led to an age structure with relatively few children and young people, but also relatively few elderly individuals.⁷ The members of the baby-boom birth cohorts, born in the 1960s and the 1970s, will reach retirement age starting in 2025, at a time when the younger age groups will be relatively small because of the past 30 years of low fertility. This situation creates the potential for an important future increase in the proportion of the elderly population, which is likely to be a short-term phenomenon, as subsequent birth cohorts have much lower numbers.

The process of aging is fuelled by a combination of very low fertility since the mid-1980s and one of the highest life expectancies in the World (80.0 years for men and 85.6 for women in 2013). A third factor added to the picture between the late 1990s and 2007—a net immigration of more than six million individuals. By 2012, the proportion of Spain's foreign-born population reached 14.2 percent. This increase in migration is directly related to the fast increase in the number of employed individuals, from 13 million in 1997 to more than 20 million in 2007, which could only be partially supplied by the native-born population (Oliver 2008). Among immigrants, family

⁷Cohorts born in the 1930s and 1940s are relatively small in size due to low fertility and high infant mortality at that time.

reunification and family formation have proceeded quite quickly (González-Ferrer 2011), and immigration has significantly rejuvenated the age structure of the country, as most immigrants are young adults and their children. The bulk of the immigrants have added to the already large number of Spanish baby boomers, however, potentially aggravating the aging momentum expected in the years 2025–2050. Since the economic recession, net migration has become negative, reaching about 250,000 net out-migrants in 2013.

The most recent projections of the National Institute of Statistics extrapolate current demographic trends into the future (INE 2012b). Consistent with previous trends, these projections assume that life expectancy will increase to 87 years for men and 91 years for women in 2051. Fertility is assumed to slowly increase to 1.56 in 2051. Net migration is assumed to be negative until 2031 (a yearly average of –130,000 in 2012–2021 and –50,000 in 2022–2031) and positive afterwards. Given these assumptions, Spain's total population will decline from 46.8 million in 2012 to 41.6 in 2051. The number of deaths will become higher than the number of births in 2018, and the proportion of individuals age 65 and above will reach 37 percent in 2051.

Of course, these assumptions may be unrealistic. In particular, several arguments can be provided questioning the assumption that a negative net migration rate will persist in the future. For one thing, current trends are based on a period of deep economic crises. Given the existing age structure, future entrants into the labor market are unlikely to meet labor demand if economic growth is positive and sustained, while the existence of a large community of recent immigrants, with network links to their countries of origin, should stimulate the persistence of positive net migration flows.

Among several existing projections, the Wittgenstein Center for Demography and Global Human Capital (2012) assumes that life expectancy at birth will increase to 87.0 years for men and to 93.2 for women in 2050. Based on expert views, it is assumed that total fertility rates will increase to 1.7 children per woman in 2050. Following previous projections from Eurostat, net migration is assumed to be moderately positive, reaching 209,000 immigrants in 2050. According to this projection, total population will increase to 56 million in 2050 (43.5 million with zero net migration during the period of projection), and 30.7 percent of the population will

be 65 and above. This projection suggests that immigration can make an important contribution toward boosting population numbers and slowing down population aging.

Delayed transition to adulthood

Spain's historic gap in educational attainment compared with other economically advanced European countries has been reduced, albeit not completely eliminated. This can be illustrated by the increase across birth cohorts in the median age at school leaving—which went from 14 years for women and 15 years for men among the cohorts born during the 1950s to 20 years for women and 19 years for men among the cohorts born two decades later (Baizan et al. 2002). The educational attainment of the population shows an important polarization, however, which largely reflects parental education and social class differentials (Salido 2007). In 2010, among individuals age 25–34, 45 percent of women and 34 percent of men had completed tertiary education, while 30 percent of women and 41 percent of men had completed lower-secondary education or less (OECD 2013a). These figures show a substantial gender gap, which is likely to be the result of increasing returns to education for women relative to men and the removal of barriers to women's careers.⁸ The fact that women have overtaken men in educational attainment is likely to have important implications for labor-market outcomes, marriage patterns, and gender relations (van Bavel 2012).

The expansion of the education system has been one of the main achievements of the Spanish welfare state, together with expansion of the public-health system. Both provide universal access and are mostly supported through general taxation. In 2009, education expenditures were 5.6 percent of GDP, of which 88 percent was public spending, including subsidies⁹ (OECD 2013a). This implies a substantial public contribution to the cost of children. The expansion of the education system has been

⁸Gender educational differentials are complex phenomena, in which education systems, families, and non-cognitive abilities of children interact (Eurydice, European Commission 2010; Pekkarinen 2012).

⁹The OECD average spending on education was 6.3 percent of GDP, of which public spending accounted for 86 percent, with important variations by country. Figures for France are 6.3 percent (92 percent public), Italy 4.5 percent (92 percent public), United Kingdom 6.0 percent (88 percent public), and Sweden 6.7 percent (99 percent public) (OECD 2013a).

politically motivated, in order to increase economic productivity,¹⁰ but it also has been driven by the population's social-mobility aspirations in a highly competitive labor market. Since tuition fees are relatively low or nonexistent, the main cost of secondary and higher education for households is children's foregone labor-market earnings (which in any case are low due to low wages and chronic high unemployment among the young). A peculiarity of the system is that educational institutions are located close to residential areas, so that most students live with their parents, limiting the cost of access to education. Thus while general investments in children have increased, the related costs have only partially fallen on parents, reducing possible quantity-quality trade-offs that might limit fertility.

The Spanish education system has been characterized as highly standardized (with little ranking among institutions) and weakly stratified into different tracks (Iannelli and Soro-Bonmatí 2000). The general nature of educational content and credentials means that schooling is only weakly tied to the labor market, lengthening the school-to-work transition. Although barriers to entry are low, in practice few individuals re-enter the education system, especially after starting a family (Martin-Garcia and Baizan 2006).

Increasing educational enrollment and attainment has been one of the main drivers of the postponement of family formation (Castro-Martin 1992; Baizan 2001; Gonzalez and Jurado-Guerrero 2006). More years spent in education directly delay such transitions as entering the labor force, leaving the parental home, and forming a partnership. For women, the effects of higher educational attainment on labor-market participation also lead to a postponement and reduction of marriage and fertility. The link between educational attainment and postponement of marriage and fertility has weakened across birth cohorts, however, and today postponement is pretty much across-the-board. In 2010, the mean age at first birth among college-educated women was 32.9, among those with upper-secondary education it was 30.8, and among those with lower-secondary education it was 28.2 (Castro-Martín and Martín-Garcia 2013). Moreover, it has been shown that the field of education is more important for fertility

¹⁰The expansion has particularly focused on general secondary education and university education, rather than on vocational training. This has resulted in a mismatch between qualifications and labor-market demand.

timing than the level of education: Educational fields related to the care of individuals or involving social skills (such as teaching, medicine, and humanities) are associated with relatively early and high fertility compared with other fields of study (Martin-Garcia and Baizan 2006).

The age at entering the labor market has been hugely delayed across birth cohorts. Thus, among those born in the 1950s, the median age for starting a first job was 16 for men and 17 for women, while for the cohorts born in the 1970s, it increased by five years (Baizan et al. 2002). But these figures do not convey the tremendous deterioration of the labor-market situation experienced by young adults in the past few decades. In the 1980s, intensified international competition and the Spanish economy's lack of competitiveness led the government to partially deregulate the labor market.¹¹ This labor-market liberalization included the promotion of short-term contracts, generally lasting a few months, which characteristically focused on new entrants into the labor market, i.e., young people and women (and later, immigrants), keeping untouched the job guarantees enjoyed by middle-aged "male breadwinners" (Polavieja 2003; European Commission 2006). In this model, workers who have "regular" jobs enjoy better wages, and firing them is more difficult and more costly for employers. As a result, companies are slow to hire additional "protected" workers.

Within a few years after the introduction of the new policy in 1984, the proportion of temporary contracts had jumped to one-third of total employment. Unemployment rates have remained among the highest in Europe, however, as the typical integration of individuals into the labor market has come to involve a long sequence of unemployment and temporary employment periods. Both relative real wages of young people and the overall proportion of wages in the economy have shown a declining long-term trend (Consejo Económico y Social 2013). Subsequent reforms have added more flexibility to the labor market but have not fundamentally changed the model (Guillén 2010). In recent years, the increase in precariousness has been significantly

¹¹Between the late 1970s and the mid-1990s, the last stage of the sectoral shift between employment in agriculture and in industry overlapped with a deep industrial crisis, resulting in high unemployment (Marimon and Zilibotti 1998). Furthermore, the timing of the opening to international markets in connection with accession to the European Community in 1986 unfortunately coincided with the arrival in the labor market of the baby-boom cohorts.

extended to middle-aged individuals, in a pattern related more to socio-economic status than to life-course stage.

A number of studies have analyzed the effects that uncertainty in employment and income have on family and household formation (Ahn and Mira 2001; De la Rica and Iza 2005; Baizan 2001; 2007; Adsera 2011). For instance, one study (Baizan 2007) found that during the 1990s and early 2000s, women unemployed or with a temporary contract showed a 40 percent reduction in the probability of having a first birth compared with women in stable employment, accounting for the endogeneity of employment and fertility. The depressing effect was not as strong for second and higher-order births, especially among the unemployed. All birth orders were strongly affected, however, when the job status of both members of a couple was unstable. All these effects were particularly pronounced for those with low education.

The economic restructuring that started in the 1980s also included a deregulation of the housing market. Public subsidies focused on home owners through the tax system, while public rental housing became less than 2 percent of total housing. As rental housing became economically unattractive, its share declined progressively to less than 10 percent of the total housing stock (Inurrieta 2007). Even with public subsidies, however, purchasing a house is a large investment relative to the wages of young people, and in addition, would-be homeowners are generally required by banks to hold a stable labor contract in order to access credit. Not surprisingly, the result has been delayed household formation (Holdsworth and Irazoqui-Solda 2002).

The response of families to changes in the economic status of young adults has been as would be expected from a familistic system. Extended parental support in the form of housing and also social and economic capital to support continuing education, finding a job, and purchasing a dwelling—all this provides the basis for young-adult life, including family formation. The extended support also leads to a delay in all life transitions. For instance, young unemployed people can wait to find the “right” job, avoiding low-status jobs and keeping unemployment rates high.¹² Family formation is delayed, with the departure from the parental home generally occurring at the time of

¹²Substantial shortages of workers in particular sectors appeared in the late 1990s in spite of unemployment rates above 15 percent. Many new job vacancies were filled by immigrants, which favored wage moderation and the expansion of care-related jobs and domestic service.

marriage or entering cohabitation¹³ (Baizan 2001). Of course, parental ability to provide support is socially differentiated, maintaining intergenerational social and economic inequalities.

This path to household formation makes both young-adult poverty (unless the parents are also poor) and family formation at young ages unlikely (teenage births are virtually nonexistent except in some immigrant groups). Until recently, it also meant little unmarried cohabitation, but this has changed (Dominguez-Folgueras and Castro-Martín 2013). Parents are still involved in helping new couples, for example, by helping with housing costs or with finding a job, but these days parents seem to be highly tolerant of unmarried cohabitation. Both the young-adult and the parental generation tend to view cohabitation as equivalent to marriage.¹⁴ This living arrangement is generally quite stable, has been increasingly associated with fairly high fertility, and is no longer limited to highly educated couples (Creighton et al. 2013). In recent years, the diffusion of cohabitation has led to a rapid increase in births to unmarried women.

The transition to a dual-earner model

Despite unfavorable policies and the cyclical economic crises of the past three decades, the increase in women's labor-market participation has been constant, reaching 69 percent in 2013 for the age group 15–64 (Eurostat 2014). Most women under age 25 are students, however, and cohorts born before the 1960s have a much weaker attachment to the labor market. When we focus on the main childbearing and childrearing ages, i.e., 25–49, women's laborforce participation rates are nearly

¹³For instance, for the cohorts born in the 1960s, 75 percent of women and 61 percent of men left their parental home for the first time and started their first married or unmarried cohabitation simultaneously (i.e., in the same month).

¹⁴Unmarried cohabitation usually takes place at a fairly late age and often starts simultaneously with departure from the parental home. In these respects, it is quite similar to marriage (Creighton et al. 2013). Living alone or independently from parents during young adulthood is much less common in Spain than in most European countries, a situation that does not facilitate entering cohabitation. For instance, in the mid-1990s, 16 percent of men age 23–27 had left their parents' home and 14 percent were living with a partner. The corresponding figures for Italy were 13 and 9 percent, for France 53 and 34 percent, and for Sweden 100 and 23 percent (Berthoud and Iacovou 2002).

universal, at 84 percent (Figure 3).¹⁵ Recent data, however, show that the current economic crisis has had a devastating effect on female employment in Spain, characterized by a move from employment under fixed-term contracts to unemployment.

Figure 3 Activity, employment, and unemployment rates at age 25–49, Spain, 1986–2013 (Eurostat 2014)

Note: Activity rates are the sum of employment and unemployment rates.

The increase in women’s laborforce participation rates in Spain is associated with the sharp increase in women’s educational level, although educational differentials in labor-market participation are quickly disappearing (Leon and Migliavacca 2013). The entrance of women into the labor market is likely to have been indirectly stimulated by the erosion of the “family wage” and by the introduction of mechanisms that make labor-market participation more flexible. The relatively high levels of horizontal and vertical segregation by gender in Spain’s labor market, compared with the EU average,

¹⁵For comparison, in 2013 the activity rate for women age 25–49 was 67 percent in Italy, 84 percent in France, 83 percent in Germany, 79 percent in the United Kingdom, and 88 percent in Sweden (Eurostat 2014).

shows that high participation rates involve trade-offs with equality (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009).¹⁶

The increase in women's laborforce participation implies an extension to women of the traditional male model of work and welfare (Gershuny 2000; Lewis 2002). This has meant an extension to women of employment-based welfare entitlements, including rights to unemployment benefits, retirement pension, child benefits, and maternity leave. Employment is crucial for getting access to individually based social rights (as opposed to family based), given the absence of universal income-support measures and the extreme weakness of means-tested benefits (including child benefits).

Women's labor-market integration has taken place under the same conditions as for men, including a lack of accommodation for childcare needs. The standard work week is fairly long for both men and women: As of 2013, men employed full time worked on average 42.7 hours per week, and women worked 40.4 hours¹⁷ (Eurostat 2014). Such long work weeks have been shown to be a barrier to the involvement of fathers in childcare and housework (Hook 2010; Baizan et al. 2014), and they do not facilitate women's laborforce participation on a full-time basis (Rubery et al. 1998). As noted above, women's overall laborforce participation rates are similar to those found in Germany or in Britain, but much less part-time employment is available than in those countries.¹⁸ In 2013, about 25 percent of employed women had a part-time job, although this figure has increased in recent years in connection with the economic crises and labor-market reforms. Little part-time job availability means that women often have to choose between full-time work or not working at all (Del Boca 2003).

¹⁶ "Horizontal segregation is understood as under- (over-) representation of a given group in occupations or sectors, not ordered by any criterion and is often referred to as segregation *tout court*. Vertical segregation denotes the under-(over-) representation of the group in occupations or sectors at the top of an ordering based on 'desirable' attributes—income, prestige, job stability, etc." (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009, p. 7).

¹⁷The 40-hour work week limit was legally introduced in the early 1980s, but this limit is frequently not respected, as employers often require longer working hours from their employees. On the other hand, many sector agreements stipulate a 37.5-hour week, most notably for public-sector employees.

¹⁸In 2013, the share of part-time work out of total women's employment was 32 percent in Italy, 25 percent in France, 47 percent in Germany, 42 percent in the United Kingdom, and 38 percent in Sweden.

Even when part-time work is available, it is associated with precarious labor-market conditions and low-status jobs, with timetables set by the needs of employers rather than to facilitate work-family reconciliation (Ibáñez 2011).

The difficulties in making work and family-care needs compatible are exacerbated by the chronic high unemployment rate that strongly reduces the probability of re-entry after a period out of the labor market (Salido 2011, Figure 3). Moreover, interruptions are heavily penalized in a system in which family and personal relationships are often crucial to access jobs and where seniority mechanisms are important, reducing the probability of getting a job with a similar status or pay after re-entry. As a result, women postpone having children until they are in a stable job situation, and they avoid quitting their jobs when they become mothers (González and Jurado-Guerrero 2006). Incentives to postpone childbearing are thus not restricted to individuals with high-status jobs or the highly educated, although such women may have additional incentives to postpone births (Gustafsson 2001).

The increase in gender equality in employment has not been matched by an equivalent increase in gender equality at home, although some changes in that direction have occurred. The results of the time-use surveys of 2002 and 2009 are illustrative (Dominguez-Folgueras 2015). They show that for couples under the age of 50 there is some gender convergence in the number of average daily minutes devoted to employment: Women worked an average of 132 minutes a day in 2002 and 136 minutes in 2009, while men worked an average of 281 minutes a day in 2002 and 229 minutes in 2009. The equivalent figures for domestic work (excluding care) were 197 and 168 minutes for women and 37 and 54 minutes for men. Men seem to be slowly increasing their contribution to childcare: Women devoted 64 minutes a day to childcare in 2002 and 81 minutes in 2009, while men devoted 27 minutes a day to childcare in 2002 and 51 minutes in 2007. Detailed regression results that control for several variables, including time spent in different activities and the age of children, show significant differences between 2002 and 2009. There are some signs that a higher father involvement in childcare may exert a positive effect on fertility in Spain as in other countries (Brodmann et al. 2007; Cooke 2009).

The expansion of formal childcare

The formal childcare system has expanded with the increase in women's laborforce participation but with a significant time lag. By the late 1990s, nearly all children age three to five were enrolled in school, and school enrollment had increased substantially for children under three. By 2012–2013, 44 percent of children under three were enrolled in some kind of care center,¹⁹ including 32 percent in officially recognized educational centers²⁰ (Figure 4). Another 16 percent of children under three received regular (paid or unpaid) childcare that was not center based (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2012; 2015; INE 2012a). This last figure may include some of the children enrolled in educational or care centers, so the percentages should not be added. Children enrolled in an educational or care center spent an average of 26 hours per week in this type of childcare, while children who were cared for by childminders received an average of 24 hours of care.²¹

The Ministry of Education provides detailed data on enrolment rates by age: 10 percent of children under one, 33 percent of one-year-olds, 52 percent of two-year-olds, and 96 percent of three-years-olds attended educational centers in 2014. About one-half of children under three were enrolled in public institutions. Prices in the public sector are moderate in comparison with average wages: about €200–€350 (US\$230–US\$400 as of 15 May 2015) per month for each child, including lunch.²²

¹⁹Data on participation of children under three in preschool education and center-based care from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions provide a similar figure for 2011, at 39 percent (European Commission 2014). Comparable figures from the same source are 44 percent for France, 26 percent for Italy, 24 percent for Germany, and 51 percent for Sweden.

²⁰There are two types of childcare centers for young children: officially recognized schools (*escuelas infantiles*) and care centers (*guarderías*). The Spanish Education Law contains general principles and objectives that apply to schools for children from birth to age six. Regional governments are responsible for establishing more detailed educational programs and setting teacher's qualifications and assessment methods for these schools (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2014; European Commission 2014).

²¹The Ministry of Education (2015), does not specify how these averages are computed. In particular, it does not specify whether weekly hours include lunch time and time spent by the children in childcare centers before and after school hours, but it is unlikely that these "extra" hours are included in the figures provided.

²²According to the national Structure of Earning Survey of 2011, women's median gross wage was €1,400 (US\$1,603) per month and men's was €1,790 (US\$2,050) (INE 2014a). The

Figure 4 Percentage of children enrolled in school by age, Spain, 1991–2012 (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2015)

Usually, public centers stipulate preferential access and lower prices for some categories of families, such as low-income and single-parent families. The range of prices in the private sector is much wider, although private centers may receive public subsidies, depending on regional policies (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2014). From age three, children are legally entitled to free preprimary education.

Substantial geographical differentials exist in the availability of early education and care for children under three, stemming from of the diversity of policies adopted by regional and local governments. Educational facilities have expanded rapidly all over the country, however, since the Ministry of Education adopted a new law in 2008 called Educa3. This program expanded the number of slots available in some of the

minimum monthly wage set by national legislation for a full-time job was €645 (US\$739) in 2013.

regions that previously had lagged behind (Andalucia and Castilla la Mancha²³), but not in others (Canary Islands, Extremadura).

All these data suggest that formal care availability has increased substantially, albeit the demand is far from being fully met, and waiting lists in public centers are long.²⁴ Formal childcare has become a crucial means to allow compatibility of childrearing with paid work for an increasing proportion of couples. In particular, the increase in formal childcare availability since the mid-1990s has stimulated the laborforce participation of women (Baizan and Gonzalez 2007). The consistent increase of female laborforce participation suggests that without childcare expansion fertility rates would have dropped to much lower levels. Indeed, the availability of childcare is likely to explain part of the increase in fertility experienced in the early 2000s. A study using regional fixed-effects methods shows a significant and positive effect of daycare availability on both first and higher-order births (Baizan 2009).

Important gaps in care for children under three persist, however. These are especially serious in the case of children under one, since maternity/paternity leave from employment is very short. Children of mothers with little education are also less likely to be enrolled in formal childcare than children of more-educated mothers (Sarasa 2011). Although full-time care is usually available in childcare centers (about eight hours per day, including lunch time²⁵), it may not suffice to match parental working times, especially in the public childcare sector, where timetables tend to be less flexible. As a result, grandmothers still have an important role in childcare (Fernandez-Cordon and Tobio-Soler 2005). The fact that the demand for formal childcare is much higher than the supply means that parents must enroll children well in advance (just after the birth of the child) to secure a place, with little flexibility to adapt to changes in the parents' employment situation or geographical mobility.

²³According to the Ministry of Education (2015), the region of Andalucia increased the enrollment rate of children under three from 6 to 24 percent between 2007 and 2008.

²⁴In the past few years, the waiting lists have shortened in many cities, most likely due to the economic crisis, price increases, and lower women's employment (Aunión 2014).

²⁵As of 2011, school hours were usually from 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with a break for lunch. Most schools provided lunch services (83 percent of pre-primary schools and 73 percent of primary schools) as well as childcare services outside school hours (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2014).

The importance of educational content in the care of children under age six should also be emphasized. As a number of studies have shown, early-childhood education is key to the acquisition of cognitive and non-cognitive skills, to later educational attainment, to leveling social-class inequalities (European Commission 2014; Heckman 2006), and to producing new cohorts with a high potential for economic productivity. This is critical because Spain's adaptation to an aging society not only involves a sustainable fertility level but also an increase in the economic performance of the future population.

Short maternity/paternity leave

Mothers have been entitled to a maternity leave from employment of 16 weeks since 1989, with 100-percent compensation of the previous wage up to a fairly high ceiling.²⁶ In addition, a parental leave of up to three years was established in 1980. Since parental leave is unpaid, however, only about 3 percent of eligible mothers and 0.1 percent of eligible fathers make use of it, making parental leave of little practical relevance (Lapuerta et al. 2011). In order to claim leave rights, a worker must have made a minimum amount of contributions into social security, which is normally set at 180 days during the seven years immediately before beginning leave or 360 days during the mother's or father's entire working career (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2014). As a consequence, the leave system excludes some groups of women with an insufficient record of contributions, most notably many unemployed women and women working in the underground economy. Women with fixed-term contracts may avoid having a child because if they take maternity leave their contract may not be renewed, even in the public sector. Benefit level is closely related to an individual's previous earnings history, creating additional incentives to postpone childbearing until a stable, well-paying position is attained.

A paternity leave of two weeks was introduced in 2007, in addition to the two days previously existing. This fully paid time off from work can be taken simultaneously or after the end of the mother's leave. Take-up rates have fluctuated at around 80 percent since its introduction. The government planned to extend paternity leave to four weeks

in 2013, but due to budgetary restrictions this extension has been delayed. This very short leave is an exception in a policy context that otherwise does not provide explicit support for childcare by men.

Overall, there is relatively little economic or normative support for childcare by parents in the form of maternity or parental leave, compared with the situation in most “conservative” or social-democratic countries.²⁷ Although leave provisions are gendered, their short duration implies few negative consequences for women’s labor-market trajectory and income, given that most women return to their jobs just after 16 weeks of leave. At the same time, the short duration of paid leave in Spain is likely to be an obstacle for combining parenthood with laborforce participation, as it does not provide sufficient time to care for children. Moreover, there seems to be no coordination with formal childcare policies, resulting in a care gap during most of the child’s first year of life. This may be because leave legislation is established by the Ministry of Labor, while childcare provision mostly depends on regional education ministries and municipalities.

Child allowances and tax deductions

During the past few decades, the Spanish government has allocated fairly low levels of public expenditure to benefits and tax breaks for families. In 2009, after several increases, family benefits amounted to 0.67 percent of GDP, and tax breaks for families amounted to 0.25 percent (OECD 2013b). During the dictatorship period (1939–1977), the government provided a substantial package of “traditional” family support, alongside a pronatalist rhetoric (Iglesias de Ussel and Meil 2001). These policies included monthly payments for workers’ dependents, birth grants, and special

²⁶Self-employed mothers have had the right to some compensation since 2006 but did not achieve full equality with employees until 2014.

²⁷This weak provision of leave entitlements, together with other social and fiscal policies providing little explicit support for the unpaid work of women, fits the “unsupported familism” described by Saraceno (1994) and the “implicit familism” of Leitner (2003). These concepts no longer describe the situation in Spain, however, which has evolved since the late 1990s away from familism, both in terms of policies and in social behavior and ideologies. This can be seen, in particular, in the trends in women’s labor-market participation, the development of non-family childcare, the practical disappearance of the “family wage” linked to the increasing flexibility of the labor market, and the universalization of several key policies, including the pension and healthcare systems.

benefits for dependent women, granted through the social-security system.²⁸ Lack of political support for these measures and financial constraints led to their practical disappearance during the 1970s, as the benefits were not updated with inflation (Bianculli et al. 2013).

Apart from small tax deductions for families, the most relevant policy initiated in the late 1970s was the introduction of individual taxation for married couples, which effectively eliminated incentives for gender role specialization. This tax system implies that two-earner households find it advantageous to file separately, while one-earner households benefit from joint filing.

More recently, there have been several attempts to increase direct economic support for parents. The amounts involved have generally been modest, however, implying fairly small effects in terms of fertility or female employment disincentives. In 1999, the government introduced some tax deductions for households with children, and these were substantially increased (from €300 (US\$344) to €1,200 (US\$1,374) per year) in 2003 for children under the age of three. In addition, a new tax credit of €1,200 (US\$1,374) per year was introduced for mothers with children under age three, conditional on employment.²⁹ A careful study of the effects of the 2003 reforms found that they significantly increased both fertility (by almost 5 percent) and the employment rate of mothers with children under age three (by 2 percent). These effects were most pronounced among less-educated women (Azmat and Gonzalez 2010).

In 2007, the government introduced a “baby bonus” of €2,500 (US\$2,863), paid at the birth of each child. Using regression discontinuity-type analysis, Gonzalez (2013, Figure 2) showed that this benefit caused a small increase in births in 2008. This study also found that families who received the benefit did not increase their overall expenditures or their consumption of directly child-related goods and services. Instead, eligible mothers stayed out of the laborforce significantly longer after giving birth,

²⁸The package provided to (formal-sector) employees included other entitlements for family members, such as healthcare and survivors’ pension. This policy stems from a “family wage” ideal (in which the male breadwinner earns enough to support the family) and legal gender discrimination in the labor market.

²⁹The fiscal reform scheduled to be applied in 2015 foresees further increases in family deductions.

which in turn led to their children spending less time in formal childcare and more time with their mothers during their first year of life. This benefit was eliminated in 2010, both for budgetary reasons and because it had little political support.

Conclusions

Fertility levels in Spain have remained very low since the mid-1980s, implying a rapid aging of the population in the future. This low level of fertility has persisted within a continuously changing social and policy context. These changes concern the welfare regime in particular, involving shifts in the share of the cost of children between social institutions, coupled with a clear departure from the previous familistic and gender-inegalitarian model. This chapter has identified the main characteristics of Spain's emerging model of welfare, several of which are unique compared with the situation in most European countries. At the same time, some aspects of Spain's new welfare system are not well settled, as the processes that make up the new model are still unfolding and several policy measures are very recent.³⁰ This may account for some of the important welfare gaps identified here. The path deviation in the model of welfare has not yet removed Spain from the list of countries with very low fertility, but the new model may well lead to changes in the future level and social profile of fertility.

Perhaps the most consistent structural trend has been the rapid increase in women's laborforce participation, which has extended the dual full-time worker family model. One of the consequences of this process has been that labor-market conditions have become increasingly relevant for fertility, as most women of childbearing ages are in the labor market. Deregulation of the labor market and persistent high unemployment create incentives to postpone and reduce fertility. The still limited availability of part-time work and difficulties in accessing (and re-entering) the labor market create additional disincentives for fertility. Since long-lasting job precariousness affects most strongly those with little education, family formation patterns are increasingly linked to educational and occupational status. Today the highest rates of divorce and cohabitation occur among the least educated, reversing the previous pattern of negative

³⁰The economic crisis that started in 2008, which hit Spain particularly hard, has created additional uncertainty with respect to future policy orientation.

correlation with education. Similarly, the pattern of fertility may well reverse in the future, leading to a positive correlation with education.

Increased gender equality in labor-market participation has not been matched by a similar increase in men's unpaid work, although time-use data seem to point to some movement in this direction. This fits the "lagged adaptation" scenario postulated by Gershuny (2000), common to many advanced countries. These processes have been fueled by women's remarkable overtaking of men with respect to education. But up to now there has been very little support for the caring role of men, either in terms of labor-market policies or family policies related to parental leave. In this context, policies favoring early-childhood education and care (via public or market provision) have been key in providing a modicum of conciliation between employment and parenthood, albeit availability has clearly lagged behind the fast-growing demand. Although grandmothers still play a role in filling some of the gaps in early childhood care, especially during the first year of life, their role is likely to decline as they also join the labor market. Overall, the role of households and women as providers of unpaid care and other services has sharply declined, creating a demand for both state intervention and market solutions.

Given the familistic roots of the Spanish welfare state, it may seem surprising that policies have systematically failed to provide the support for the familization of care. Leave policies have remained ungenerous, as has the system of family benefits and tax allowances. In addition, the limited availability and the characteristics of part-time jobs have contributed to the growing number of couples who both work full time, seriously jeopardizing the ability of families to provide care for children. One unintended effect of these policies, given the weakness of the income-support system and the concentration of precarious work conditions among the less educated, has been rates of child poverty that consistently rank among the highest in Europe. Another likely effect of the policy environment for families has been to depress fertility levels.

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