

**Couples' careers and fertility.**  
**An event-history analysis of the ECHP samples of Denmark, Spain, and United Kingdom**

*Abstract prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of ECHP Users*  
*Berlin, June 24-26, 2004*

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**Abstract**

Fertility behavior is constrained by the labor force status of both partners of a couple (married or cohabiting), and by how they distribute among them household chores, childcare, and paid work. Uncertainty about labor market prospects and associated income is also likely to influence fertility decisions. Moreover, institutional configurations specific to each country may influence the decisions taken by couples in a systematic way. This paper investigates the effects of the combined labor force participation of each partner, and specifically the effects of unemployment, temporary contracts and part-time, on second and higher order births. An international comparative approach may help to detect national patterns on how couples' labor force status influence fertility.

Event-history methods are used, where the several events studied are modeled simultaneously, and where the outcomes of one process enter as time-varying covariates in the other process(es). I use a modeling strategy that accounts explicitly for the endogeneity of the processes of labor force participation and fertility, by taking into account the correlation between the unmeasured factors across processes. A longitudinal sample of the European Community Household Panel is used for the analyses, concerning the years 1993-2000. This allows to analyze the most recent situation in Denmark, Spain, and United Kingdom.

Preliminary results, concerning Spanish data only, show significant correlations between processes. After controlling for unobserved heterogeneity factors, the effect of employment on births is still negative, and unemployed women have even lower birth

rates. The results show that women experiencing job instability have lower fertility, while women working part-time or in the public sector have higher birth rates. Finally, exit from the labor force is accelerated by pregnancy or by the birth of a child. However, entry to the labor force is not significantly affected by a birth.