

Women's Partnership and Labour Trajectories and the Transitions to First and Second Births in Spain. The Role of Stability Over the Life Course on the Recuperation of Births

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Short abstract

The postponement of first childbirth is a widespread trend observed in many high-income countries. However, this delay does not necessarily imply a decrease in fertility rates. Previous research has shown that women who become mothers at later ages may compensate by reducing the spacing between subsequent births. This study aims to examine how women's job and partnership trajectories over the life course influence the likelihood of delaying motherhood and the subsequent recuperation of births, considering women's educational levels. By utilizing data from the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey and employing cure models, the findings indicate that women who had stable partnership trajectories until the age of 35 are less likely to delay childbearing. Moreover, they are less likely to have a second child if they postponed the first. Conversely, women who had instable partnership trajectories are more likely to have a first child after the age of 35, and are also more likely to have a second child. Regarding labour stability, women with unstable labour trajectories are not necessarily more likely to delay motherhood. However, those who have held more than one job until the age of 35 or had no jobs are more likely to have a second child than those with more stable labour trajectories. Stable labour trajectories are associated with a larger spacing between births. By level of education, the findings show that there is a catch-up effect among the University-educated. They delay motherhood more often, particularly when they have unstable partnership and labour trajectories, but after that, they are more likely to have second births. This indicates that women with higher education tend to have more control over their fertility depending on their personal circumstances.