

# The effect of gender (in)equality in household and care work on the intentions to move to the second child in Spain

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## 1 Introduction

During the last years, the study of fertility intentions has received renewed attention, focusing on different angles and contexts (Balbo, Billari, & Mills, 2013; Beaujouan & Berghammer, 2019; Freitas & Testa, 2017; Sobotka, 2009; Testa & Rampazzo, 2019). Since fertility intentions are considered a predictor of future fertility behaviour, research on this issue has become a fundamental piece of the complex study of family formation (Miller & Pasta, 1995; Philipov, 2009). According to previous literature, the gendered division of domestic and care responsibilities is one of the key elements that needs to be taken into account in the study of childbearing intentions and behavior (Lappegård, Neyer, & Vignoli, 2015; McDonald, 2013; Mills, Mencarini, Tanturri, & Begall, 2008). This is specially so for women, who typically bear the largest load of housework. An equitable distribution of domestic and care chores may increase the probability of intending and having a(n)other child, while a less equitable distribution may have the opposite effect (Brinton, Bueno, Oláh, & Hellum, 2018; McDonald, 2013; Mills et al., 2008; Shreffler, Pirretti, & Drago, 2010).

Spain is among the European countries with the lowest fertility, having a TFR below 1.3 children per woman since 2011. Notwithstanding, the mean number of desired children has remained unchanged around two children for several decades (Sobotka, 2009). The result is a sizable gap between preferences and outcomes in childbearing (Adsera, 2006; Castro-Martín, Martín-García, Cordero & Seiz, 2018; Harknett & Hartnett, 2014). Recent qualitative research has shown the importance of the distribution of domestic and care work on childbearing in Spain. Dominguez-Folgueras et al. (2018) argue that the (in)egalitarian distribution of chores before the first child influences the distribution after childbearing. Bueno et al. (2019) study the interaction between gender equity and economic uncertainty, showing that in those egalitarian couples that face economic insecurity, intentions to have a child are lower. In other contexts, Mills et al. (2008) compared the relationship between gender equity and fertility intentions in Italy and the Netherlands, concluding that the effect of an (in)egalitarian distribution of chores on fertility intention is only significant for those women who work more hours or have one or more children, that is, those who have a heavy load.

Based on prior research and findings, we will address the following questions:

1. Does a higher participation of fathers on care and house duties increase the probability that women intend to have a second child in Spain?
2. What has a greater impact on women's intentions to have a second child: a relatively egalitarian distribution of domestic and care work or the possibility of outsourcing these duties?
3. Is there a difference between the influence of these two types of responsibilities –childcare and domestic work– on childbearing intentions?
4. Does the use of paternal leave affect the intentions of women to have a second child?

The availability of the recently conducted Spanish Fertility Survey allows to assess whether the effect of the gender distribution of domestic and care tasks is also appreciable in the childbearing intentions of women in Spain. This paper aims at assessing the role of fathers' contribution to domestic and care work after having the first child on women's intention to have a second child. The relevance of focusing on the transition to the

second child in Spain is related to the fact that decreasing second birth rates are a key factor behind the lowest-low fertility level in the country (Esping-Andersen, 2013).

## 2 Methodology and data

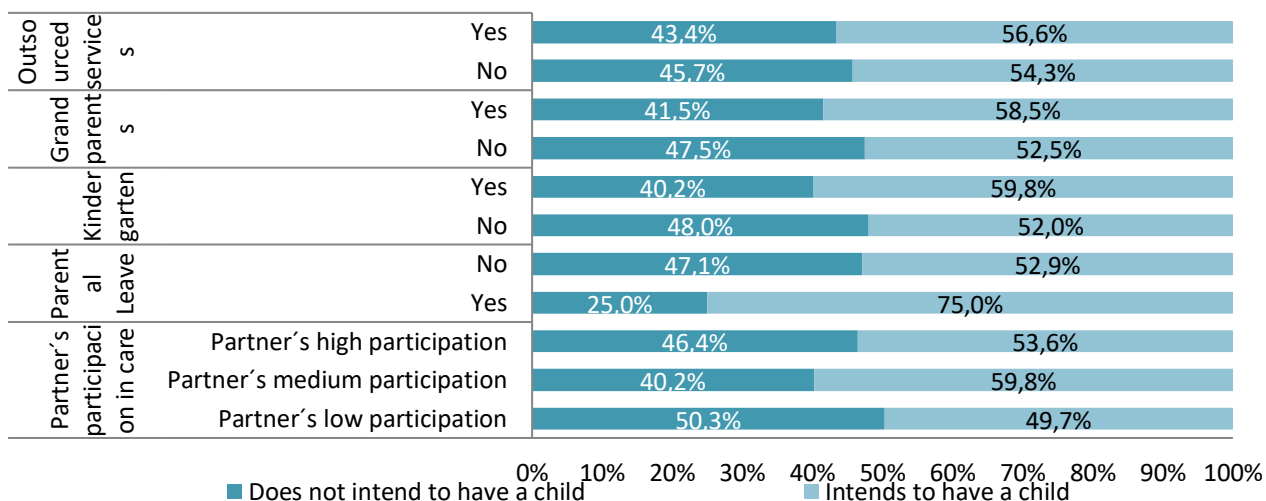
In order to answer the research questions posed above, we use the Spanish Fertility Survey, which came out in April 2019. The microdata set includes a sample of 14,556 women –and 2,169 men– aged between 18 and 55. In order to carry out the analysis, the analytical sample will be restricted to one-child mothers under age 41 who live with their partners, regardless of their marital status. The detailed questionnaire provides a wide range of variables that can be included as controls in the models in order to assess the importance of the gendered distribution of household responsibilities on women’s fertility intentions.

The analysis will be based mainly on logit models, having as dependent variable the “intention to have a child within the following three years”. Independent variables will be clustered into three groups: 1) the couple’s distribution of housework and childcare, 2) the sociodemographic characteristics of the woman and her partner, and 3) the outsourcing of care and housework services.

## 3 Provisional results

A preliminary descriptive analysis shows that there are some difference between those women who intend to have a second child and who do not according to the distribution of household and care work in the couple. The following graph displays how in those couples in which the partner’s participation is high, 53.5% of women intend to have a second child, while in those in which the participation is low, this percentage is somewhat lower. As for parental leave, observed differences are remarkable, as 75% of women whose partner took a parental leave with the first child intend to have a second child.<sup>1</sup> In relation with outsourced services or kindergarten, the effect of the latter is more relevant, as 59.8% of women who took their first child to a kindergarten intend to have another child within three years. A similar pattern is found among those who count on the help of grandparents.

**Graph 1. Distribution of intentions to have a second child within the following three years by availability of outsourced care and household services, availability of grandparents, kindergarten, partner’s parental leave and partner’s participation in care tasks.**



<sup>1</sup> These data must be taken with caution, as the sample of fathers who have taken parental leave is quite small.

Source: 2018 Fertility Survey, Spanish Statistical Office.

In order to assess whether the differences found in the descriptive analysis are due to associations with other variables, a preliminary logit model has been included in the appendix. Father's use of paternity leave with the first child and satisfaction with the couple relationship appear as relevant in explaining women's intention to have a second child. In contrast to our expectations, higher partner's participation on household and care work does not have a statistically significant effect on childbearing intentions. We will explore other measures of partner's participation in household and care work in order to confirm this result.

In Model 3, we include variables that are related to the possibility of outsourcing care and household duties, observing that all of them have a remarkable effect on fertility intentions. Those effects are much larger than the (in)equal distribution of domestic and care chores. It is especially relevant the effect of kindergarten and the help of a paid person who works in the house and/or with children. This suggests that there is room for improvement in public policies, since if more care services were guaranteed by the State, more women would intend to move to the second child.

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## 5 Appendix. Table of results.

Table 1. Logit models.

	MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3		
	Exp(B)	St. Error	Sig.	Exp(B)	St. Error	Sig.	Exp(B)	St. Error	Sig.
Satisfaction with Childcare distribution	.960	.043	.344	.989	.046	.811	.983	.046	.710
Partner's contribution to Childcare	.985	.107	.887	.919	.113	.457	.893	.115	.327
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Paternity leave									
No [Reference]									
Yes	2.679	.588	.094	2.956	.610	.076	2.855	.619	.090
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Percentage of household work by partner	.993	.005	.191	.998	.006	.697	.999	.006	.861
Satisfaction with housework distribution	1.069	.041	.106	1.037	.044	.414	1.041	.045	.372
Satisfaction with couple	1.178	.052	.002	1.142	.055	.015	1.166	.056	.006
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Kindergarten									
No [Reference]									
Yes							1.691	.157	.001

Grandparent								
No [Reference]								
Yes						1.267	.144	.101
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Outsourcing services								
No [Reference]								
Yes						1.922	.283	.021
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Level of study								
Upper secondary [Reference]								
Lower secondary			.906	.201	.625	.976	.203	.904
Tertiary			1.691	.172	.002	1.585	.174	.008
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Current work								
Not working [Reference]								
Permanent contract			1.098	.187	.618	1.035	.192	.858
Fixed-term contract			.787	.236	.308	.733	.239	.195
No contract			1.187	1.022	.867	1.149	1.026	.892
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Age								
30 - 34 years [Reference]								
18 -24 years			.590	.446	.237	.528	.449	.154
25 - 29 years			1.446	.269	.170	1.435	.272	.185
35 - 39 years			.397	.161	.000	.421	.163	.000
40 years			.365	.270	.000	.412	.275	.001
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Marital status								
Not married [Reference]								
Married			1.095	.156	.560	1.159	.158	.353
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Partner's level of study								
Upper secondary [Reference]								
Lower secondary			.914	.173	.603	.923	.175	.647
Tertiary			1.895	.189	.001	1.784	.192	.003
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Partner's current work								
Not working [Reference]								
Permanent contract			.687	.283	.184	.665	.285	.153
Fixed-term contract			1.032	.310	.920	.979	.313	.946
No contract			.571	.977	.567	.490	.974	.464
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Personal income			.863	.142	.299	.819	.145	.169
Partner income			.914	.130	.488	.894	.131	.393
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Constant	.296	.443	.006	.888	.594	.841	.629	.608
- 2 LL			1356.988			1263.852		1243.107

Source: 2018 Fertility Survey, Spanish Statistical Office.