

**Working mothers in Great Britain and Spain:
A Preliminary Analysis**

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Introduction

This paper addresses the ways in which women combine work and family in Spain and Britain. One of the main aims of this comparison is to establish whether socio-economic status, e.g. level of education, is associated with similar patterns of women's employment and family formation in northern and southern Europe. Throughout Europe, educational attainment is closely associated with economic activity, and the extent to which the employment of highly qualified Spanish women's employment is broadly equivalent to that of British women, may be taken as evidence of convergence in women's experience of employment and family formation. As women's economic activity has increased throughout Europe concomitant with declining fertility, the ways in which women combine employment with motherhood has become central to explaining women's occupational attainment and patterns of family formation, especially levels of fertility (Blossfeld, 1995; Bernhardt, 1993). Yet it is extremely difficult to generalise about the relationship between employment and family formation in a European context. From a southern European perspective, it is necessary to take into account the specific characteristics of the Mediterranean family and labour market structures. Bettio and Villa (1998) argue that Mediterranean family solidarity and the central role played by the family in providing social support may, in part, explain why southern European countries do not fit the expected relationship between fertility and women's employment. For example both Italy and Spain currently have one of the lowest rates of fertility in the world, yet women's employment rate is below the European average (European Commission 1995). Low fertility in the South may reflect high costs of child-rearing in a society where the family provides the most important welfare safety net and young people remain resident in the parental home until their late twenties supported by their parents (Pinnelli, 1995). Delayed leaving home in the South is associated with entry into higher education, as the majority of students live with their parents for the duration of their studies, and high youth unemployment which makes it difficult for young people to establish their economic independence (Vergés Escuín, 1997; Garrido and Requena, 1996). Lower coverage of unemployment benefits in the South - which discriminate against young people - leads to a majority of unemployed adult children the Mediterranean countries not being eligible benefits and more dependent on their parents than their northern European counterparts (Bettio and Villa, 1998; Almeda and Sarasa, 1996). This is hypothesised to delay the process of family formation thus lowering period fertility.

The specific structure of the labour markets in both countries mitigates against flexibility in combining employment and family. The southern European labour markets are characterised by strong insider/outsider effects, with 'insiders' enjoying relatively secure and long-term employment, while 'outsiders' rely on insecure employment (Adam, 1996). For many women high rates of unemployment restrict opportunities to secure employment in the first place, however once that have found a job they are reluctant to take a break to start a family, as re-entering employment may be just as difficult. Moreover, combining employment and motherhood is problematic as the majority of women who work in the South do so full-time (Ruivo *et al*, 1998; Cousins, 1994). There are limited opportunities for combining part-time work and motherhood, the favoured solution of working mothers in many northern European countries, particularly Great Britain (Smith *et al*, 1998). Though limited opportunities for part-time employment do not necessarily hinder combining employment and motherhood, as the French case proves, full-time work does depend on the availability of adequate child-care (Dex *et al*, 1993). In southern Europe responsibility for child-care is mostly regarded as a

matter for the family (Millar and Warman 1996). Hence one factor that may influence women's ability to combine employment and motherhood is the availability of kin to provide child-care (usually a grand-parent). Bettio and Villa (1998) suggest that greater proximity between kin and higher frequency of contacts is characteristic of the Mediterranean family. In Spain kinship networks are maintained either through coresidence of elderly parents and adult children or close proximity of residence of close relatives (Holdsworth, 1997). In Spain in 1991 52.7% of adult children (age 20 to 49) who did not live with their parents lived in the same municipio as at least one parent, though it should be noted that the size of the municipio varies from a population below 100 (hamlet) to over 500,000 residents (built up city area) (INE, 1993). Close proximity of parents may mean that women have greater access to informal child-care, however it may also lead to a double burden on mothers who will also have to care for elderly parents. The role of the kinship networks in supporting women's employment through providing child-care will therefore depend on the specific circumstances of family members.

We can therefore identify a number of factors which may be associated with different patterns of employment of women in North and South, relating to characteristics of the Mediterranean family, high unemployment, insider/outsider differences in the labour market and dependency on family for child-care. The ways in which Spanish and British women combine employment and family-formation will reflect these factors. Furthermore, we may also expect that women's experience of combining the two vary by level of qualification. This may lead to polarisation of employment patterns between women with higher educational attainment and less well educated women, reflecting the fact that women with greater human capital, such as educational qualifications, are in a better position to overcome the difficulties in securing employment and combining this with family formation. It is important to identify differences in the ways which women combine work and family commitments if we are to understand fully the causal relationship between fertility and employment in a European context (Bernhardt, 1993). In most cases the two have been assumed to be incompatible, yet increasingly throughout Europe this may no longer be the case. In this paper we compare the extent to which motherhood continues to be incompatible with employment in two European countries and for women from different backgrounds in each country.

Data Sources

This paper compares the employment of a cohort of British and Spanish women aged in their early thirties in 1991. The analysis of working mothers in Great Britain is based on the National Child Development Survey (Shepherd, 1995). This is a prospective study of a cohort of people born in one week in March 1958 and followed since birth, giving 11,193 cases in 1991. In this analysis data are taken from the interviews when the respondents were aged 16 (1974 interview) and 33 (1991 interview). Each interview provides detailed information on education, employment, housing and partnerships. For this analysis I have extracted all women with non-missing values for economic activity, current partner and fertility history giving 5489 cases in total. The Spanish data is taken from the 1991 Spanish Sociodemographic Survey (INE, 1993), a retrospective survey of 160,000 individuals which includes information on respondents' housing, education, employment and family. A Spanish cohort of women born between 1956 and 1960 (a total of 7263 cases) has been extracted to compare with the British 1958 cohort.

Family Structure

Table 1 compares the family type of respondents as recorded in 1991. A greater proportion of Spanish women had a least one child, 80.2%, compared to 75.3% of British women. The

proportion of single (taken as currently without partner, not marital status) childless women is slightly higher in Spain (12.3% compared to 10.5%), while the proportion of partnered childless women in Spain is half of that in Britain. By far the majority of Spanish partnered women are married, while a larger proportion of British women are in cohabiting relationships. Turning to women with children, a larger proportion are partnered in Spain (93.7%) than in Britain (89.3%). However, of those with children a third of Spanish women had one child only compared to 22.0% in Britain. This cohort therefore conforms with expected differences in family formation between the two countries. The higher proportion of single women in Spain is indicative of the long Spanish family and delayed leaving home (5% and 13% of women were living in the parental home in Britain and Spain respectively). The higher proportion of married Spanish women and the lower proportion of lone mothers demonstrates the continuing institutionalisation of marriage (Jurado Guerrero and Naldini 1996), while in Britain there is more evidence of new patterns of family formation, for example higher divorce rates (as evident by higher number of lone mothers 72.1% of whom are divorced or separated). The small proportion of childless couples in Spain suggests that fewer couples in Southern Europe delay childbearing and the expectation to have children soon after marriage remains high. However it is interesting to note that while more women in Spain are married with children, far more had only one child by their early thirties, this supports previous findings that a significant part of low fertility in Mediterranean countries is explained by large number of one-child families (Muñoz-Pérez, 1989). However, we do not know whether this cohort will eventually have a larger completed family size.

It is also informative to compare family structure by level of qualification (table 1). In both countries level of highest qualification achieved is divided into three groups: Degree or diploma; post compulsory but below university level; compulsory only or no qualification. Given the different education systems in the two countries it is extremely difficult to devise a truly comparative measure of qualification, especially among women with lower level qualifications. In particular in Spain it is not possible to divide women who leave school at the end of compulsory education into those leaving with

Table 1: Distribution of family structure for women aged 33/31-35 in Great Britain and Spain by highest level of qualification, 1991.**Number of cases in parenthesis**

Family structure	Britain				Spain			
	All Women	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only	All Women	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only
Single, No Children	10.5 (570)	16.2 (205)	13.8 (82)	7.9 (283)	12.3 (892)	24.7 (382)	13.2 (208)	7.3 (302)
Single, Children	8.0 (436)	3.1 (40)	4.4 (26)	10.3 (370)	5.1 (372)	3.9 (61)	6.3 (100)	5.1 (208)
Partnered, No Children	14.3 (778)	22.2 (281)	17.5 (104)	10.9 (393)	7.5 (544)	13.1 (203)	7.7 (121)	5.3 (220)
Partnered, Youngest Child <5	37.6 (2053)	43.4 (548)	40.7 (242)	35.1 (1263)	39.5 (2872)	41.7 (644)	39.0 (616)	38.9 (1612)
Partnered, Youngest Child >5	29.6 (1617)	15.0 (190)	23.6 (140)	35.8 (1287)	35.6 (2586)	16.5 (254)	33.8 (533)	43.4 (1799)

Sources. GB: National Child Development Study, Spain: 1991 Sociodemographic Survey

Table 2: Percentage of women in work by family structure and highest level of qualification, for women aged 33/31-35 in Great Britain and Spain, 1991. Number of cases in parenthesis

Family structure	Britain			Spain		
	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only
Single, No Children	95.1 (205)	93.9 (82)	82.0 (283)	85.1 (382)	76.4 (208)	58.3 (302)
Single, Children	75.0 (40)	61.5 (26)	51.9 (370)	78.7 (61)	69.0 (100)	53.8 (208)
Partnered, No Children	91.1 (281)	96.2 (104)	90.3 (393)	84.2 (203)	67.8 (121)	49.5 (220)
Partnered, Youngest Child <5	64.8 (548)	47.1 (242)	48.1 (607)	74.1 (644)	45.8 (616)	24.0 (1612)
Partnered, Youngest Child >5	83.2 (190)	75.7 (140)	74.0 (1287)	67.3 (254)	44.7 (533)	30.3 (1799)

Sources. GB: National Child Development Study, Spain: 1991 Sociodemographic Survey

qualifications and those without, in the same way that it is possible to do for Britain based on qualifications at age 16, hence I have combined these two groups.

The distribution of family structure by level of qualification is broadly similar in both countries, in that a higher proportion of women with degree and diploma qualifications are single and childless or partnered and childless compared to all women in both countries. In particular the large proportion of highly qualified women in Spain who are childless and single indicates that highly qualified women are delaying family formation. In both countries a larger proportion of women with compulsory education only, have children (combining those in and out of partnerships) compared to more highly educated women. Moreover their youngest child is more likely to be of school-age, reflecting the fact that they begun family formation earlier. Hence we may conclude that though the underlying pattern of family formation differs in each country, the impact of educational attainment of family formation is broadly similar in both countries.

However, the question to be considered here is to what extent similarities in the relationship between family formation and educational attainment, are associated with comparable employment patterns in both countries. Table 2 gives the percentage of women in work by family structure and level of highest qualification. As expected, fewer women are in employment in Spain compared to Britain. In both countries women with pre-school age children are less likely to be in employment than any other group. In Spain single women have the highest employment rate but in Britain it is partnered women who are most likely to be in employment. The higher employment rates for British women without childcare commitments demonstrates a greater underlying level of employment compared to that for Spanish women. Furthermore there is more variation in employment rate by level of qualification for Spanish women, illustrating that qualifications have an impact on women's employment regardless of childcare commitments. However in both countries qualifications have a marked effect on the employment of women with children, particularly in Spain where employment rates of women in the highest qualification group are 3 times those of women with compulsory education when the youngest child is below 5, and over twice that for women with school-age children.

Moreover, unemployment has a greater effect on women's overall economic activity patterns in Spain than in Britain. Table 3 gives the economic activity and unemployment rates for women by family type and level of education. Women in Spain regardless of level of qualification or family composition have higher unemployment rates than British women. However, these rates must be treated with some degree of caution as it may be the case that British women who are unable to find work and who, due to their partner's circumstances, are not entitled to unemployment benefits, are unlikely to declare themselves as unemployed. Single women therefore provide the best indicator of the level of unemployment and, as can be seen from the tables, the unemployment rate of single Spanish women varies from 10.7% for highly qualified women to 17.3% for those with post-compulsory education. For British women the equivalent rates are 2.5% and 3.7% respectively. In Spain, the highest unemployment rates occur for lone mothers,

Table 3: Percentage of women economically active and unemployed (in parenthesis) by family structure and highest level of qualification, for women aged 33/31-35 in Great Britain and Spain, 1991.

Family structure	Britain			Spain		
	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only	Degree/Diploma	Post-Compulsory, below degree	Compulsory only
Single, No Children	97.6 (2.5)	97.6 (3.7)	88.3 (6.3)	95.8 (10.7)	93.8 (17.3)	73.5 (15.2)
Single, Children	75 (0)	61.5 (0)	55.4 (3.5)	93.4 (14.7)	95.0 (26.0)	82.7 (28.9)
Partnered, No Children	93.2 (0.9)	98.1 (0.8)	94.1 (1.5)	93.6 (9.4)	86.8 (19.0)	65 (15.5)
Partnered, Youngest Child <5	65.7 (0.9)	47.9 (0.8)	49.6 (1.5)	86 (11.9)	66.9 (21.1)	46.2 (22.2)
Partnered, Youngest Child >5	84.7 (1.5)	77.1 (1.4)	75.7 (1.7)	81.5 (14.2)	68.3 (23.6)	52.4 (22.1)

Sources. GB: National Child Development Study, Spain: 1991 Sociodemographic Survey

though due to the small numbers involved the confidence intervals for these rates are very high. The rates for partnered women without children are similar to those for single women, with the overall lower level of economic activity explained by a smaller proportion of women in employment. Spanish women with school-age children have higher unemployment rates, with 1 in 5 women with below degree level qualifications unemployed. This may suggest that women who have a higher chance of experiencing unemployment start their families early and chose motherhood rather than trying to look for work. However the direction of causality is unclear as the high rates of unemployment recorded here may reflect a shortage for jobs for these women, which may be due to their low educational attainment, or to the fact that childcare demands make it harder for them to secure employment. Conversely in Britain, women with children have very low unemployment rates, this may reflect women who can not find work describing themselves as 'housewives' and hence economically inactive, or that because of the larger number of part-time jobs in Britain, the majority of women with children who want to work, are able to do so.

Comparison of employment and economic activity rates for women in both countries suggests greater polarisation of employment experiences in Spain, using educational attainment as a measure of human capital resources. In the next section of the paper we test the hypotheses that family structure has a greater impact on women's employment in Britain than in Spain, while in the latter socio-economic factors, including education and socio-economic background, have a greater impact on enabling Spanish women to overcome structural barriers to employment.

Modelling women's employment

The different patterns of women's employment participation have been formally modelled using a logistic regression model. This model tests the hypothesis that socio-economic background has a greater impact on women's employment in Spain, while family composition is more important in Britain, after controlling for other variables.

The dependent variable is coded 0 for all women out of work in 1991 and 1 for all those in employment (no distinction is made between hours of work). The independent variables fitted in the model are:

Women's Family circumstance in 1991

Family composition:

1. Single (not partnered) no children
2. Single (not partnered) with children
3. Partnered, no children
4. Partnered, youngest child aged less than 5/6
6. Partnered, youngest child aged 5/6 and over

Whether partner is in employment:

1. Partner working
2. Partner not working
3. No partner

Women's socio-economic background

Father's occupation when respondent was aged 16

1. Professional/managerial
2. Intermediate

3. Agricultural worker
4. Manual worker
5. Not working/missing

Father's education

1. Post compulsory education
2. Compulsory education only
3. Missing

Mother's education

1. Post compulsory education
2. Compulsory education only
3. Missing

Whether mother was working at age 16

1. Working
2. Not working
3. Missing

Women's educational attainment

Level of highest qualification attained:

1. Degree and over
2. Diploma
3. Post compulsory but below diploma/degree
4. Compulsory

Household Structure in 1991

Living with parent:

1. Not with parent
2. With parent
3. Parent in same Municipio (Spain only)

As proximity to kin in Spain is measured by parent in the same Municipio the size of which varies considerably, a variable on the size of Municipio of residence is also included (this controls for the fact that women who live in a large Municipio have a greater probability of living in the same Municipio as their parent).

Each block of variables has been added at a separate stage and the results of the progressive model are given in table 4. The variables fitted in model 1 are for current family situation: family structure and partner working. With the reference category as partnered/no children, there is greater variation in the odds of being in work by family structure for British women than Spanish women. In the Spanish model the odds of being in work of partnered women with children (either age category) are around one-third of those for the reference category, partnered women with no children. In Britain however, women in all family structure groups are less likely to be in work in comparison with the reference category, this is in part due to the high numbers of working women in the reference category. The odds for partnered women with children aged five and older are similar to those for Spanish women, while for women with below school age children they are considerably smaller (one tenth of those for the reference group). For single women, the odds ratios show that in Spain women without children are more likely to be in employment, while in Britain those with and without children have a lower odds of being in work. Those for British single mothers are particularly low, especially in comparison with the Spanish model.

Table 4: Odds ratios from the model of women's employment

Dependent variable 0=not working 1=working ** Significant at 95% level * Significant at 90% level

	Great Britain					Spain					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 5
Family composition:											
1. Single no children	0.62**	0.63**	0.63**	0.67**	0.45**	1.41**	1.43**	1.34**	1.45**	1.46**	1.58**
2. Single with children	0.10**	0.10**	0.11**	0.12**	0.10**	0.81	0.82	1.06	1.08	1.07	1.16
3. Partnered, no children	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
4. Partnered, child <5	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.09**	0.33**	0.34**	0.38**	0.37**	0.37**	0.31**
5. Partnered, child >5	0.30**	0.30**	0.34**	0.34**	0.32**	0.29**	0.32**	0.42**	0.42**	0.42**	0.43**
Whether partner is in employment:											
1. Working	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2. Not working	0.25**	0.26**	0.27**	0.27**	0.26**	0.81*	0.85	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.03
3. No partner	aliased	aliased	aliased	aliased	aliased	aliased	aliased	aliased	Aliased	aliased	aliased
Father's occupation when respondent was aged 16											
1. Professional/managerial	1.16	1.07	1.07	1.05		1.60**	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.05
2. Intermediate	1.11	1.09	1.09	1.08		1.45**	1.04	1.03	1.02	1.02	1.02
3. Agricultural worker	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.00		0.67**	0.72**	0.72**	0.76**	0.76**	0.75**
4. Manual worker	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
5. Not working/missing	0.89	0.88	0.88	0.88		0.99	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.96
Father's education											
1. Post compulsory	1.06	0.96	0.95	0.95		1.40**	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.93
2. Compulsory only	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3. Missing	1.47*	1.42*	1.42*	1.40*		na	na	Na	na	na	na
Mother's education											
1. Post compulsory	0.99	0.92	0.92	0.93		1.62**	1.15	1.15	1.16	1.16	1.15
2. Compulsory education	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3. Missing	1.13	1.11	1.11	1.12		na	na	Na	na	na	na
Mother's employment when respondent age 16											
1. Working	1.19**	1.16*	1.16*	1.16*		1.40**	1.44**	1.45**	1.46**	1.46**	1.46**
2. Not working	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3. Missing	0.78	0.79	0.79	0.80		na	na	Na	na	na	na
Level of highest qualification attained:											
1. Degree/Diploma		1.90**	1.89**	1.11			5.76**	5.73**	5.80**	5.80**	5.04**
2. Post compulsory		1.13	1.12	2.59*			2.10**	2.10**	2.08**	2.08**	2.00**
3. Compulsory		1.00	1.00	1.00			1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

	Great Britain					Spain					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4a	Model4b	Model5
Household Structure in 1991											
1.Not with parent				1.00	1.00			1.00		-	
2.With parent				0.83	0.88			0.88		-	
Interaction: family composition* qualification											
1.Family type 1*Qualification 1					3.76**						0.75
2.Family type 2*Qualification 1					2.52**						0.58
3.Family type 4*Qualification 1					1.72*						1.70**
4.Family type 5*Qualification 1					1.44						0.89
1.Family type 1*Qualification 2					1.30						1.13
2.Family type 2*Qualification 2					0.57						0.87
3.Family type 4*Qualification 2					0.35*						1.26
3.Family type 5*Qualification 2					0.40						0.88
Spain only:											
Household Structure in 1991											
1.Not with parent										1.00	1.00
2.With parent										0.98	0.96
3. Parent in same Municipio (Spain only)										1.23**	1.24**
Population of Municipio											
< 5,000										0.92	0.93
5,001-20,000										0.89	0.89
20,001-100,000										1.07	1.07
> 100,000										1.00	1.00

Partner's employment status has a significant effect, with women with non-working partners less likely to be working themselves, though this effect is greater in Britain. This is probably due to homogamy in partnership choice, with unemployed women marrying unemployed men. Though in Britain a more important factor is the social security system which often acts as a disincentive for wives of unemployed men to work, as their earnings are offset against benefits. In Spain, Adam (1996) demonstrates that partners' unemployment has a positive effect on women's employment, as husbands' labour market mobility increases the mobility of wives. However, there is no evidence of this relationship from the cross-sectional analysis.

Variables for respondent's background are included in model 2. These variables show that once a women's family circumstances are controlled for, parental background has very little effect on the odds of working in Britain, with the exception of mother's employment status at age 16, which suggests that women are influenced by their mothers' employment patterns. In Spain parental education and father's occupation are all significant, with daughters of highly educated men and women more likely to be working than daughters of less well educated parents. The same relationship is observed for father's occupation, with daughters of service and intermediate workers having higher odds of being in work than those with manual-class fathers. However, daughters of agricultural workers are less likely to be in employment than those of manual workers. It is also interesting note that for the Spanish model, after controlling on family background, the odds for partner's employment status are no longer significant and close to 1. Hence at this stage of the modelling it would appear that in Britain, a women's current family structure is the strongest determinant of whether they work or not, whilst in Spain support for the polarisation thesis is provided by the significant results for family background. This suggests that women from higher socio-economic background have a higher expectation of being in employment, regardless of family structure - or are in a better position to find work. A further distinctive characteristic of Spanish women's employment is the lower odds for daughters of agricultural workers. Far more Spanish women (24%) fall into this group than British women (1.5%) indicative of the continuing importance of agricultural employment in rural Spain. The low odds for women's employment suggest that the distinctive patterns in employment also occur between 'rural' and 'urban' Spain. However, it may be the case that a large part of women's agricultural employment is not recorded in the survey by the women themselves, particularly if it is seasonal.

In the third stage of the model (model 3) we include women's level of qualification. This variable has a noticeable effect on the odds ratios for the family background variables in the Spanish model, as those for parent's education are no longer significant (the majority of women with higher level qualifications will also have highly educated parents). For father's occupation, the odds ratio for daughters of agricultural workers remain significant, while mothers' employment continues to be significant. In Britain all family background variables are insignificant at this stage. Moreover, the odds for qualification suggest that there is greater differential by qualification in Spain than in Britain. Women with degree and diploma level qualifications are almost 6 times more likely to be in employment compared to women with compulsory -level education, compared to odds ratios of around 2 in Britain. We have to be careful when comparing the two models, as the two reference categories are slightly different, however the results for qualification and for family background would suggest that there is considerable degree of polarisation in women's employment in Spain, after controlling for family structure. Interactions between qualification and family structure were fitted in model 5. In Spain the only significant interaction is between university-educated partnered women with a child below 5 which indicates that the odds of this group of women being in

employment are higher than would otherwise be expected. In Britain interaction terms between highly qualified single women (with or without children) are significant thus reflecting the differences in employment rates of highly qualified single women and those with fewer qualifications.

In model 4 (4a and 4b in Spain) variables for family structure are fitted. In Spain and Britain living with parents has no effect on the odds of being in employment after controlling for the other variables. However, when this variable is extended for the Spanish model, the importance of having relatives nearby is evident as women in this category have higher odds of being in work. It is not possible to test this effect for Britain, however elsewhere in the survey questions were asked on childcare arrangements for women (for further detail see Ward *et al* 1996). Out of all women in work just over one third of women relied on their parents for some or all of their childcare costs. An equal number of women relied on partners, with only one-fifth using formal childcare (including au pairs, childminders, nursery), while two-fifths depended on schooling to meet their childcare needs. In total two-thirds of women had family or friends to provide childcare, with 36% relying exclusively on these informal arrangements. Hence in Britain, as in Spain, the family continues to be the main provider of childcare.

In the above model no distinction has been made by type of employment. In Britain, a far greater proportion of working women (46.8%) are employed part-time; 69.1% and 63.1% of women with a child less than 5 and over 5 respectively compared to 4.5% of single and 11.5% of partnered childless women. In Spain, while the majority of women work full-time (87.9%), a large number of women work in temporary employment. Combining those in full-time, permanent with contract work as an estimate of women with 'insider' employment which would most probably provide women with economic independence; 58.6% of working Spanish women fall into this category. Breaking this down by family type the lowest percentage is found for women with children aged 5 and over (47.8%), while among childless women, 66.4% of single and 62.4% of partnered women have 'insider' employment. Hence the distribution of insider/outsider employment types in Spain is different from part-time versus full-time employment in Britain. British part-time work is more closely associated with family circumstances, while insider/outside effects in Spain reflect difficulties facing all women in securing employment.

Discussion

From the results of the model it would appear that there are fewer restrictions on combining employment and motherhood in Spain. However, the higher relative odds of being in work for women with children in Spain compared to Britain are influenced by the lower level of employment among partnered, childless women in Spain (the reference category). This suggests that Spanish women are more likely to leave employment on getting married and prior to having children, which is now very uncommon in Britain. Moreover in Spain all women, regardless of family circumstances, find it harder to secure employment than their counterparts in Britain. This demonstrates an important difference between Great Britain and Spain; in the former childcare commitments restrict employment opportunities, while women without children have practically full employment. However, in Spain childcare commitments do not account for employment participation to the same extent as observed in Great Britain. We might therefore expect a different causal relationship between employment and fertility in the two countries. This is an issue in need of further research.

There is also evidence of emerging polarisation between highly qualified women and those with lower educational attainment in Spain comparing both levels of economic activity and employment. What is unclear is the extent to which this polarisation is due to less well qualified women in Spain choosing motherhood over employment, due to the difficulty in combining the two, or if women from different socio-economic backgrounds have different normative attitudes towards employment and motherhood in some sectors of Spanish society.

In Britain, barriers to employment have been reduced following implementation of equal opportunities legislation. However, structural changes in the labour market that have led to an increase in part-time employment as the favoured solution of combining motherhood and employment. Since World War II, part-time employment has been established as the most appropriate way for mothers to work. The reliance on part-time work has not been matched by equivalent investment in affordable child-care. In comparison with other northern European countries, provision for maternity leave is less generous (though as policies have changed over recent years it is difficult to provide an accurate comparison, see though Gustafsson *et al*, 1996). With relatively little social policy directed towards working mothers, the presence of dependent children has a critical impact on women's employment, earning potential and economic independence (Joshi *et al*, 1995). The circumstances of lone mothers in Britain illustrate the impact of this 'policy'. The low employment rates of lone mothers reflect the fact that jobs for mothers (usually part-time jobs) do not guarantee economic independence, and crucially do not cover the costs of child-care leaving many lone mothers 'better off' on benefits than in employment.

Spain too is characterised by relatively few policy initiatives to support working mothers. This in part reflects the relatively recent adoption of equal opportunities after the death of Franco and conversion to democracy. The development of social policy since the mid 1970s has been motivated by two contrasting forces, on the one hand a rejection of the traditionalist approach towards the family adopted by Franco, leaving a dearth of legislation on specific family issues (Valiente, 1996). However the development of welfare reform has been based on the continuation of the male breadwinner norm, and welfare provision is underwritten by the safety net provided by the family (Adam, 1996; Millar and Warman, 1996; Cousins, 1995). The focus of policy reform is to protect the interests of adult working men and is based on the assumption of a male breadwinner wage model. Benefits are mostly restricted to individuals who have been in employment, leaving the large number of never-employed young people dependent on their families. Maternity benefit is also restricted to workers in the social security system with 6 months contributions, and provides 75% of pay for 14 weeks. Given the large number of women in temporary and casual work a significant of women are probably excluded, thus intensifying the employment insider/outsider effects. As in Britain, the majority of working women rely on the family for childcare.

Hence, in both countries, social policy regimes, though distinctive in their relationship towards family issues, provide relatively little support for working mothers. The main differences between patterns of women's employment in the two countries and its relationship with family formation are related to labour market structures, particularly availability of part-time work in Britain and insider/outsider effects in Spain. Underlying these structural effects are normative expectations of women's employment. In particular the growth of part-time employment in Britain is associated with a recognition that this provides an appropriate way for women to combine family responsibilities and employment. Conversely in Spain, expectations of a male breadwinner norm are greater, as reinforced by welfare regime, making it far harder for women to combine families and employment. In this

welfare regime and cultural context women from more advantaged background are more successful in combining work and family.

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