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Work-family preferences and employment trajectories of mothers in different welfare regimes (1994-2012)

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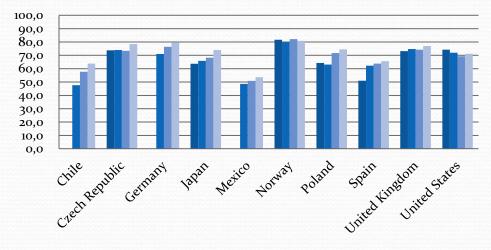




Background (OCDE Statistics)

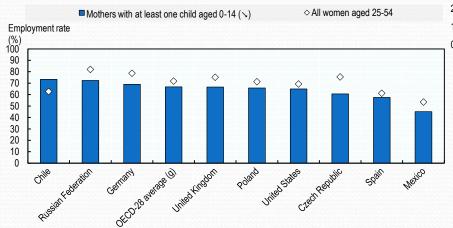
The incorporation of women (and mothers) into the labour market is a widespread trend in all

OECD countries in recent decades.



2000 2005 2010 2016

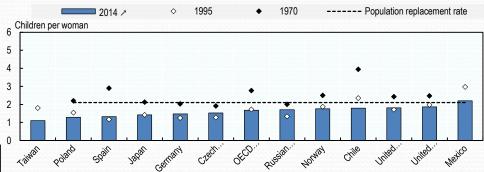
Graph 3. Maternal employment rates (2013)



Graph 1. Employment rates women 25-54 (2000-2016)

Other general trends in recent decades are the **decrease of the fertility rate** and the expansion of **family policies** since the late 1990s. These policies promote female employment and the reconciliation of work and family.

Graph 2: Total fertility rate (1970-2014)



International surveys have found **important** changes in the attitudes towards maternal employment and gender roles, although there exist significant variations across countries.

Background

Table 1. Do you think that women should work outside the home: full time, part time or not at all under these circumstances? When there is a child under school age (below 6)

| | Work full time 2012 | Work full time 1994 | Work part time 2012 | Work part time 1994 | Stay at home 2012 | Stay at home 1994 |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Czech R. | 16.5 | 6.6 | 44.4 | 39.4 | 39.1 | 53.9 |
| Germany (E) | 32.9 | 14.8 | 60.3 | 64.5 | 6.7 | 20.7 |
| Germany(W) | 4.8 | 1.3 | 68.9 | 30.2 | 26.9 | 68.5 |
| Great Britain | 6.6 | 5.9 | 52.8 | 31.9 | 40.6 | 62.2 |
| Japan | 6.1 | 11.1 | 25.2 | 25.7 | 68.7 | 63.3 |
| Norway | 32.6 | 7.7 | 55.0 | 47.5 | 12.5 | 44.8 |
| Poland | 13.5 | 11.2 | 28.4 | 14.4 | 58.1 | 74.5 |
| Russia | 12.8 | 4.1 | 53.2 | 35.6 | 34 | 60.3 |
| Spain | 13.9 | 14.0 | 60.1 | 39.3 | 26 | 46.7 |
| United States | 17.6 | 11.1 | 47.0 | 34.2 | 35.4 | 54.7 |

Source: ISSP "Family, Work and Gender Roles" (1994, 2002 and 2012). Blue: maximum value. Red: minimum value.

There is no general trend (1994-2012). The majority of the countries increase their percentage of preference for full-time work, but Spain not (stability). In contrast, the part-time option increases its popularity. In the case of staying at home, this option has decreased in all countries except Japan. Japan shows a traditional gender role, followed by Poland. The majority of interviewees in Latin America, West Germany, Great Britain and Spain prefer part-time work and the highest figures of working full time are found in Norway and East Germany. None of these countries prefer full-time work to part-time work.

Background

Table 2. Do you think that women should work outside the home: full time, part time or not at all under these circumstances? When the youngest child starts school.

| | Work full time 2012 | Work full time 1994 | Work part time 2012 | Work part time 1994 | Stay at home 2012 | Stay at home 1994 |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Czech R. | 42.3 | 22.6 | 44.9 | 57.9 | 12.8 | 19.6 |
| Germany (E) | 54 | 27.0 | 43.3 | 67.0 | 2.6 | 6.0 |
| Germany(W) | 18.7 | 4.9 | 74.4 | 67.1 | 6.9 | 28.0 |
| Great Britain | 34.0 | 18.2 | 63.6 | 72.9 | 2.4 | 8.9 |
| Japan | 17.1 | 17.1 | 65.1 | 56.5 | 17.8 | 26.4 |
| Norway | 66.4 | 25.2 | 32.1 | 64.2 | 1.6 | 10.6 |
| Poland | 56.1 | 30.0 | 30.4 | 29.8 | 13.5 | 40.2 |
| Russia | 36.8 | 10.2 | 54.5 | 58.2 | 8.7 | 31.6 |
| Spain | 54.0 | 32.6 | 41.5 | 44.7 | 4.4 | 22.7 |
| United States | 54.0 | 37.8 | 41.1 | 53.8 | 5.0 | 8.4 |

Source: ISSP "Family, Work and Gender Roles" (1994, 2002 and 2012). Blue: maximum value. Red: minimum value.

Trend: All countries increase their preference for full-time work, except Japan. Japan increases their figures in the case of part-time work and others countries not because they prefer full-time work (Norway, United States). In the case of staying at home, this option has decreased in all countries. The highest increases in full-time work occur in Norway, East Germany, Poland and Russia; whereas in part-time work happen in Japan. Poland is an interesting case: in 1994 it had the maximum value in staying at home (40.2) and in full-time work (30), in 2012 it has decreased the first option to 13.5 and the second has increased to 56.1, only overtook by Norway.

Theoretical framework: explanations of maternal employment

There exist many explanations of female (and maternal) employment. We test two opposing theories: Hakim's preference theory and the institutional approach.

- * Hakim argues that in the most advanced post-industrial societies the fundamental element for understanding maternal employment is the study of the individual preferences of women. Women can be divided into three groups depending on the importance they place on work and caregiving in their lives: work-centered women, home-centered women and adaptative women (the last is the largest and the most heterogenous group, composed by women who do not give priority to either aspect).
- * Critics of Hakim's view argue that individuals continue to remain part of social structures and cultural and institutional contexts that continue to exercise power over them (Crompton 2006). Women are conditioned by other factors when deciding whether to work or not, which justifies the existence of inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviors (Crompton and Lyonette 2005; Pfau-Effinger 2010). Some of these constraints are related to institutional factors (for example, parental leave and childcare services), others to the labor market (availability of part-time employment, flexible working hours) and the economic situation, and still others to the normative (cultural) contexts that characterize a society (cultural assumptions about care and family duties).

Research questions and methodology

If we compare the preferences towards maternal employment (surveys) and the actual maternal employment rates, it is clear that **there exist a gap.** This reality leads to some **research questions**:

1: to what extent do women who become mothers match their preferences with their behaviours?

2: what factors influence the probability of experiencing a coherence or a discrepancy?

3: what countries have larger and smaller discrepancies?

4: has the gap between preferences and behaviours decreased or increased in last two decades?

Database: Family, Work and Gender Roles module of the International Social Survey Programme-ISSP (1994, 2002 and 2012 waves).

Selection of countries: Great Britain, Germany, Norway, Spain and Czech Republic

- If Hakim's assumptions are proven true, one would expect: (i) a high degree of coherence between preferences and work trajectories in the more economically advanced countries (ii) that this coherence has increased in the last two decades because the conditions for the "new scenario" have expanded in these societies; and (iii) that the coherence between preferences and work trajectories is greater in Great Britain, given that, according to this author, this country is the best example, together with the United States, of the place where women can more freely choose which life path to follow.
- If the culturalist and institutionalist approaches are correct, women have a greater level of choice in countries like Norway, with an institutional and cultural context supportive of maternal employment, while women in more familistic countries (that is, with less developed or traditional family policies and/or more traditional gender cultures), such as Spain, Germany and the Czech Republic, are more constrained than the rest.

Methodology: dependent and independent variables

- **Sample**: mothers (who had a spouse/partner when they were raising their young children).
- Dependent variables:
 - Comparison preference-employment trajectory when child is under school age.
 - Comparison preference-employment trajectory when child starts school.

| Preferences | Employmen trayectory | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | Home | Part-time | Full-time | |
| Home | Both home | Worked more than desired | Worked more than desired | |
| Part-time | Prefer to work but didn't work | Both part-time | Worked more than desired | |
| Full-time | Prefer to work but didn't work | Worked less than desired | Both full time | |

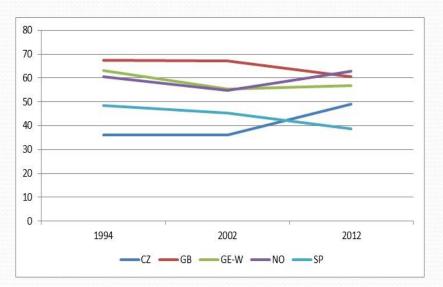
In green: consistency between preferences and employment.

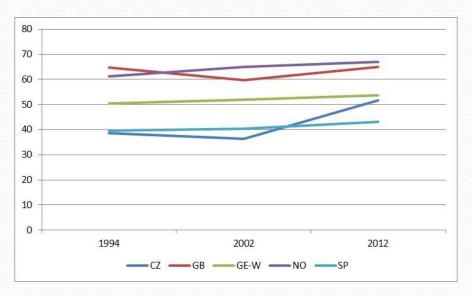
In blue, red and purple: discrepancy between preferences and employment.

- Each dependent variable has 6 categories: both home/both part-time/both full-time/worked more than desired/worked less than desired/prefer to work but didn't work.
- **Independent variables**: age in 3 groups (born in 1945 or before/born from 1946 to 1969 and born in 1970 or later) education (primary, secondary and tertiary), mother worked when respondent was below 14, countries. Control: partner's occupational status (employed full time, part time or not employed).
- **Method:** descriptive statistics and multinomial logistic regression.

Results (descriptive)

Figures 4a and 4b. Evolution of coherence between work orientations and employment trajectories Preschool child (Left), Child in school (Right)





- Great Britain and Norway show the highest percentages of coherence.
- **British mothers** with small children have worsened their situation while **Norwergian mothers** have improved their coherence (particularly when their children are in school).
- The lowest coherence is achieved in **Czech Republic and Spain**.
- Czech mothers have largely improved their situation, while Spanish mothers have increased their coherence when children are in school but have worsened when children are below 6. This pattern of Spanish mothers is repeated in the case of **West Germany**, although the levels of coherence are higher than in Spain.
- But... the composition of the coherence (and the of the gap) are very different among these countries

Distribution of coherence and inconsistency between what mothers consider desirable and their employment trajectories (2012)

| | Czech Republic | Germany (West) | Great Britain | Norway | Spain | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------|--|--|
| When a child is under school age (below 6) | | | | | | | |
| Both home | 22.1 | 16.6 | 29.7 | 5⋅3 | 15.4 | | |
| Both part-time | 13.2 | 36.7 | 27.1 | 35.6 | 16.5 | | |
| Both full-time | 13.7 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 22 | 6.9 | | |
| Total coherence | 49 | 56.8 | 60.5 | 62.9 | 38.8 | | |
| Worked less | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 9.1 | 1.3 | | |
| Worked more | 39.3 | 16 | 20.6 | 17.6 | 31.8 | | |
| Didn't work and wanted to | 10.1 | 25.7 | 18 | 10.4 | 28 | | |
| Total gap | 51 | 43.2 | 39.5 | 37.1 | 61.2 | | |
| When a child starts school | | | | | | | |
| Both home | 4.2 | 4.5 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 2.6 | | |
| Both part-time | 11.4 | 41.4 | 50.9 | 24.9 | 12.6 | | |
| Both full-time | 35.9 | 7.9 | 12.9 | 41.3 | 27.8 | | |
| Total coherence | 51.6 | 53.8 | 64.9 | 67 | 43 | | |
| Worked less | 1.7 | 3.8 | 8.9 | 15.8 | 7.4 | | |
| Worked more | 37 | 13.4 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 18.5 | | |
| Didn't work and wanted to | 9.7 | 29 | 13.7 | 4.7 | 31.2 | | |
| Total gap | 48.4 | 46.2 | 35.1 | 33 | 57 | | |

Results: multinomial regression analysis

The differences found in the descriptive analysis could be due to **effects of composition** in the samples, that is, to individual characteristics. I carried out a **multinomial regression analysis** for each year to verify which factors (age, education, having a working mother when she was a child, employment situation of the partner and country of residence) increase or decrease the probability that a mother will experience coherence or discrepancy. The data confirmed the hypotheses regarding **the impact of institutional and cultural factors**. Even when we control for individual variables, **coherence is greater in Great Britain, as assumed by Hakim**, but also women have more options in Norway, while the gap between preferences and behaviors is higher in the most familistic countries, as assumed by the institutional approach.

The analysis of this coherence is **complex**: although the **Norwegian and Czech mothers** have increased autonomy, they have achieved this with **reforms in family policies that are completely contradictory**. German reforms have improved coherence for mothers when their children are over six years old, but the same has not happened when their children are younger than that age. These results explain the efforts of German governments to expand public childcare services in recent years (Daly and Ferragina 2017; Wrohlich 2008). The possibilities of choosing the preferred career path have worsened in Great Britain in the case of women with small children. Finally, Spain is the only country where in no case do mothers who achieve coherence between their work trajectory and their wishes surpass those who experience a discrepancy. The "family care" model of the Mediterranean welfare states forces many women to accept a high workload or to give up their working careers.

Future research

This work has some **limitations**:

- We don't have information about the work experience of women before having children, the **occupation** of the respondents (although this variable is closely related to education) and other features (income, stability, public/private sector).
- We don't have information about the number of children in the household neither the occupation of the partner.
- Attitudes are dynamic: we are not sure if the preference declared in the survey is the same the respondent had when she became mother.
- Methodologically, Hakim criticised the use of a question about general attitudes ("Do you think that women should work") as a personal preference.
- The sample is composed by **partnered mothers**, results should not be generalised without further research to the rest of mothers.

More research is needed:

 Analysis of the impact of family policies in the level of consistency for different groups of mothers: have more educated women been more benefited than low educated mothers?

To know more:

García-Faroldi, Livia. 2018. Mother's autonomy or social constraints? Coherence and Inconsistency Between Attitudes and Employment Trajectories in Different Welfare Regimes. *Social Politics*. doi:10.1093/sp/jxy030.

Thank you!