

The persistence of male breadwinner model in southern European countries in a compared perspective: Familism, employment and family policies

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Abstract

This paper analyses the association between traditional family structures based on intergenerational and gender tasks and kinship solidarity and the family and employment policies in Southern European countries (Spain, Italy and Greece) from a compared perspective. In this way, the paper studies how the persistence of structures and family strategies associated with the male breadwinner model are linked in these countries with limited family and labour policies of support to the families with family responsibilities and dual-earners. The conclusion from these analyses refer to the fact that in the Southern European countries the institutional context in which the family and labour policies are developed would partly explain the continuity of low fertility, woman's economic and family dependence and, therefore, the persistence of the traditional family based on the male breadwinner model.

1.- INTRODUCTION

In recent years, welfare states have been turned into a fundamental analytical referent for explaining family changes and the unequal incorporation of women into the labour market in different European countries. The permanence of the traditional family and the limited participation of women in the labour market, have traditionally been two characteristic identification signs that have characterized the welfare states of southern Europe. In this sense, a line of comparative research that has attempted to demarcate the defining characteristics of the Mediterranean welfare regime has been developed (Ferrera, 1996; Trifiletti, 1999; Jurado y Naldini, 1996; Castles, 1995; Moreno, 1996). Limited development of family policies, permanence of family solidarity and dependence, limited flexibility of the labour market and unequal division of family work between men and women are determining factors which explain, in part, the restricted participation of women in the labour force.

In this paper, I have tried to incorporate the distinct theoretical perspectives applied to the comparative analysis of the welfare states with the objective of analyzing the evolution of the male breadwinner model in the southern European countries from a comparative perspective. So this paper will study how family models have evolved and the relationship between the institutional framework in which family policies of support to families and policies of employment and family conciliation have germinated and developed.

This paper studies the evolution of the family models in relationship with the institutional framework where the family policies have been developed.

2.- THEORETICAL MODEL: THE MALE BREADWINNER MODEL IN THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN WELFARE STATES

The comparative studies on welfare states, have incorporated the institution of the family (Esping Andersen 2000) and gender relations (Korpi, 2000) as key factors in the evolution of post-industrial economies. Esping Andersen was one of the first authors to introduce southern European countries into the comparative analysis of the welfare states. In the studies of this author, Spain, Italy and Greece are included in the conservative welfare regimes, where the presence of *familism (the predominance of the traditional family)* in family relations and in public policies, is an idiosyncratic characteristic that defines the welfare states of southern Europe, differentiating them from countries like Germany, Austria and Netherlands. Authors such as Del Boca (2002), Ferrera (1996), Trifiletti (1999), Saraceno (1994 ; 2003), Flaquer (2001; 2002) and Bettio and Villa (1998) have emphasized the characteristics that define the welfare states of southern Europe as regards to family policies, family formation, fertility and women's employment tendencies, highlighting the permanence of

traditional family structures associated with a restrictive family policy and reduced rates of working women, as well as reduced fertility indices.

The institutional peculiarities of southern European welfare states, have shaped employment and family strategies, giving way to a model of family finances characterized by *familism* (family solidarity and dependency) in which the male breadwinner model has been transformed into the principal referent for defining public aid policies to families, as well as employment policies.

For their part, researchers of the feminist tradition have questioned the typology designed by Esping Andersen for omitting gender categories in the comparative studies on welfare regimes (O'Connor, 1996; Lewis, 1992; Daly and Lewis, 2000; Lewis, 2004). Lewis (1992) specifically refers to welfare regimes that heed gender relations and points out the institutional consideration that each state concedes to "domestic work". Ostner and Lewis (1994) have developed this line of investigation paying special attention to the impact that social policies have had in strengthening or weakening the male breadwinner model in the different European welfare regimes. Lewis, in collaboration with Daly (2000:282) has reinforced this theoretical argument of gender relations, introducing into the comparative analyses of the welfare state the concept of "social care" which allows a link between the private and public spheres in the present institutional framework of the welfare states. In the authors' opinion, the introduction of this concept leads to an explanation of the change and development of family relations, in which gender relations have been transformed into a crucial element of the social policies of welfare states (Daly, 2000:290).

The form in which the different states have integrated the provision of "social care" into their social policies has determined the evolution experienced by family and employment models, and therefore the male breadwinner model. According to Esping Andersen, in the case of the social democratic welfare regime, the state has been entrusted to provide services to children and the elderly through a family policy of employment and family compatibility. This policy is based on the individualization of rights, which has encouraged higher rates of working women, thereby favoring the process of *de-familialization* (Esping Andersen, 2000: 51). In contrast, in southern European countries, the provision of these services has been privatised thus, giving rise to the transformation of the family into the principal agent for providing family services and, in this way, favoring family dependence and solidarity. The lack of family policies not only has implications for the family, but also for the division of labour and gender relations. In the case

of liberal welfare regimes, typical of the United Kingdom, the privatization of family services has been orientated to the market, favoring the externalization of this type of services. In the case of countries belonging to conservative welfare regimes, such as Germany or Austria, the state has developed a family policy based on the family and not on the individual. This affects gender relations and women's activity in the labour force which, being still higher than that of southern European countries, is comparatively lower than that of the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom.

In spite of the analytic contribution introduced by these authors, the model omits two important elements to be taken into account in the relationships between employment and family: the work time and the specialization of female employment. In this sense, Rubery (1998) concludes that the approach for conciliating employment and family adopted by women in the different welfare states is determined by family policies as well as by the possibilities of integrating part-time job into the labour market and the service sector. In this way, Rubery has tried to link employment strategies to the institutional framework of family and employment policies. The integration of these factors broadens the theoretical framework for explaining the idiosyncrasy of the male breadwinner model that characterizes the employment and family model, predominant in southern European countries.

Mutari and Figart (2001:38-39) were pioneers in introducing work time as an approach used by individuals to make employment and family compatible. In the framework of this typology, they defined diverse rankings of models, spanning from an egalitarian gender model in which men and women participated equally in employment and housework to a model of the male breadwinner in which the man works full-time and the woman dedicates herself to housework. The male breadwinner model is predominant in southern European countries, where the possibilities of working part-time are very restricted and women with family tasks depend economically on the income of the man (Mutari and Figart, 2001: 439).

Gottfried and O'Reilly (2002), broaden this explanatory model integrating the perspective of "social care" (Lewis and Daly, 2000) and the perspective of work time, with the ultimate objective of analyzing the importance of the two factors in the existing differences between the male breadwinner model in Germany and Japan.

Naldini (2002), in her study of Spanish and Italian families, introduces the historic perspective in order to explain how in these countries, family policies and the construction of the modern welfare regimes have been

affected by the experience of dictatorial regimes and the social-economic context. In this context, Naldini (2002: 98) suggests that the social policy of the Mediterranean welfare systems has favored the maintenance of a traditional male breadwinner model based on the solidarity and family dependence that characterizes rural society. As such, the male breadwinner model in these countries doesn't have the nuclear family as an exclusive referent, as in the case studied by Lewis (1992, 2004), but rather the extended family, in which he is the main economic referent for various generations and relatives that live in the same home.

Therefore, in the case of southern European countries, a series of factors converge in such a way that the limited family policy, together with the family dependence and a labour market that offers limited possibilities for women to work part-time, have given shape to a work and family model characterized by the permanence of the *male breadwinner* figure and the *ambivalent familism* that exists in a paradoxical institutional context of reduced development of family services (Saraceno, 2003). As a result of this complex puzzle, the male breadwinner model in southern European countries reflects the gap which exists between gender inequality, observed in families, and gender equality, defended institutionally but (Di Petre, Morgan and Engelhardt 2003), more as a declaration of intentions than as effective regulation.

The degree to which working women with family tasks have entered into the work force reveals the nature of gender relations, the degree of development of the welfare states as well as the introduction of the male breadwinner model. The reduced rates of employment of women with family tasks that characterizes countries like Spain, Greece and Italy shows an elevated degree of *familism* and a limited institutional network of support to families with children. This labour and family situation is found to be associated, in the majority of situations, with the maintenance of the male breadwinner and the mother caretaker model.

In the case of southern European countries, the limited possibilities that women have to work part-time, due to the rigidity of the labour market, the limited work and family compatibility policies developed by the welfare states, as well as the family dependence and solidarity that characterize the family relations in these countries, would explain the persistence of the male breadwinner model as a basic referent of the welfare state (Flaquer, 2002; Cousins, 2000; Moreno Mínguez, 2004)

3.- FAMILY AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

The analysis of work and family indicators reveal the existence of different employment regimes such as the persistence of traditional family forms associated with the male breadwinner model in southern European countries.

Since the end of the seventies, in the majority of European countries, the individualization of family and gender relations has contributed to debilitate the male-breadwinner model through the massive incorporation of women into the labour market (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In southern European countries, however, the persistence of the traditional family gender roles and family functions, transformed the traditional family into the main pillar of the dictatorial regimes in countries like Spain. The substitution of the male breadwinner model for a more egalitarian family model in Europe reflected the pluralization of different forms of coexistence and residence. The traditional nuclear family, characteristic of industrial society, gave way to new forms of family organization such as single-parent families or couples cohabiting. In the case of southern European countries, the scant incidence of the so-called 'new forms of family' and the persistence of traditional forms such as the extended family are emphasized.

In the majority of European countries, fundamentally in social democratic welfare regimes, the growing economic independence achieved by women in the decade of the seventies was favored on one hand by the transformation of family financial models and, on the other hand, by the transformation of the traditional division of family tasks. These processes gave way to new family and employment aspirations among the collective of women favoring the growth of these new family forms, which led to the decline of the patriarchal family and the male breadwinner model. Parallel to the decline of the traditional family, there was a decrease in birth rates, as well as a progressive increase in divorce rates, in the percentage of cohabitating couples and in the rates of employment and female employment (see table 1).

However, this process hasn't been reproduced with the same intensity, nor in a convergent form, in the different European countries. As reflected in the data that is presented in the following table, a clear difference is observed between the countries of northern Europe and southern European countries. It can be pointed out, according to the ECHP, in the year 2001, extended families in countries like Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal, represented 13.7%, 7.8%, 10.2% and 12.8% respectively of total families, while in countries like Belgium they represented 1.7%, France 1.6% and in Netherlands 0.2%. Therefore, in southern Europe, the extended family continues to be a basic referent of the expression of family solidarity and dependence. In

contrast, the proportion of cohabitating couples and single parents is very reduced in Spain, Italy and Greece in comparison with Denmark and Sweden, which is an unequivocal sign of the showness in which the family change is being produced in these countries.

On the other hand, in southern European countries, the rate of female employment is the lowest in the 15 countries of the European Union, with the exception of Portugal. If this table is completed with the data referring to fertility, it is observed that it is precisely in southern European countries where fertility reaches its most reduced levels. In reference to the divorce rate, the fact stands out that the number of divorces is comparatively lower than the average rate in the 15 countries of the European Union. The delay in socioeconomic modernization and policy are some of the arguments used by researchers like Roussel (1992), Naldini (2002), Benigno (1989) and Giner (2000) to explain this demographic and female employment situation of women that characterizes southern European countries.

From reading this data, it can be deduced that processes like the formation of the family, family change and the employment situation of women in southern European countries are narrowly linked with family policies and policies of employment developed by the welfare states. Only by examining in detail the connections that link the welfare state (family and employment policies) with family change, can it be determined in what measure the male breadwinner traditional family model of southern European countries is explained in accordance with the restrictive policy of support to families and working mothers.

Table 1.- Family and Work Indicators

	BEL-15	AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	DENMARK	FINLAND	FRANCE	GERMANY	GREECE	IRELAND	ITALY	LUXEMBOURG	NETHERLANDS	PORTUGAL	SPAIN	SWEDEN	UNITED KINGDOM
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	1.47	1.29	1.65	1.74	1.73	1.90	1.29	1.29	1.98	1.24	1.70	1.69	1.42	1.25	1.57	1.63
GROSS DIVORCE RATE (PER 1000)	1.9	2.5	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.0	2.4	0.9	0.7	0.7	2.3	2.3	1.8	1.0	2.4	2.6
% OF COUPLES LIVING IN A CONSENSUAL UNION	9	9	9	17	21	10	9	1	4	2	7	15	5	3	23	13
% PERSONS LIVING IN EXTENDED FAMILIES (*)	10	14	8	6	6	7	7	12	17	13	12	9	21	18	8	8
% ONE EARNER COUPLE WITH CHILDREN	N.D.	32,6	32,6	N.D.	N.D.	36,0	39,7	49,7	55,5	53,6	51,2	32,7	26,5	56,3	N.D.	29,8
% OF PERSONS LIVING IN A LONE PARENT FAMILY (*)	4	4	6	2	2	5	4	2	5	2	2	3	3	2	7	8
EMPLOYMENT RATES OF WOMEN AGED 15-64	55	60	51	72	65	56	59	41	55	41	51	65	61	43	72	65
% OF WOMEN IN PART TIME JOBS	33	36	38	31	17	30	39	8	30	17	26	73	16	17	33	44
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF WOMEN AGED 15-64	8,7	4,5	8,2	4,6	9,1	9,9	8,3	15,0	4,0	12,2	3,9	3,0	6,1	16,4	4,5	4,5

Source: My elaboration on data from *Living Conditions in Europe*. Statistical Pocketbook, Eurostat, 2004 y OCDE, 2002

Note: Data referring to couples living in consensual union belong to 1998

(*): This data are available on European Community Household Panel (ECHP)

It is therefore evident that the change in family structures is directly linked to the incorporation of women to the labour market and, therefore, with the redefinition of the role and position occupied by women in the family and the market. The progressive

incorporation of women to the labour market brings with it a redefinition of the classic division of family work, such as the employment and financial approach adopted by family members.

This evidence of reduced employment participation of women in southern European countries corresponds with the traditional model of the division of family labour characterized by the primacy of the male breadwinner figure. In this sense, it is accurate to point out that the successive reports produced by the European Union warn of the disadvantageous position held by women in the labour market and in the framework of social protection in countries like Spain, Greece and Italy. It can be argued that in the last decades there has been a substantial increase in female employment, which has brought on a relative reduction in the proportion of traditional families headed by a single male breadwinner in favor of the family model made up of two economic providers, however, it is also true that it is in these countries that the permanence of the traditional family model (male-breadwinner) is more appreciated. Numerous researches have shown that the family regime of the male-breadwinner has been, and continues to be in certain countries, the main referent for welfare states and for the financial organization of many of them (Crompton, 1999 ; Lewis, 1992; 2004).

In the table 2 it can be observed that Spain, Greece and Italy, followed by Luxembourg and Ireland, are the countries that have a higher percentage of families with a single provider, both in couples with and without children. This indicates that structural factors (political and family) in southern European countries exist in such a way that they give incentive to the permanence of the male-breadwinner model. The comparison of the organizational guidelines of work time in families, evidences significant differences among the member countries in reference to family and labour approaches adapted for making work and family compatible. In the majority of the countries referred to, the proportion of homes in which two members of the couple work is less in families with children than in families without children. In Spain, Italy, Greece and Belgium there is little difference, since in these countries the proportion of working women is relatively less than in the 15 countries of Europe before the enlargement. In the case of Portugal, the proportion of families with children in which both members of the couple work full-time is very high, reflecting the couples' economic need to increment the family income as they face a difficult economic situation.

Table 2.- Family composition according to relations between family members, employment and the presence of children (2000)

(Percentage of families with at least one of the members of the couple in the labour market)

NON-PARENT					
	ONE EARNER COUPLE	MALE FT+ FEMALE FT	MALE FT+ FEMALE PT	MALE PT+ FEMALE PT	MALE PT+ FEMALE FT
AUSTRIA	35,3	52,0	14,5	*	0,6
BELGIUM	38,2	37,4	19,8	2,1	2,5
FRANCE	31,8	52,3	13,2	1,1	1,6
GERMANY	30,1	47,5	20,4	0,8	1,2
GREECE	51,4	44,2	3,4	0,4	0,6
IRELAND	45,3	43,5	11,2	*	*
ITALY	53,5	34,9	9,0	1,3	1,3
LUXEMBOURG	45,2	41,2	13,7	*	*
NETHERLANDS	29,0	37,9	29,3	2,2	1,6
PORTUGAL	35,3	56,6	8,2	*	*
SPAIN	57,8	35,4	6,3	0,2	0,4
UNITED KINGDOM	20,9	55,2	21,2	1,1	1,6

PARENT					
	ONE EARNER COUPLE	MALE FT+ FEMALE FT	MALE FT+ FEMALE PT	MALE PT+ FEMALE PT	MALE PT+ FEMALE FT
AUSTRIA	32,6	38,8	27,7	*	*
BELGIUM	27,3	40,8	28,3	1,9	*
FRANCE	36,0	45,4	16,3	1,2	1,7
GERMANY	39,7	26,1	32,9	0,6	1,1
GREECE	49,7	43,7	4,7	0,9	0,7
IRELAND	55,5	27,1	16,2	1,1	*
ITALY	53,6	31,2	13,0	1,3	0,9
LUXEMBOURG	51,2	25,7	23,2	*	*
NETHERLANDS	32,7	10,8	52,9	2,3	1,3
PORTUGAL	26,5	66,5	7,0	*	*
SPAIN	56,3	35,6	7,5	0,2	0,4
UNITED KINGDOM	29,8	28,6	40,0	0,7	0,9

Note: No reliable data available

Source: Statistics in Focus, 9/2002. Eurostat

The data displayed leads to the conclusion that in southern European countries a narrow association between the permanence of the traditional *breadwinner* model and the reduced labour participation of women can be observed. However, the question that remains to be asked at this point is, "What factors, and of what type, explain the prevalence of the family financial model characterized by the male breadwinner model and by the reduced participation of women in the labour market in the environment of the Mediterranean countries?" (Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal). This tendency, clearly contrasts with the observed evidence in societies that are characterized by the advanced process of *de-familialization* and high rates of working women (Denmark, Belgium, Sweden). In order to explain these differences, we will try to link the characteristics that family policies and the structure of the labour market present, with the situation of family and women in southern European countries. The restricted policy of family support for working mothers developed by the welfare states, and the limited offer of part-time work that characterizes these countries are two of the principal causes that would explain the limited labour participation of women and the continuity of the male breadwinner model in these countries.

4.- REGULATION OF THE MALE BREADWINNER MODEL IN ITALY AND SPAIN IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE LABOUR MARKET

In southern European countries, the experience of dictatorial regimes has marked the conservative design of family policies, including fiscal policies, family protection and services to children and the elderly.

The socioeconomic context in which socioeconomic modernization has been produced and in these countries, has been determined by the ideological and institutional reminders of the past dictatorship, which, in turn, has affected family policies. In Italy, after 1948, the transition to democracy in the framework of the ideological fragmentation of the political parties was initiated, making it difficult to implement their own approved programs of family policy in political regulation and legislation. As a result of this political process *clientelism* and *subsidiarity* were introduced as habitual practice in the Italian welfare state (Ferrera: 1996). The case of pensions is, perhaps, the most noteworthy example of this situation (Naldini, 2002: 103). In the case of the transition to democracy that was experienced in Spain from 1975, the political parties removed explicit references to family policies from their political discourse. The explanation of this behavior is found in the legacy of the Franco dictatorial regime. In the post-Franco era, no mention whatsoever was made of support to families, even more energetically than in the Italian case, that could identify family policy with being *pronatalista* (incentive to have more children) and conservative, similar to that of the dictatorial regime (Meil, 1995; Alberdi, 1999; Iglesias de Ussel, 1999).

On the other hand, the hegemonic influence of the Catholic church in the design of the family policies has been very important in these countries (Flaquer, 2002). The Catholic church, frequently in alliance with the more conservative political forces, acts as a brake on the development of family policies.

As Naldini (2002) and Saraceno (2003) have indicated, the political and ideological configuration that was installed in the Italian and Spanish welfare states in the first years of transition to democracy, has been decisive in the institutional definition of the family model and family policies. The Italian and Spanish political parties have systematically forgotten to include in their political agendas programs of support to families and to employment and family compatibility, which has contributed to reinforcing an idiosyncratic male breadwinner model based on family solidarity and dependence. Family approaches are generated in a sociopolitical and institutional context adverse to family interests, deriving in what has been called a form of

“*ambivalent familism*” (Saraceno, 1994). This concept of *ambivalent familism* is a family approach characterized by family dependence and solidarity, and by the permanence of the male breadwinner model in an institutional context in which the family is considered a private sphere in which family members, and specifically women, should assume the costs of reproduction and family dependence.

Therefore, the observed variations in the male breadwinner model in Europe have a clear link with the development of public and private services for attention to children and the elderly. The degree of development of this type of family services and family-friendly public policies, affects family solidarity, and gender relations to the extent that they favor or limit externalization and individualization of family services (Bettio and Villa, 1998; Jurado and Naldini, 1996). In the case of countries like Spain and Italy, the underdevelopment of family policies of the welfare states of southern Europe, has reinforced family dependency and solidarity favoring in this way the reproduction of a male breadwinner model based on the extended family and a dualized and privatized model of social protection, clearly remote from the male breadwinner model characteristics of countries like Germany or Austria (Ferrera, 1996; Flaquer, 2000; Rhodes, 1997).

In recent years these countries have experienced an increase in the proportion of social expenditures assigned to compensating family tasks but in spite of this, in comparative terms, this increase doesn't represent even an appreciable part of the total of public resources assigned to redistribution of the national income. Compared to the 15 countries of the European Union, social expenditures assigned to family and family services in the Mediterranean countries, has varied very little since 1980, as reflected in table 3. Table number 4 shows that Spain, along with Italy and Portugal, is the European country with the lowest social expenditure directed to families. On the other hand, it can be observed that the increase experienced in social family expenditures is practically irrelevant, given the restricted percentage. These data confirms the hypothesis defended by authors like Ferrera (1996), Trifiletti (1999) and Flaquer (2000), that social protection to families in southern European countries is characterized by the privatization and assistance that is derived from the *familism* implicit in the management of the public policies of the welfare states.

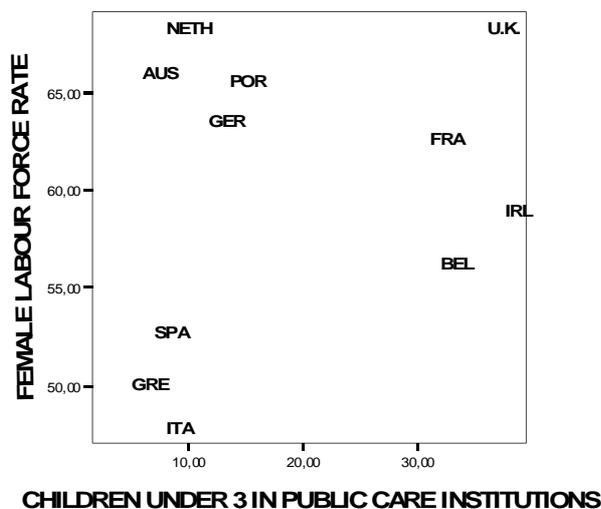
Table 3.- Cash family benefits in Europe. Year 2000

	AS % OF GDP	AS% OF TOTAL SOCIAL BENEFIT	% VARIATION 1990-2000
EU-15	1,4	5,5	3,5
AUSTRIA	2,3	8,2	3,3
BELGIUM	2,0	7,7	2,7
DENMARK	1,1	4,0	4,3
FINLAND	1,4	5,8	2,2
FRANCE	2,0	7,0	2,3
GERMANY	2,1	7,5	6,9
GREECE	1,0	3,8	4,4
IRELAND	1,5	11,2	7,8
ITALY	0,5	2,0	-0,1
LUXEMBOURG	2,6	12,9	11,7
NETHERLANDS	0,8	2,9	-2,3
PORTUGAL	0,5	2,7	5,2
SPAIN	0,2	0,9	5,9
SWEDEN	1,0	3,2	-2,4
UNITED KINGDOM	1,4	5,5	4,3

Source: My elaboration on data from Statistics in Focus (2003), Eurostat.

In the case of development of family services for children, there is a great heterogeneity in the distribution models. In spite of the great importance that these types of family services have, they have only developed fully in northern European countries. The graph shown evidences the existence of various groupings of countries. On one side, a compact group of countries from Southern Europe (Spain, Greece and Italy) is highlighted showing how the reduced distribution of public services for children coincides with the reduced labour participation of women. From the graphic association of both variables corresponding to the countries, it could be concluded that the limited institutional development of assistance services assigned to families with family tasks has had, in a certain way, a negative consequence on women's work activity. The second group of countries corresponds to what has been called “the conservative regime” (Austria, Netherlands Germany and Portugal), in which public services to children covers between 10% and 20% of the child population under three years, which corresponds with an average rate of female employment. Finally, the social democratic welfare regimes (Denmark and Sweden) stand out with their elevated distribution of public services to children corresponds with the elevated rates of employment and working women.

Graph 1.- Rate of female employment and percentage of children under three years old in public child care (2000) in the 15 countries of the European Union

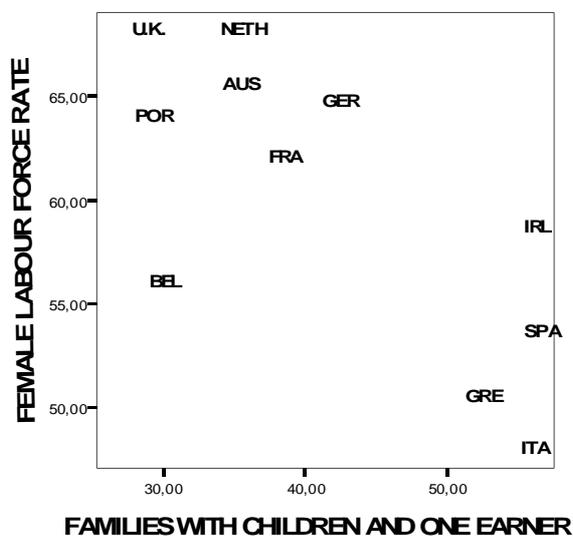


Source: GAUTHIER, A. H. (2003). *Comparative Family Benefits Database*, Version 2, University of Calgary

In graph 2 it can be observed that in the welfare states of southern Europe (Spain, Italy and Greece), where the male breadwinner model is more established, less public services for children have developed.

Therefore, these data could be interpreted to suggest that the structure of the family (characterized by family dependence and solidarity), the maintenance of the male breadwinner model and gender relations as described are strongly associated with a lack of reconciliation between family life and employment in the mediterranean welfare states model.

Graph 2.- Percentage of families with children and a single economic provider and percentage of children under three years old in public child care centers in the 15 countries of the European Union (2002)



Source: GAUTHIER, A. H. (2003). *Comparative Family Benefits Database*, Version 2, University of Calgary

The data presented confirm the fact that the limited institutional development that family policies for children in southern European countries have had has negatively affected in the entry of women into the labour market, reproducing, in this way, *familism*. The most relevant consequence of this employment and family situation, favored in part by family policies, has been the maintenance of the male breadwinner figure as the principal economic referent of the extended family.

5.- CONCLUSIONS

Market institutions, the state and the family interact in industrial societies giving way to different models of gender relations linked to specific welfare regimes. In the case of southern European countries (Spain, Italy and Greece), family policies and the labour market have had a decisive influence in the maintenance of the male breadwinner model characterized by the dependence and solidarity among generations and the unequal sharing out of family functions between genders. The model of family finances typical in southern European welfare states, is characterized by the permanence of traditional family structures, by a network of intergenerational exchange based on solidarity and by an unequal division of family labour where the male is the primary economic provider. The permanence of this family model is found to be closely related to a welfare state model that has historically delegated family care services for children and the elderly to the family sphere and has protected the male breadwinner figure. On the other hand, the labour market in these countries has empowered full-time work to the detriment of part-time work. In this context of reduced institutional and economic support to families, the incorporation of women with family tasks into the labour market is very slow and it experiences numerous difficulties, which explains the permanence of traditional family structures with a single economic provider.

This investigation has shown that the reduced participation of women in the labour force that characterizes Mediterranean countries as well as reduced fertility, are social phenomena resulting from an elevated degree of *familism* and a limited institutional network of support to families with family tasks. These family approaches are contextualized, therefore, in a model of welfare state in which there are scarce family services, in addition to some gender relations being characterized by the economic and family dependence of women as well as by the centrality of the male breadwinner figure.

Of the analyses completed it can be determined that in southern European countries (Spain, Italy and Greece), the perpetuation of the extended family is associated with an elevated number of families with a single economic

provider. This indicates that intergenerational solidarity and dependency is a parental approach belonging to a family economic model in which women find numerous obstacles when incorporating themselves into the regulated labour market. The obstacles are related to employment and family compatibility (social policies) and in the structure of the labour market (work time). In contrast, in the countries of northern Europe, the elevated ratios of women in the work force correspond to the generalization of new family forms like cohabitation and single-parent families that in turn are related to a more egalitarian model of gender relations and a division of domestic labour in which women have greater independence.

To summarize, factors like the limited institutional development that family policies of employment and family compatibility in southern European countries have had, together with the social policy developed by these countries to support the male breadwinner and the segmentation of the labour market with a limited supply of part-time work, have limited the incorporation of women with family tasks into the labour market. This contributes to *familism* and the maintenance of the male breadwinner model in the welfare states of southern Europe.

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-- My most sincere acknowledgements to the **European Commission** and the **Marie Curie Fellowship** for giving me the research opportunities that finally led to this article. I am grateful to **Manuela Burns** for her kind and sharp revision of this article. Also to **Quique Crespo** for his help and always encouraging me. --