

## **A debate on family sensitive social policy: the case of Spain<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract:**

This short commentary on Professor Niel Gilbert's proposal aims, firstly, to analyze the characteristics of the family sensitive social policy, focusing the debate on the social protection system in Spain; secondly, to present a number of areas of application with regard to family sensitive social policy, describing measures that are already in place; and lastly, draw conclusions which contribute to the debate on designing family sensitive social policy.

### **1. Introduction**

Comparative research into the sphere of family sensitive social policy must take into account two key aspects: on the one hand, globalization and the exclusion trends associated with it which constrain family life and put social welfare systems at risk (Segado and Lopez, 2015); and on the other, the specificities of each social context<sup>3</sup>: social protection systems, the characteristics of different families, their needs and the relationship with caregiving and protection of members (Moreno Mínguez, 2013).

We must start by recognizing that social policy is not neutral and neither is family social policy. It reflects social consensus, favoring certain groups over others. What is the situation in Spain? Has it developed a family sensitive policy model? What can Spain bring to the table in the debate about family sensitive social policy in Qatar?

As for Spain, our social welfare system has been defined as Mediterranean and undeveloped (social benefits are subsidiary to the welfare each family can provide for itself on its own) (Moreno, López y Segado, 2012: 35). As such, our model is often defined as familialistic in the sense that the family is the last line of defense against social exclusion.

Spain's model is familialistic given that the family is the main resource provider; the welfare state is fragile and focuses its attention on other groups (Flaquer, 2004). Our system is oriented towards senior citizens. For instance, both the late age at which young people leave their parents' home and the low birthrate belie our social protection model which does not consider families central.

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<sup>3</sup> Over the last few years, we have carried out research into the wellbeing of families in Spain (López Peláez y Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo 2013; Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo y López Peláez 2014; López Peláez y Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo 2015a, 2015b; López Peláez y Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo 2016). In addition, the research group in which I am lead researcher, Koinonia ([www.koinonia.org.es](http://www.koinonia.org.es)), has heard defense of several doctoral theses regarding social work and families (Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo 2011; Del Fresno García, 2011).

There are more resources available for a family that decides to separate than one that tries to stay together, and there are a wide array of public resources available to victims of gender violence that are not available to married women. It is also easier for single mothers to qualify for social benefits as the scales are tipped in favor of single-parent families.

The real effects of social benefits do not always coincide with those anticipated. Unexpected consequences can occur. For example, in Spain the increase in the duration of paternity leave meant to encourage the participation of men in the raising of children has lead, not only, to an increase in the number of fathers who request it, but also an increase in pressure against the measure from businesses who have started reducing the number of permanent contracts for those workers thought to potentially make use of this right (Rica y Gorjón, 2016).

This short commentary on Professor Niel Gilbert’s proposal aims, firstly, to analyze the characteristics of the social protection system in Spain; secondly, to present a number of areas of application with regard to family sensitive social policy, describing measures that are already in place; and lastly, draw conclusions which contribute to the debate on designing family sensitive social policy.

## **2. Social protection and family policy: the Spanish welfare system**

### **2.1. Characteristics of Spanish families:**

The profound social and cultural changes of the last 30 years have transformed the understanding of what constitutes a family today (Table 1) as well as increasing the demand for new family-centered policy that works throughout a family’s life cycle.

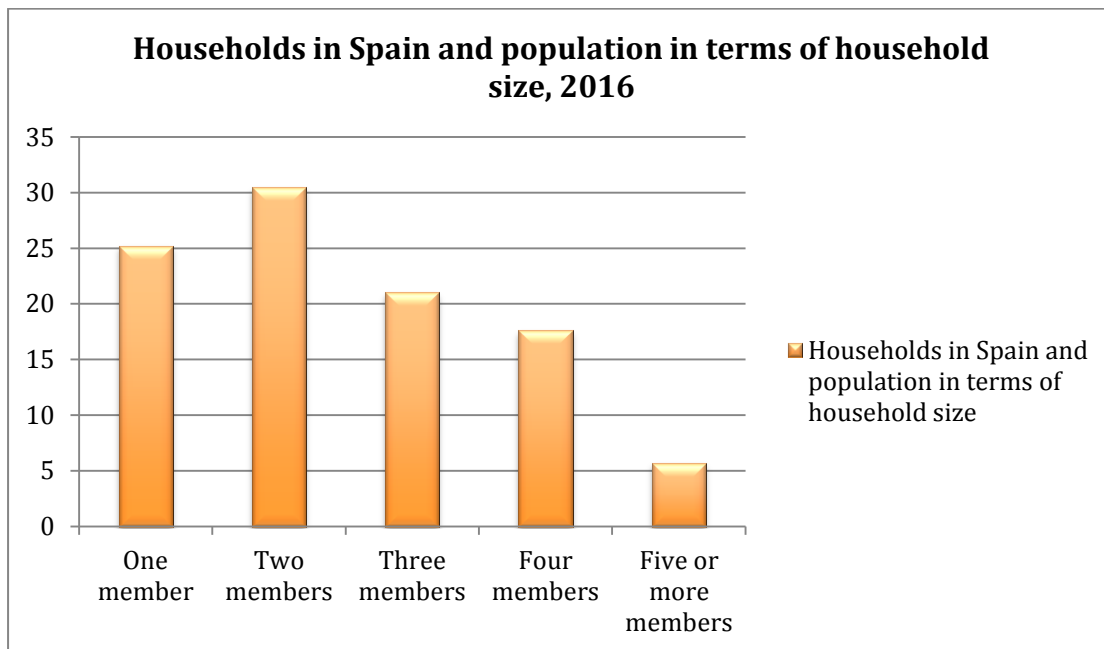
Table 1: Changes in the Spanish family in the last 30 years

Rebalancing of gender relations
Increase in life expectancy
Crisis in the patriarchal model
Voluntary infertility
Late motherhood
Ability to dissolve marriage
Deinstitutionalization of marriage
Plurality in family formats

Source: Del Fresno, 2011.

The large majority of the Spanish population lives in households made up of two or three members (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Households in Spain and population in terms of household size, 2016



Source: National Statistics Institute (INE), Continuous survey of households, 2016.

In the last 30 years, Spain has seen a reduction in the number of members in each household as well as a reduction in the number of marriages, an increase in the number of cohabiting unmarried couples, and a reduction in the birthrate (INE 2017): in 2015, 418,432 children were born in Spain, 8% less than in 2014.

The birthrate was down to 9.02 births for every 1000 women.

The average number of children per woman was 1.33, and the average age for motherhood reached 31.9.

The average number of people per household in 2016 was down to 2.5 from 2.51 in 2015.

## 2.2. The Spanish welfare system

In Spain, both healthcare and education are financed by the State, who guarantees universal access to both. As such, social protection of families is oriented towards other areas such as rejoining the workforce, the family-work life balance, the protection of minors and support of dependent persons.

What are the main characteristics of the social protection system for families in Spain?

I) Extremely decentralized:

The Spanish social protection system can be characterized as extremely decentralized in that the Central State, the Autonomous Regions, and local authorities (cities and provinces) all participate. The Spanish Constitution establishes that social welfare services are a competence of the Autonomous Regions, yet the subsidiary principle also applies. Thus, it is actually the local authorities – cities and provinces – that manage benefits and attend to citizens.

## II) Levels of administration:

Spain is organized into three administrative levels: the Central State, Autonomous Regions, and local authorities (cities, provinces, etc.). “This means that administrative and legal competences have been distributed among the three levels; thus public social welfare services and grants may be financed, organized, and activated by an institution of the Central State, of the Autonomous Region, and/or the local authority” (Ministry of Health, Social Policy, and Equality 2017:1).

## III) Coordination:

Coordination becomes a priority in a decentralized system. “In order for the social protection policy of families to be effective, coordination among the three levels – the State, the Regions, and local authorities – is necessary” (Ministry of Health, Social Policy, and Equality 2017: 7). While decentralization has its advantages, it can also bring about problems in terms of coordination. A clear example are the issues surrounding the mechanisms set up to guarantee a minimum income: “extremely limited amounts (the unemployment subsidy is just 426€, for example), no supplements for family size, time limits that end up lapsing, a total lack of coordination in terms of criteria, requirements, and scales, etc.” (Laparra, 2015).

## IV) Family-oriented programs:

Family social benefits in Spain can be classified into the following 14 categories (Ministry of Health, Social Policy, and Equality 2017):

### A. Family Social Security benefits, parental and other forms of leave

Monetary benefits for birth or adoption of child

Birth or adoption of multiple children

Birth or adoption a child for large families, single-parent families, and mothers with disability of 65% or more

Grants for children or minors in family placement or pre-adoptive guardianship

Parental leave and other leave/benefits for family affairs

Leave for motherhood

Leave for fatherhood

Leave for risk during pregnancy and breastfeeding

Reduced timetable (for breastfeeding, for the care of minors and other family members, for the care of minors suffering from cancer, for any other serious illness, other forms)

Leaves of absence (for the care of children or minors in permanent family placement or pre-adoptive guardianship, for family care)

B. Work-related grants

Unemployment benefits

Other grants for unemployed persons with family responsibilities

The PREPARA program

Mobilization Program

Programs to promote employment

C. Personal Income Tax benefits for dependent children and other family circumstances

State deductions

Regional deductions

D. Large family grants

Recognition as a large family

Issuance of large family certificate

Benefits established for large families

E. Grants for single-parent families

Social Security (Death entitlements and survivors' benefits, benefits for the birth or adoption of a child for single-parent families, increased length of non-contributory motherhood subsidy for single-parent families, allowance amounting to 45% of Social Security contributions to hire family caregiver for large single-parent families, calculation of income limit to qualify for family benefits for children or minor in permanent family placement or pre-adoptive guardianship)

Tax benefits (Personal Income Tax, IRPF)(Consideration of the single-parent family as a family unit for joint filing benefits, reductions in tax base and personal minimum, advanced payment of deduction for

legally separate or unmarried ascendants with two children minimum,  
regional deductions for single-parent families)

Housing

F. Family benefits in the social welfare service system

Benefits and services (Information and orientation, domestic help and household support, alternative housing, prevention and social inclusion, promotion of solidarity and cooperation)

G. Grants for families with dependent persons

Basic benefits

Specific protection for non-professional caregivers

Grants for Personal Assistant

Disabled Services Office (OADIS)

H. Grants for lack of payment of maintenance in the case of separation or divorce

I. Services for the care of children under 3

J. Support for fathers, mothers, and persons with parental responsibilities (positive parenting)

K. Scholarships and study grants from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports

L. Housing grants

National plan for the promotion of housing rental

Social housing fund

Other measures for mortgage holders unable to pay back mortgage loan

LL. Subsidies for persons suffering from hepatitis C (HCV) and HIV

Commission on the Evaluation of Social Benefits for Sufferers of HCV (CEVHC)

Commission on Social Benefits for Sufferers of HIV (CASVIH)

M. Cultural activities, sports, and tourism for families

### **3. Family-sensitive social protection and social protection programs in Spain**

Family-sensitive social protection can be defined as an innovative policy framework that aims to develop policy, programs, protection measures, and support oriented towards improving family welfare. As Professor Gilbert points out in his report “A Conceptual Framework for Family-Sensitive Social Protection,” “this report operationally defines Family-Sensitive Social Protection (FSSP) as public and private social programs and benefits that support family formation, choice, interdependence and solidarity, which strengthen the bonds of family life and its capacity to perform the essential functions of procreation, socialization of the young, care for dependent members, and social cohesion.”

As such, this presentation will briefly outline a few of the programs and support measures currently in place in Spain, analyzing the extent to which they follow the model of Family-Sensitive Social Protection (FSSP).

The large majority of the programs are oriented toward rejoining the workforce, striking a family-work life balance (as in paternity leave and leaves of absence), and the support of families in terms of:

- a) The direness of their situation (such as lower income single-parent families),
- b) The number of children in the household (large families receive a 45% break in Social Security contributions for the hiring of a family caregiver) and
- c) The level of dependence of its members.

Either way, programs are not oriented toward the strengthening of the family. Their objective is more the amelioration – through grants or tax breaks – of a certain need. There are more resources available for a family that decides to break-up than one that tries to stay together, and there are a wide array of public resources available to victims of gender violence that are not available to married women. It is also easier for single mother to qualify for social benefits as the scales are tipped in favor of single-parent families.

In this decentralized panorama, it is up to local authorities to develop specific measures to support families. Thus, this document will focus on the programs been carried out in two Spanish municipalities: Palencia and Segovia, both located in the Autonomous Region of Castilla y León.

From an evidence based practice research approach, in the last two months we have carried out a research project in two provinces of Spain, Segovia and Palencia. We interviewed 20 social workers, and 20 families who use social services. Below, we present some preliminary results of our research, diferenciating between the formal interventions and their practical consequences.

#### **3.1. Guaranteed Income/Unconditional Cash Grants and Family Life**

*3.1.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar:*

The Spanish economy is in its third straight year of growth after suffering the largest economic crisis in its history. Despite the fact that in 2017 the number of people living in households with no income at all decreased in comparison to 2016, the number is still significant. According to the National Statistics Institute (INE)<sup>4</sup>, 1,163,700 people in Spain live in households with no income whatsoever. Among them, 319,200 – 37.4% – live alone while 263,600 (22.7%) live with another person. In addition, 202,500 people – 17.4% – live in 2-person households while 220,800 – 19% – live in homes of 3. 103,500 live in households of five with no income to speak of, and there are 35,400 cases of people in six-person households, 7,700 in seven-, 5,600 in eight- and 5,400 in nine-.

The Citizens' Guaranteed Income (RGC) grant is a monetary social benefit, received on a regular basis, that serves as family's income in lieu of other sources. Guaranteed income in Castilla y Leon is regulated through the Citizens' Guaranteed Income grant (RGC).

The grant is subsidiary to all other benefits from any public social protection system such that the applicant must have applied for and exhausted all other means of protection in order to qualify.

The grant supplements family income up to the amount of the benefit. Nevertheless, the supplement will not be applied if the applicant receives benefits from Social Security or any other public system of protection.

The right to said benefit is recognized upon fulfillment of the requirements and signing of an Individualized Integration Plan.

The goal of the RGC is to provide the means and support necessary to meet basic needs of subsistence and to promote the integration of those in situations of social exclusion.

Though the grant is funded by the Autonomous Region, the task of intervention and follow-up, particularly that of the Individualized Integration Plan and the fulfillment of the obligations associated with the grant, falls to the local administration. Intervention in municipalities of more than 20,000 inhabitants or through the provincial administration is carried out in Social Action Centers (CEAS). The case at hand refers to Social Action Centers (CEAS) in Segovia and Palencia.

This benefit is laid forth in law 1/2014, 27 February, which passed the consolidated text of laws in force on the eligibility for and receipt of the citizens' guaranteed income grant in Castilla y Leon.

### ***3.1.2. Discussion of the implications of guaranteed income programs for the stability and cohesion of family life***

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)



In Castilla y León, the amount of the Citizens' Guaranteed Income grant is adjusted in accordance with the number of members in one's family. Furthermore, different family units living in the same household may each receive the grant separately.

The amounts are insufficient to cover basic needs. Moreover, this policy, in practice, provides no incentives for rejoining the workforce.

The Individualized Integration Plan works mainly on finding a job, not the removal of those obstacles that lead to social exclusion in the first place. It is necessary to undertake further action to avoid chronic dependency and the replication of this model in minors.

Furthermore, administrative processing times do not reflect the real urgency of families' needs, and it can sometimes take months to process the grant.

Foreigner families cannot travel to their home country while receiving this grant. In fact, they cannot even leave the Autonomous Region without a written job offer. Moreover, the documents required are difficult to obtain in some countries and, even when obtained, are usually costly and must be translated which takes more time etc.

This situation can sometime lead to extra fees for delays in repayment that the family does not know how to handle, thereby forcing them to spend money on non-basic needs.

As Professor Miguel Laparra puts it, "the main problem with guaranteed income grants in the Autonomous Regions is their sparse coverage in the majority of cases, with the exception of the Basque Country and, less so, in Navarra and Asturias. The differences between Autonomous Regions is abysmal (1 to 50 at the extremes), but curiously enough, coverage tends to decrease as needs rise" (Laparra, 2015: 3).

## **3.2. Means-tested Social Benefits, and the Formation of Stable Families**

### ***3.2.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar.***

Means-tested social benefits are granted on an individual basis. Furthermore, it is easier to fulfill the requirements when not part of a family unit. For example, single women or women who have reported gender violence have a better chance of receiving said benefits.

First response social service offices (*básicos*) each have a team to aid families with tasks such as overcoming situations of helplessness, distress, and risk. Additionally, the first response social services intervene in family reunification with grants for urgent needs.

Means-tested benefits aim to cover all or most situations of extreme emergency or serious need. They are granted on an individual basis for each family member.

Though the benefits are processed by local authorities, the Castilla y Leon Parliament has unified the grants for social emergencies.

The recipients of said grants include those individuals of legal age as well as emancipated minors of any nationality who are going through a social emergency and, where applicable, eligible members of his or her family; requirements include a cap on annual income at 1.2 times the Public Revenue Index (IPREM) paid in 12 payments and adjusted for family or cohabitants by a percentage for each additional member (20% for the first member, 10% for the second and 5% for the third or more), up to 1.8 times the IPREM annually per family unit.

### ***3.2.2. Discussion of incentives and disincentives for the formation of stable families generated by means-tested social benefit such as social assistance, housing subsidies and children's allowances***

Means-tested social benefits are granted on an individual basis. Furthermore, it is easier to fulfill the requirements when not part of a family unit. For example, single women or women who have reported gender violence have a better chance of receiving said benefits.

First response social service offices (*básicos*) each have a team to aid families with tasks such as overcoming situations of helplessness, distress, and risk. Additionally, primary social services intervene in family reunification with grants for urgent needs.

Teams lack a designated social worker responsible for improving the social capital of families and their members, someone in charge of carrying out group and community intervention in these cases.

The service received is extremely individual and hardly touches on context.

Though, in practice, these services are available at Social Action Centers (CEAS), they are not available on demand but rather through referral. Moreover, as the volume of cases – from both minors and women – is so large, social workers are unable to attend to all of them<sup>5</sup>, and those cases that do receive attention are ones dealing with social exclusion, thereby casting doubt on the universality of these social services.

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<sup>5</sup> The changes introduced by law 26/2015, 28 July, on the modification of the system of protection of children and adolescents, together with the competences attributed to local authorities by law 14/2002 on the support, service to and protection of children, can be included among measures proposed for serious risk without collaboration which up to the entry into force of aforementioned law 26/2015, 28 July, could not be formally reported to authorities.

On the other hand, the implementation of the protocol for services for gender violence victims lead by the Castilla y León Junta and part of the working framework for the comprehensive service model: "Objective: zero violence" in accordance with agreement 130/2015, 10 September, by the Castilla y León Junta, whose trial period began in July 2016, has lead both case coordinators, social workers at Social Action Centers (CEAS), and support teams specialized in family support to become overwhelmed with these tasks which require both complex and immediate responses.

### **3.3. Cash Versus In-Kind Social Benefits**

#### ***3.3.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar.***

Family life in Spain is rapidly changing due to a number of factors:

- Aging (an increase in the number of dependent persons)
- The incorporation of women into the workforce
- The plummeting birthrate (In 2016, 404,384 children were born in Spain, 2.8% less than in 2015, the lowest since 2001.) Furthermore, out-of-wedlock births made up 44.5% of all births in 2015, a number that puts Spain above the European average (39%). The trend in out-of-wedlock births in the last few decades illustrates the transformation of the family model in Spain. In 1980, it was only 3.9% of all births. In 1990, it was 9.6%. After that, the number shot up: 17.7% in 2000 and 35.5% in 2010 to reach 44.5% in 2015.
- Diversity in family formats
- Pressure from interest groups to define social benefits in terms of individual conditions and not family models.

There are various types of in-kind benefits to aid and support people in dire situations as well as monetary benefits.

##### *3.3.1.1. Food distribution*

Food distribution is carried out at the local level. In Segovia, European Union food distribution for most deprived persons (MDP) who meet the requirements is another of the tasks carried out by the city (though up till six years ago the Red Cross was responsible for its execution). Distribution consists of an application period which receives nearly 600 requests and three distributions a year. (Each distribution requires copious documentation that must be filled out by recipients, documentation required by the European Union that must follow regulation in case of possible inspections.)

The process includes the equal distribution of food to each family in terms of the number of members as well as a significant amount of documentation and exhaustive control.

Social workers have expressed discontent with this practice through the Social Work General Council decrying that it is a return to charity and beneficence of old.

In Palencia, this system is organized differently. Food benefits are included within the system that handles emergency grants. As such, each case is evaluated by municipal social workers from the third sector, the Red Cross, and Caritas. In addition to the evaluation, an individualized and family intervention plan is drawn up for each case to aid in resolving the dire situation.

##### *3.3.1.2. Emergency grants.*

These are grants whose goal is to partially or fully cover situations of extreme emergency or need; they are meant to cover the cost of the following specific basic subsistence needs:

- Food
- Essential personal care, particularly clothing and hygiene
- Temporary housing in social emergencies

Other needs may be considered essential through the presentation of sufficient argumentation following evaluation by the professionals and the Technical Evaluation Commission at the Social Action Center (CEAS) whose aim it is to ensure a person's physical integrity, job stability, and prevent serious risk of exclusion as well as guaranteeing that the person remain in their home as long as possible or any other need along those lines in line with the spirit of the benefit.

The recipients of said grants include individuals of legal age or emancipated minors of any nationality who are going through a social emergency and, where applicable, the members of his or her family who meet the eligibility requirements; said requirements include a cap on annual income at 1.2 times the Public Revenue Index (IPREM) paid in 12 payments and adjusted for family or cohabitants by a percentage for each additional member (20% for the first member, 10% for the second and 5% for the third or more), up to 1.8 times the IPREM annually per family unit.

### ***3.3.2. Discussion of the implications of cash-for-care compared to publicly subsidized child care services for family-sensitive social protection?***

The main priority of the social service system is that of publicly subsidized care. Only occasionally are direct monetary benefits granted and only then in situations where public services are not available.

With respect to food distribution, the fact that the Social Work General Council has decried that it is a return to charity and beneficence of old says it all. There is general professional discontent with this practice, more so considering how easy it would be with all the new technology to provide users with a supermarket voucher (or better still, a voucher for neighborhood shops) so that people could buy staple food in a normal space in a natural way.

In the case of the city of Palencia, the application period for emergency grants ends at the end of the year and begins again in March; as such, there is no coverage during the months in-between, months in which household energy consumption is usually higher. Moreover, both regulations and application are quite restrictive.

Given that each local administration has its own budget, a grant of the same characteristics may be approved or denied depending on the moment in which the application arrives and the money available at that time.

### **3.4. Marriage Benefits to Encourage Family Life**

#### ***3.4.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar.***

In the debate concerning family policy in Spain, there is a certain degree of consensus in that Spain has yet to develop a general framework for family protection that recognizes its fundamental role in collective wellbeing.

Support measures for families boil down to maternity and paternity leave and small tax breaks.

Given that families are tasked with taking care of both children and elderly members, one measure of protection consists of a 45% discount in Social Security contributions when hiring a family caregiver. Both paternity leave and leaves of absence obey a regulatory framework common to the entire Spanish State.

At the regional and local level, there are no direct resources or services available besides a 1,200€ a year deduction on Personal Income Tax (IRPF) for working mothers with children under 3 in Castilla y León.

The majority of programs at the local level are oriented toward the protection of minors, academic reinforcement, parental training to better handle family life, programs for teens and adolescents and measures designed to encourage the participation of women in the workforce.

#### **- Municipal Play Space in Segovia**

Municipal play spaces in Segovia offer activities through centers in La Albuera, Nueva Segovia and San Jose. They are designed to be educational and recreational spaces which also hold activities for mothers and fathers on the weekends: education as a family.

#### **- Mother-Child Health Programs**

In conjunction with the health system in Segovia, Social Action Centers (CEAS) organize a program for families with little or no income or those at risk of exclusion that guarantees healthy breastfeeding during the first year of the child or children's life.

#### **- Dynamization and prevention programs for children and adolescents.**

For more than a decade the municipal social services of Palencia and the Sports and Life Association have been organizing this program. The target ages are between 6 and 16. Programs work on the prevention of the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol, values education, and sports and leisure activities.

***3.4.2. Discussion of the effects of financial supports for marriage such as housing for newly-weds, interest free loans for dowries, and marriage bonuses encourage the formation of cohesive families?***

In general terms, it's worth mentioning that the creation of support measures that take the individual as the point of reference without considering the family as a whole end up de-incentivizing the couple (for example, in terms of the filing of taxes).

**3.5. Work-oriented Benefits and Family Life**

***3.5.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar.***

The benefits aimed at encouraging a healthy family-work life balance have to do with maternity and paternity leave, a flexible timetable at work, a reduced timetable which allows for childcare, etc. As previously noted, a central characteristic of the Spanish welfare model is that it puts the care of children and the elderly in the hands of families. Along these lines, for example, in 2009 14.4% of the 17.1 million households in Spain had some type of habitual domestic help ([www.ine.es/prensa/np683.pdf](http://www.ine.es/prensa/np683.pdf)).

Local measures are oriented toward care and education of children, allowing parents time to participate in the workforce.

**A. La Senda Municipal Pre-School**

On January 31<sup>st</sup> 2013, the city approved the Rules (*reglamento*) on the municipal pre-school which declared that the city of Segovia, more concretely the Social Services Council through the Municipal Evaluation Commission, would be in charge reviewing and deciding on applications and admission as well as reserving spaces for students.

**B. Casilda Ordoñez and Cres Sanz Municipal Pre-Schools**

The city of Palencia runs two pre-schools for children from 0 to 3 years old. Some students may be referred by social services based on social and family cases. The city also has a third pre-school in conjunction with a Foundation that works with the disabled located in an industrial area of the city. These three pre-schools serve the entire population of the city under 3, thus making its coverage universal.

Moreover, pre-school scholarships are available on an annual basis for those families who qualify.

***3.5.2. Discussion of how social protection measures such as paid parental leave, part-time work and early child care may impact childbearing and socialization functions of family life.***

Measures established in this area have had a limited impact on the panorama in Spain: women delay motherhood until later and later, and the birthrate is one of the lowest in the world. Nevertheless, thanks to female employment policy more and more fathers are participating in child-rearing (Gracia y Esping-Andersen, 2014).

The increase in the duration of paternity leave meant to encourage the participation of men in the raising of children has led, not only, to an increase in the number of fathers who request it, but also an increase in pressure against the measure from businesses who have started reducing the number of permanent contracts for workers who could potentially make use of this right (Rica y Gorjón, 2016).

At the local level, the impact of the educational programs mentioned is limited, due to the limited resources and the job insecurity of workers. Politicians would like to see schools become a competence of the Autonomous Regions which would mean losing the chance to develop a universal social service. School operation is being sub-contracted out, and students are the ones who pay the price for employee job insecurity and lacking facilities.

On the other hand, in Segovia many people work in the restaurant business with timetables that are not compatible with those the schools offer. Thus, in vulnerable families with difficult timetables and job instability, the resources available are not enough to cover their needs, making it necessary to search out further help.

### **3.6. Social Protection and Alternative Family**

#### ***3.6.1. Overview of how family life is changing in the country or region with which you are familiar.***

As mentioned in part 2, protection measures for alternative families are spread over three main areas: Social Security, tax benefits, and housing. Here we will focus on housing policy at the local level (Piedra Muñoz y Jaén García, 2014).

##### **A) Municipal Housing**

On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2006, the city of Segovia passed a resettlement plan for families living in Camino Tejerin (13 family units, 65 people) and Carretera de Madrona (20 family units, 80 people). This decision implied a two-year search for adequate housing for these families, the large majority of whom ultimately ended up in privately-owned units.

From that point on the department began working on housing issues searching for private housing for the resettlement of families living in shantytowns granted that city did not have enough public housing to cover the need. Most families ended up in privately-owned homes in various neighborhoods around Segovia. Of them, 21 family units still lack a definitive solution, though the city covers the cost of renting an apartment for them; thus intervention is ongoing.

In terms of the 122 municipal social housing units, the department handles the following:

- Awarding the rental of municipal housing
- Renewal in accordance the time limit for the end of the rental contract
- Jointly (with families) dealing with pending back-payments on rent of municipal housing
- Repair of municipal housing (both complete renovation and small repairs throughout the year)
- Changes in contract-holder, etc.

Said tasks inspired the city on February 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 to pass the Rules (*reglamento*) for awarding municipal social housing which created a permanent registry of applicants to which anyone who met the established requirements can have access. Furthermore, it established a “permanent evaluation team,” a body made up of specialists in charge of evaluating housing applications during bi-monthly meetings.

#### B) Family placement programs

Part of the Childhood Protection System, family placement is a caregiving alternative based on citizen solidarity which allows children who have been temporarily separated from their parents to continue growing in a stable family environment.

It is a family living alternative for children in dangerous home situations which aims to provide them with a stable family structure when circumstances impede them from doing so with their biological family. It is not the same as adoption though both are legal protection measures; the difference lies in that they meet different needs in the children and expectations in the adults. As a general rule, placement is always temporary, lasting only until the situation which caused the separation from the biological parents improves and/or a more definitive solution for the child is proposed.

The main objective is to fulfill the rights of all children to live and grow up with a family, the goal ultimately being the child’s biological family where possible.

This measure is meant to avoid institutionalization of minors, a practice which favors neither normal development nor growth.

#### ***3.6.2. Discussion of social protection measures for alternative family structures and their ramifications for strengthening solidarity in family life.***



In Spain, families with minors or other dependent persons in their care can obtain social benefits. However, a broader definition of the functions families carry out and a change in the conditions to qualify for benefits would serve to reinforce family unity.

Nevertheless, the trend has swung precisely in the opposite direction: social policy is now focused on the protection of women and children during a divorce or separation and the protection of the elderly.

The effect of housing policy is limited due to the scarce number of units offered by cities. The case of Segovia is symptomatic; it was clear with the resettlement of families living in shantytowns that once settled in the new flats, over time, their families would grow, thus requiring more space and producing severe overcrowding at home. In fact, there have been cases of new families who, with the birth of their first child, applied for Guaranteed Income (RGC), which allowed them to move into their own place. Over time, however, they could not afford the cost of living and, not wanting to move back home, ended up applying for public grants, using them up, and find themselves in the same place as their parents before them.

In terms of family placement, there are very few families who sign up for the program to receive grants for taking children in temporary placement, too few for the potential demand of the program.

#### **4. Conclusions:**

The model in Spain is a paradox. Strong family ties underline just how positively Spaniards feel about family. For instance, in a study carried out by the Jacobs Foundation that compared children in 16 different countries regarding satisfaction with life, family, school, and friends, Spanish kids were the most satisfied with their family life out of all the 16 countries studied (3.79 out of 4 points) as well as with their friends (Rees et al., 2016: 21).

The strength of family ties, the real social protection network that helped get Spain through the recent economic crisis, is a central pillar of Spanish society; this fact, however, is not reflected in its social policy. There are no real support measures set to increase the birthrate, the employment of young people, or the creation of new families.

As such, as in other Mediterranean countries in Europe, family plays a central role in social life. The family is tasked with taking care of its members; that does not, however, make it a key objective in social policy. Our welfare system has not been designed with family unity and protection in mind, but more with getting people working, fighting social exclusion, and supporting children, the elderly and other dependent people on occasion.

Professor Gilbert's Family-Sensitive Social Protection approach would be a significant transformation of family policy in Spain. Both families and children should be considered a social asset and, thus, policies should be designed to support and encourage the family: the starting of new families, establishing a healthy family-

work life balance, sharing household chores, and the transition from childhood to adulthood, not even to mention the development of grants to help overcome unemployment and functional diversity (table 2).

Table 2: Social programs for families in Spain

<b>Programs and support measures for the family in Spain</b>	<b>Impact on family life</b>	<b>Best practices and strategies for reinforcing family wellbeing</b>
<b>Guaranteed Income/ Unconditional Cash Grants and Family Life</b>	<p>Citizens' Guaranteed Income (RGC)</p> <p>Individualized Integration Plan</p> <p>Oriented toward entering the job market</p>	<p>Overcoming obstacles in the family by evaluating the family as a whole</p> <p>Adjusting coverage to family needs</p>
<b>Means-tested Social Benefits, and the Formation of Stable Families</b>	<p>Maintaining family united in times of distress, helplessness, and reunification</p> <p>Depends on local budgets</p> <p>Strict requirements to qualify for benefits</p> <p>Conditions: searching for work, children attending school</p>	<p>Coordination among different needs in the family</p> <p>Evaluation of the performance of social benefits in terms of increase in family wellbeing</p> <p>Support of youth in transition to adulthood and starting new family</p>
<b>Cash Versus In-Kind Social Benefits</b>	<p>Personal orientation</p> <p>Huge differences among cities</p>	<p>Coordination between different levels of administration</p> <p>Mixed design: both types of benefits (cash and in-kind) depending on family needs</p>
<b>Marriage Benefits to Encourage Family Life</b>	<p>Benefits are individual</p> <p>Marriage benefits extremely limited (Example: large family discount)</p>	<p>Design benefits for families based on characteristics: births, youth transitioning to adulthood, support of dependent persons</p>
<b>Work-oriented Benefits and Family Life</b>	<p>Striking a healthy family/work life balance</p>	<p>Flexibility in work timetable for both parents</p>

		Support in finding balance Support in caregiving of children and other dependent persons
<b>Social Protection and Alternative Family</b>	Social Security, Tax benefits, and housing Support depending on level of income	Large number of units available for families Supervision focused on the evolution of the family unit, particular attention on children and dependent persons

Source: the authors

In Spain, problems with coordination between the different administrative levels, the invisibility of families and their needs, and the limited impact of existing programs demands a retooling of our family social policy (along the lines of a Family-Sensitive Social Protection approach). (Table 3)

Table 3: Strategies for the development of comprehensive social protection for families:

<b>Scope of action</b>	<b>Proposals</b>
<b>Problems with coordination</b>	Create a Family Ministry or Secretary that promotes and coordinates all family policy carried out by local, regional and central administrations
<b>Lack of comprehensive family social policy</b>	A national pact on families which would serve as a legal tool to protection and support families
<b>Lack of public funding</b>	Increase spending on family policy to 2% GDP
<b>Conflict, break-up, and reunification of families</b>	Pass a law on prevention and mediation in families to support family stability and the protection of minors
<b>Low birthrate and discrimination of women-mothers in the workplace</b>	Unequivocal support of motherhood, consider children social assets
<b>Aging and care of the elderly</b>	Unequivocal support of families who care for elderly members

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