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THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF CATALONIA

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The term "Second Demographic Transition" was introduced by Van de Kaa (1988) and Lesthaeghe (1994) to explain demographic trends in Western countries from the 1950s to the present¹. Some demographers, like Cliquet (1991), don't agree with the idea of talking about a "second" demographic transition, arguing that demographic changes experienced during the last decades are only a lineal continuation of changes that gave sense to a well known Demographic Transition initiated in Europe following the industrial revolution.

The Demographic Transition, as defined in Ansley Coale's works (1973), should be seen as the change from a traditional society with high natality and mortality rates to an industrialised society in which natality and mortality are stabilized at low levels. In the explanatory framework developed by Notestein (1953) this change is a consequence of a modernisation process of society, that consists in a deeply social and economic change, promoted by the industrial revolution. Since then, studies on demographic trends use as independent variables macro social factors in order to measure the degree of modernisation of a specific society. From this point of view, the mortality and natality transition are explained by factors such as urbanisation, education levels, productive structure, secularisation, etc.

As it has been pointed out recently in a critical review of the construction of demographic knowledge done by the demographer Susan

¹ Dirk Van de Kaa and Ron Lesthaeghe include in the *Second Demographic Transition* recent trends in mortality and mobility, but I will only refer to family dynamics.

Cotts Watkins (1993)², it's important to note that in the context of the "first" Demographic Transition, the same factors that are relevant to explain women's reproductive behaviour also appear in mortality and mobility studies. In fact, demographic studies on reproductive behaviour changes do not take into account in which context of gender relations fertility decisions are taken. The Theory of Demographic Transition says nothing about sexuality (fertility is the result of an immaculate conception), gender roles and gender relations (couples appear as monolithic unions without conflicts). Since then other fertility theories have been developed (Value of Children by Arnold, New Home Economics by Gary Becker or Wealth Flows by John Caldwell), in which the economic value of children is underlined, but in all of them the couple appears as a harmonic unit, without interests in conflict. In short, power relations that influence fertility decisions and are so relevant to explaining different reproductive behaviour are left out in such frameworks.

On the contrary, the Second Demographic Transition, in its explanatory framework, considers openly changes in gender relations. For that reason, I think is useful to speak about a *second* demographic transition in order to underline the importance of changes in relations between men and women related to demographic and family changes. Behind any decision of having or not having children, of getting or not getting married, exists a negotiation process in which personal expectations and bargaining power are very important. It seems clear to me, then, that women's emancipation has changed the negotiation capability of women in these processes, becoming the crucial factor of the process of deinstitutionalisation of the family³. That process is expressed in a search of an own field of experimentation of new family arrangements outside of the patriarchal family⁴. In this context, fertility decline and changes in family forms are demographic changes that can be understood in terms of the new women's roles, built on the base of more autonomy and less dependence on men.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

According to Lesthaeghe we can distinguish three phases in the *Second Demographic Transition* as it takes place in many Northern and Central European countries. During the initial phase, roughly between 1955 and 1970, there were three major components. Firstly, there was a

² Susan Cotts Watkins and Ansley Coale have broadly studied the regional geography of the fertility transition in Europe in the context of the Princeton study (see Coale & Watkins, 1986).

³ Usually in sociological literature the term "deinstitutionalization" of the family is used to refer to the process of privatization of family decisions and individualization of its members.

⁴ The term "patriarchal family" is used here as a synonym for the modern family (as it was defined by Talcot Parsons (1955): with a clear division of gender roles of partners, he as a breadwinner and she as a housewife) to emphasise the hierarchic dimension in gender relations.

considerable acceleration in the already upward divorce trend. Secondly, the baby boom came to an end. Fertility at all ages and marriage durations declined simultaneously. This coincided with the contraceptive revolution based on new hormonal contraceptives and the rediscovery of the IUD. Thirdly, the decline in ages at marriage, that had started between 1880 and 1920 in most Western countries, stopped. Instead, proportions marrying prior to the age of 25 dropped considerably. In the late 60s several countries also experienced a temporary increase in shotgun marriages: premarital sex had been on the increase throughout the 1960s, and contraceptive protection in such relations was not yet efficient enough. In most countries this feature disappeared during the early 1970s. In others, a problem of teenage pregnancy persisted.

During a second phase, roughly between 1970 and 1985, premarital cohabitation spread from Nordic countries to many others. In Europe, proportions cohabiting largely compensate for declining proportions marrying. Thereafter, procreation also starts within consensual unions, and these unions drift away from being a period of courtship to becoming more a "paperless marriage". Procreation in consensual unions results in a larger share of extramarital births among all births. But, this does not entail a rise in fertility prior to the age of 25. The opposite still holds.

A third phase has occurred from the mid-1980s onward. It is characterized by a plateau in divorce rates in countries that had reached high levels. However, it should be stressed that remarriage probabilities, both for divorcees and widowed people, had declined throughout the period since the 1960s. Post-marital cohabitation and LAT-relations⁵ emerge as new features and they replace remarriage to some extent. Moreover, there is a recuperation effect of fertility after the age of 30. In some countries the decline in fertility at young ages has stopped, largely because it reached very low levels or because of the persistent teenage fertility problem. As a consequence, the recuperation after the age of 30 pushes the period fertility rates to slightly higher levels. Not all Western nations have, however, reached this third stage. In Europe, the leads and the lags essentially follow a North-South axis, with the mediterranean countries still being in the second phase⁶.

REGIONAL PATTERNS

In an attempt to show the regional diversity of the demographic frame, the French demographer Louis Roussel (1992) analysed the process of

⁵ L.A.T. (living apart together) refers to a stable sentimental relation keeping independent households of residence.

⁶ For a more detail description and explanation of the Second Demographic Transition see D. Van de Kaa (1988) and R. Lesthaeghe (1994).

deinstitutionalization of the family in Europe. Roussel presents a typology based on the following indexes in 1988 for sixteen countries. Taking as a starting point he considered: average number of children per woman or total fertility rate, divorce rate, percentage of cohabitants and percentage of births outside marriage. As a result he distinguishes four great regions: 1) The Southern Region (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain): low fertility, divorce, cohabitation and birth outside marriage; 2) The Northern Region (Denmark and Sweden): high level of fertility, divorce and cohabitation and high or middle level of percentage of birth outside marriage; 3) The Western Region (France, Norway, Holland and the United Kingdom): low fertility, low level of cohabitation and high divorce and high percentage of births outside marriage; and 4) The Central region (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland): high divorce, medium cohabitation, scarcity of births outside marriage and weak fertility.

This typology in our case is useful only to situate Spain in the context of Mediterranean areas. The decline of fertility and nuptiality marking the beginning of the *Second Demographic Transition* in Western and Northern European countries took place later in the Mediterranean countries (during the seventies and the eighties) and faster because of political, economical and cultural factors acting at that specific time. Just to mention one in Spain, during Franco's era, divorce, contraception and abortion were illegal. In democracy normative legalization comes very slowly: contraception in 1978, divorce in 1981 and abortion, only in three restricted situations in 1985 (rape, risk for mothers' health and congenital malformation).

In Catalonia, like in the rest of Mediterranean Europe, all the features that define the *Second Demographic Transition* are more noticeable than in other Spanish regions: fertility is lower, and percentage of out of wedlock births, divorce and cohabitation higher. As a consequence one-parent families, one-person households and reconstructed families are more frequent, especially in the Metropolitan Area and Barcelona City. I will argue that these trends are associated with a higher degree of women's autonomy and independence and with a weaker degree of patriarchal relations.

In Catalonia, the fertility and nuptiality decline began around 1975. At the beginning of the eighties the fertility decline was so accelerated that nowadays this area (Spain, Italy and Portugal) registers the lowest fertility levels in the world: Catalonia, the Basque country, Galizia and some other regions in the North of Italy (Emilia-Romagna and Liguria) are the regions with the lowest number of children per woman. Simultaneously the age at first union and the age at first birth increased (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1. – Basic demographic indicators

Indicators:	Spain		Catalonia		Barcelona (city)	
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980/81	1990/91
Fertility						
* Total Fertility Rate (Children per Woman)	2.21	1.36	1.88	1.24	1.6	1.14
* Average Age at Motherhood	28.2	28.8	27.9	29.4	28.5	30.3
* Average Age at First Child	25.05	27.18	-	27.86	-	-
Births out of wedlock						
* % of Births Out of Wedlock	3.9	9.6	6	11.1	9.9	14.1
* % of Births Out of Wedlock where the Father is Unknown	60.8	17.4	43.3	13.3	47.9	15.6
Nuptiality and divorce						
* Age at first marriage: Men	25.4	27.5	25.4	27.1	26.2	29
* Age at first marriage: Women	23.4	25.3	23	24.9	24.1	27
* Civil Marriages as a % of the Total Number of Marriages	4.5	19.3	4.7	25.9	1.15	34
* Initiated cases of Separations and Divorces	16,363**	59,463	4,014**	13,049	-	-
* Separations & Divorces per 100 Marriages	8.1**	27	15**	40	-	-
Cohabitation						
* % of Cohabitants per Unions Formed between:						
1980-85	4.0		-		-	
1986-90	7.8		-		-	
1991-95	-		-		-	
* % of Cohabitants Out of the Total Number of Couples		1.6***		2.8***		4.6***
** 1981 ***1991						
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Censos, Movimiento Natural de la Población & Encuesta Socio-demográfica (1991); Enquestes Metropolitanas de Barcelona (1990 & 1995)						

We can also appreciate an important change in the kind of marriage celebration, which is a good indicator of the deinstitutionalisation of the family. At the beginning of the eighties in Catalonia only a very few couples got married outside the traditional Catholic ritual, but at the beginning of the nineties one of every four marriages was celebrated by the civil law (only). The average in Barcelona City is one out of three and in Spain one out of every five marriages. During the eighties the number of legal divorces and separations tripled and birth outside marriage doubled. The ratio between the dissolution of old couples and the number of new married couples has been increasing.

At the beginning of the nineties, for every ten marriages celebrated in Catalonia, 1.5 legal separations or divorce actions were initiated; ten years later this relation was 10 to 4. Currently the incidence of divorce is higher in Catalonia than in Spain as a whole, but in relation to European patterns

these figures are still very low. From the experience of central and northern European countries we know that the divorce rate became stable when cohabitation is broadly spread. That is to say, when cohabitation is normatively seen as a type of marriage it could also finish in a pre-marital disruption (sometimes the term "divorce of cohabitants" is used). This contributes to a reduction in the number of divorces and separations that follow a legal course. It also has an influence on fertility in lowering its rates given the losses of the reproductive period caused by the lags between the pre-marital disruption and future relationships the woman may engage in. Statistics from the census show a lower number of separated and divorced males than separated and divorced females (in 1991 in Spain the relation was 7 to 10). These figures reflect the higher propensity of men to remarry after a broken union. The reasons for this difference could be multiple. On the one hand, the incapability of men to take care of themselves increases their predisposition to begin a new union. On the other hand, often, after a divorce or a separation fathers keep virtually free of family burdens, or better to say, with less daily responsibilities than mothers, and for that reason they are in a better situation to initiate a new life in a couple with another person. Finally, men more frequently than women ask for a separation when they already have initiated in practice a new relationship.

Data from marriage registers confirm the above assumption showing a higher propensity of men to be in their second unions, especially with previously single women. On the contrary, second marriages between divorced women and single men are not frequent at all. The incidence of marriage with at least one of the partners divorced is higher in Catalonia than in the rest of the Spain, and they are concentrated in Barcelona City.

Cohabitation, including pre-marital type also, but especially after dissolution of a first marriage increased substantially in Catalonia during the eighties. Births outside marriage have increased in parallel with births of not married women where the father is known. This confirms the higher incidence of cohabiting couples. Also in this case, Catalonia and Barcelona are distinctly different from all of Spain, as shown by the high values of both indicators.

In cohabitation we can distinguish at least two different functions: one, as a pre-marital function, or as a "trial marriage", especially for young couples; and on the other hand, as an alternative frame to redefine gender relations in couples, frequently adults, who have experienced a former union or marriage that has ended up in a separation or divorce. In Catalonia, this second group is very important and the profile of cohabitants suggests a relational frame less conventional than marriage. The occupational category and the level of education is higher than the average of the population; in relation to married couples, to find a women older or better educated than

her partner is more frequent⁷, and the number of children per couple is lower (see Flaquer and Solsona, 1995).

Pre-marital cohabitation and living apart together, although with a relatively low incidence in the European context, are consistently more frequent among young adults. In fact, living apart together relations could play the same role as the "old courtship", as a waiting time, until the partners became economically independent. In that sense, is possible to suggest that the "independence thesis", formulated in Gary Becker's theory of marriage doesn't work in our country. Becker states that "the gain from marriage is reduced by a rise in the earnings and labour force participation of women because a sexual division of labour becomes less advantageous". That is to say, greater women's independence will substantially increase the proportion who never marry. Nevertheless, in Spain, on the contrary, self-realisation of women, and men as well, is not an obstacle, but a pre-condition to initiate a process of family constitution⁸. In that sense, the great difficulties for young women to get a job, and the existence of a welfare state that does not make emancipation from the parental home easy, neither to combine work and family, explain in a great part, such low nuptiality and fertility levels in Catalonia and in Spain.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Recent trends in nuptiality, divorce and in part in fertility and mortality caused important changes in family structures and in the style of family life. As a consequence of developments of the *Second Demographic Transition* life cycle transitions for individuals become more frequent, less strictly patterned and more complex. There is an observable decline in categories of more traditional households, meanwhile other different kinds of families become more visible: one parent families, mostly headed by women, are increasing, as well as one person households and reconstructed families. In that sense, the monolithic identity that in the past protected the family institution disappeared, and women did a lot in this direction. For that reason, some authors talk about the death of the family and the birth of the families.

⁷ Mead Cain (1994) has studied the relation between patriarchal society and demographic change in different contemporaneous societies. One of the most important results is that a positive relation exists among the age difference between partners, the number of children and the strength of the patriarchal regime.

⁸ Valerie K. Oppenheimer and V. Lew (1995) criticize the microeconomic theory formulated by Gary Becker, demonstrating that in the United States during the eighties, women with higher education level, a better position in the labour market and higher income have a higher propensity to get married.

Some notes about the availability of European statistics on family structures

Statistics, such as population censuses, which are not designed to gather information about family situation, show the changes in the constitution of the family late and in a fragmented way. So, it is very difficult to know if out of wedlock births correspond to a one parent family or cohabiting partners. The same problem occurs with the reconstructed families, that means, small siblings living in a family created by a second marriage.

The information about family composition in Europe is limited although I must note the work done by Eurostat gathering data given by governments from their population censuses. For the moment, Eurostat has published two documents with results from population censuses: *The European Union and the Family, Social Europe 1-1994* and *Ménages et Familles dans l'Espace Economique Européen, Statistiques en bref, Population et Conditions Sociales, 1995-5*.⁹

To compare household structures in 1991 among European countries we will distinguish between: one person households, one parent families, one nucleus families, two or more nucleus families and non-family households of two or more people. Data is not completely comparable, because many statistical institutes don't follow United Nations recommendations to tabulate family data. For instance, some countries limit the age of children to consider them as members of a family nucleus (such as Denmark, Luxembourg, Finland or Sweden, where they fix the maximum age at 18, 25, 18 and 18 respectively) while the majority of the countries don't do it.

On the other hand, the definition of the family nucleus, based on partners or affiliation relations, also has more than one exception. In the Portuguese case, for instance, as a consequence of migratory movements abroad, households composed of grandparents and grandchildren are frequent and also considered as nuclear families. In Denmark, Luxembourg and Great Britain, these households have the same treatment.

Another issue that doesn't receive homogeneous consideration is cohabitation. While in some countries cohabitation is seen as similar to a marriage type, in others cohabitants are considered unrelated people, so that in the case of having children they are tabulated as one parent families, and if not, they are included in the category of non family household with two or more people.

Finally, just to say that data from 1991 correspond almost entirely with Europe of 15, even though sometimes Eurostat also gives information about

⁹ Readers who want to clarify any statistic, figure or matter referring to census definitions of basic concepts of household and family, that are the base for tabulations on living arrangements, please consult the two references above.

Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, in which case it refers to European Economic Space.

Family Structures at the beginning of the nineties in Europe

At the beginning of the nineties, more than 2 out of 3 European households (70%) were composed of one or more family groups. The more common case is the strict nuclear family -63%, close to 66% in 1981- even the weight of different kinds of households has changed during the eighties, reducing couples with children and increasing one parent families. Extended nuclear families have decreased (4% in 1991 versus 6.5% in 1981). One person households in 1991 represented 27% compared with 23% in 1981.

In terms of the population it is still evident that the most common experience for individuals is to live in a family, since 86% of the population resident in the European Economic Space lives in a family household. Nevertheless, the eighties trends confirm the development of new family arrangements related to the changes of the Second Demographic Transition. They are expressed by an increase in one parent families, one person households and reconstructed families, even though trends and evolution of the last can not be measured with precision. In fact, one of every 10 European people lives alone, one of every 10 lives in a one parent family, but 1 of 5 lives in a traditional family composed of a couple with children and only 3% of people live in nonfamily households with 2 or more people. Thus, it does not seem adequate to talk about the end of the family, instead we may explore the new diversity of family forms, that also shows great diversity of family forms in the European space. From the distribution of households per country by type shown in Figures 9.1 and 9.2 it is easy to confirm that we are comparing different realities.

The one person households are very frequent (30% of the total) in the Northern countries and Germany whilst in the Mediterranean countries this percentage is close to 20% and Spain has the lowest percentage with only 13%. In the rest of the countries this percentage ranges from 25% to 30%. In Northern countries women and men have the same experience of living alone. In Sweden, for instance, 18.5% of the population lives alone (8.4% are men and 10.2% are women). A similar situation could be found in the rest of the Northern countries. Nevertheless, in Germany, in the Mediterranean and Central European countries, the percentage of women living alone doubles or triples that of men.

In the information published by Eurostat (1995) households without nucleus with more than one person are included in the category of nonfamily households, but in some cases they are formed by related people who do not constitute a nucleus. The three countries that show the highest percentage of this type of household are the Netherlands, Finland and Ireland, every one in a different stage of the *Second Demographic Transition*, indeed.

Figure 9.1. – Household structure in Europe, 1981.

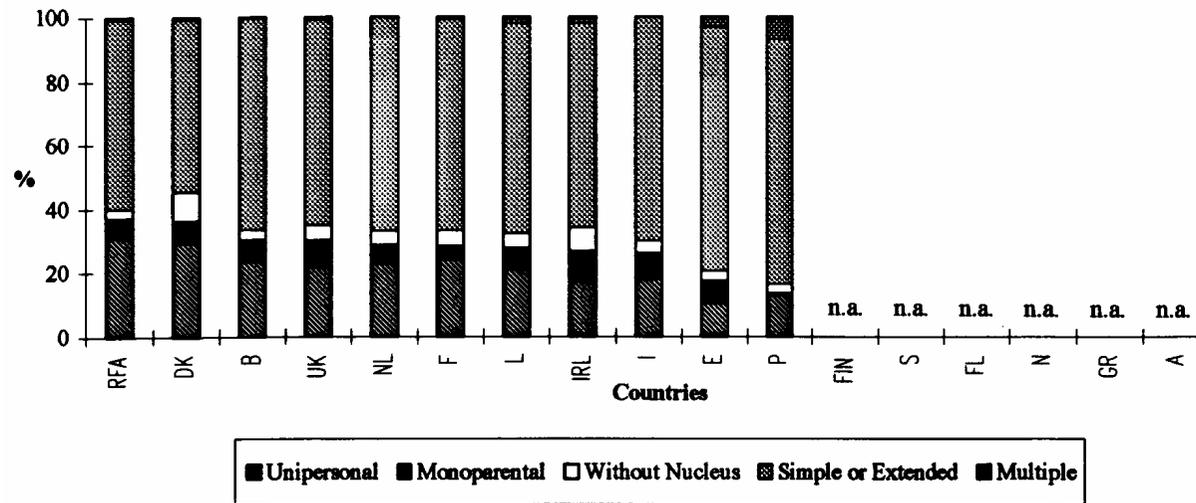
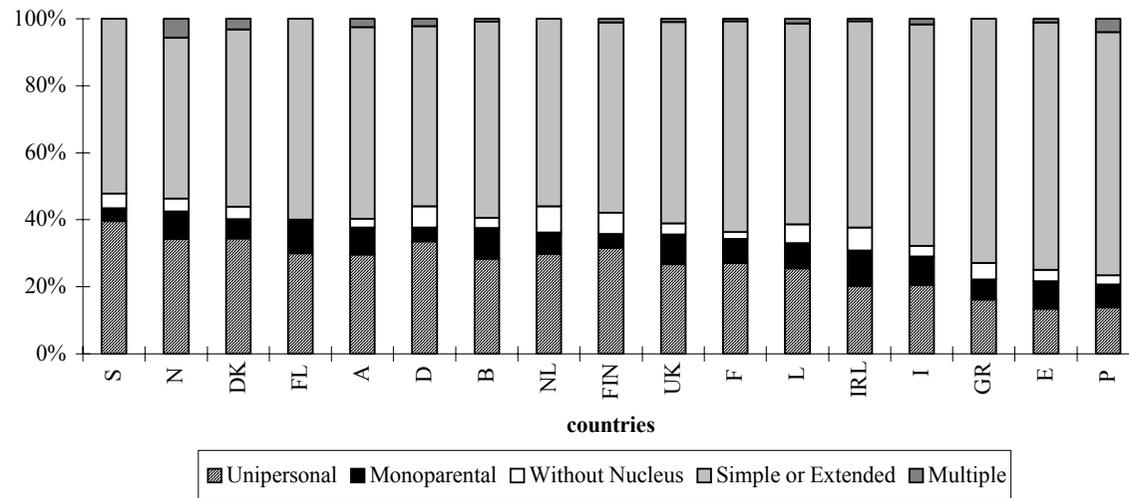


FIGURE 9.2. – HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE IN EUROPE, 1991.



One parent households have been increasing in all European countries during the eighties, but regional differences are difficult to explain because there are not common criteria about the maximum age of children that are used to define them. In some cases these families are a result of a decomposition of a nuclear family, and in other cases it could be an old parent, for instance a widowed mother, who goes to live with one of the children already adult and economically independent.

In fact, among the countries that show the higher percentage of this kind of household, only Norway has established a limit on the age of children. Ireland registers the highest percentage (10.68%) followed very close by Iceland (10%). Belgium, Great Britain, Spain, Austria and Norway have percentages higher than 8%.

Even though it is clear that one parent households have been increasing in all European countries during the eighties, it's difficult to establish the genesis of this kind of household, partly because definitions in the censuses differ among countries. Sometimes the factor which originated the above type of household is the ageing process of the population and family regrouping process of elderly people with oldest relatives. In other cases it is just an expression of the fact that the nuclear family has lost the monopoly of reproduction. Therefore, it may be difficult to make generalisations about the process.

If we take into account only one parent families with at least one child less than 16 years old, then the regional typology is clearer. Denmark, Great Britain and Germany show the highest percentage (20.8%, 16% and 15.4% of the total households, respectively). Greece, Italy and Spain are the lowest (5.7%, 6.4% and 7.9%, respectively). In relation to the presence of lone fathers and lone mothers, as well as ten years before, we can speak about the feminization of single parenthood, since the frequency of lone fathers is very low in all countries. The Norwegian demographer An-Magritt Jensen (1995) refers to the effects of single parenthood in childhood: the feminization of single parenthood brings a process of feminization of childhood, which means that children tend to keep closer to their mothers, and the contrary happens with fathers. Mothers have more responsibilities in relation to their children and a greater amount of reproductive work than before the disruption. On the other hand, single parenthood is related to a reduction in family income for the salary missing that leads to a feminization of poverty as well.

Denmark is the country with the highest presence of one parent families with minor children. That can be explained, in part, because it is one of the countries where equal opportunity policies were developed earlier. These policies guarantee economic autonomy for women, as well as for men, which allow decisions-making in relation to family arrangements to be taken more freely. The cases of Great Britain and Germany can not be understood without taking into account the availability of their public policies.

These policies acted in another direction and from a more patriarchal ideology, in the sense that they tried not to call in question the legitimacy of the traditional/patriarchal nuclear family based on asymmetric and hierarchical sexual division of labour.

In Great Britain, for instance, the State during the sixties wanted to protect lone single mothers, because from a conservative point of view it was a disgraceful situation. As such the state would "help" them economically. Now, the State has problems to give the provision to all lone mothers who have the right to receive it. In fact, as a result of the gender blind economic policy that considers women's work just as a help, every day there are more mothers who do not reach the minimum salary needed to raise their children.

In Germany, the protectionist policy of the State could be seen from an optimistic perspective since it allowed women to not be dependent on an individual patriarch, her partner, even though lone mothers become dependent on government welfare payments. In many countries, as for instance Spain, where the State does not give any kind of provision in such a situation, women without resources are forced to live with their partners although their relationship has fallen apart, because they can not economically support their children and themselves. In this sense, the German policy has a good consideration by lone mothers who perceive economic provisions from the State, as has been shown by Madje & Neussuss (1994) in their study on West Berlin, ahead of the more pessimistic assumption that emphasizes the strong relation between lone motherhood and feminization of poverty.

The simple and extended nuclear households (considered together because disaggregated data have not been published yet) show a north-south regional typology that is quite clear: maximum presence in the Mediterranean countries (Portugal, Greece, and Spain with more than 70% of total households) and minimum in Norway (less than 50%). In Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and Austria we find percentages close to Norway (from 50% to 60%). Italy and France keep very close to their Mediterranean neighbours (from 60% to 70%), as do Ireland, Great Britain, and Iceland

Observing simple nuclear households, we are in fact referring to living arrangements with the same composition. However, we should point out that in Mediterranean countries as well as in Ireland, households with a couple without children are less frequent, relative to the rest of the European countries. Nevertheless, it's important to mention that gender and inter-generational relations in families with couple and children, may be quite different depending on the economic and personal autonomy of their members. I should by now clarify what I have been calling a traditional or patriarchal type of household. I defined them as such based upon a division of labour as follows: he's the breadwinner and she's a housewife. But, when the wife or one of the children enjoy economic independence, patriarchal

relations are weakened. The same comment is valid to refer to a household which is composed only of a couple without children. In such a case, gender relations are defined on the basis of the relative autonomy of their members.

In concluding with the European geography's frame of household composition, we should mention that curiously Norway shows the higher percentage of households with two or more nuclei. This is very difficult to be explained, but we assume that it is related to census definitions (maybe with the maximum age of children to belong to a nuclear family).

NEW FAMILY FORMS AND GENDER RELATIONS. AN EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORK

The explanatory framework of the *Second Demographic Transition* developed by Van de Kaa (1988) considers social processes in three dimensions: structure (which refers to modernisation, development of post-industrial society and the Welfare State), culture (expressed by the so-called "silent revolution") and technology (which includes the second contraceptive revolution and the spread of television information). From my point of view, the second dimension, referring to culture, is very important because it includes the weakening of gender inequalities and women's dependence. The author underlines in this dimension: the increasing contest between the sexes, changes in balance of power between sexes, increased emphasis on self-actualisation, conflict of roles in different spheres of life, female life course more independent, search for personal life style, etc. All these processes promote the development of new living arrangements.

Women's emancipation became a key factor in the acceleration of these changes, but at the same time, as a consequence of the redefinition of sex roles, relations between men and women were modified and masculine gender identity began a de-construction/reconstruction process, with preliminary effects on marriage and reproductive behaviour. To study gender relations changes and demographic changes it is absolutely necessary to include the male half of the population in our studies, to recognise that to get married and to have children is at least a matter involving two people.

Some authors have included men in the study of economic policy on fertility decisions, getting very interesting results. The economist Nancy Folbre (1993), for instance, has argued that the weakening of patriarchal society is expressed by a reduction in the exercise of men's power in decisions on the number of children. That happens when the economic value of children is decreasing for an imbalance between intergenerational economic flows and then women can exercise control of their own bodies, and get more decision and bargaining power. On the other hand, there is a negative effect on the number of children desired from the co-responsibility of fathers

of the reproductive work. That is to say, when fathers became aware of the meaning of *love's work*, to use the term of Hilary Rose (1987)¹⁰, the mythical image of a great family sitting at the table around the patriarch on a holiday disappears.

Gender relation analysis is necessary to understand what a union's break-up really means and the constitution of a one-parent family. Some years ago Cristine Delphy (1982), in a paper on the sociological meaning of marriage and divorce, pointed out that divorce marks the end of a marriage but it does not mean at all the end of the marriage as an institution. Her paper "Marriage and divorce: the double predicament" focuses only on the economic aspects. Her hypothesis is that marriage is the institution that permits extraction of free work from a category of the population, the wives-women. She argues broadly that divorce reveals some institutional features of marriage that before were kept in a latent situation. Delphy affirms the follow paradox:

"On the one hand, for women marriage is the institutional place of their exploitation and, on the other hand, as a consequence of that exploitation their potential situation (for all women, not only for married women) is so bad that, economically speaking, marriage becomes still the best career for them" (Delphy, 1982, p. 68).

Nevertheless, this statement has many exceptions, since many women reject going back to a situation of patriarchal dependence. In fact, other authors have pointed out that in many countries as a consequence of the development of the Welfare State, as for instance the case of Germany, the risk situation for people who experienced a change in the way of life could become an opportunity, if there is a social and political infrastructure that gives alternatives to women who are in that situation (Madje & Neususs, 1994).

One conclusion that could be exposed easily is that the development of the Welfare State is a key factor for the development of new attitudes concerning marriage and reproduction and based on a higher level of individual autonomy. When Roussel (1992) wondered why changes in living arrangements began in the Northern Region, he concluded that it was precisely in Denmark and Sweden where the debate began on the new women's image, their integration into working life, the autonomy of couples and the reconsideration of gender roles. Of course, in order to change gender roles it is necessary to modify gender relations.

In Spain, even though the legal reforms introduced after the Democratic Transition affect the entire state, which without any doubt made the democratisation of family life easier, currently we may find different regions in different stages of the Second Demographic Transition. The

¹⁰ For Hilary rose *love's work* is a combination of servant work, often for long hours, repetitive and boring domestic tasks and complex emotional work with children, husbands and incapacitated elderly people.

consequences of such reforms are interfering with the gender identities constructed in the past in every region. My hypothesis is that in Catalonia these processes are quite developed, especially in Barcelona City. This has been occurring not as a consequence of a broad development of the Welfare State, even though in that area important improvements have been taking place during the tenure of the left wing government of the city, neither because of the massive integration of women in the labour market (women's unemployment rates are very important); but due to a weakening of patriarchal relations shaped throughout the century.

Women's emancipation in Catalonia is in an advanced phase because the compatibility between family and salaried work has more legitimacy there than in other Spanish regions (Solsona, 1994). On the other hand, the social debate to reach the responsibility of men and women in the private sphere is more vigorous. Several factors have favoured this advantaged situation of Catalonia: historical reasons, economic, political and cultural as well. In fact, from the beginning of the industrial revolution, women in Catalonia have been needed as a labour force in textile industries. Even the conservative wave of the Catalan nationalist movement at the beginning of the century, that aimed to give education to women to become better partners and to raise healthier children, gave greater importance to preparing girls and young women to earn a living in new professions in better conditions. The Cultural Institute founded by Francesca Bonmàison, which is one of the expressions of the force of this contradictory conservative feminism, developed at the beginning of the century (1909-1926). It tried to train modern women in the religious values making a better housewife and a better partner, and also to promote its presence in the public space, and promoting a solidarity among women of different social classes (Macià, 1988). During this period, the first experience in Spain in coeducational schools took place in Catalonia with the "Escola Moderna de Ferrer Guardia" (1901-1906), and during the Second Republic (1931-38) only in Catalonia was coeducation widely implemented (Cortada, 1988).

During the Second Republic the most progressive legislation in Spain was implemented by the Catalan government to guarantee civil rights and social integration of women; that legislation was comparable to that of the most advanced countries of that time. For instance, Catalonia was the second country in the world (after the Soviet Union) where abortion was legal; contraceptive information was widespread; the Spanish divorce law was amplified and the legal regime of separate property of partners gave married women more autonomy and independence (Oranich, 1978).

Even during Franco's dictatorship, the Catalan civil law, based on the old Roman law, was more advanced and less discriminatory toward women than the Napoleonic Civil Code introduced after the Civil War (in 1939) in the major part of Spain. That means, for instance, that during Franco's regime, a Catalan woman who married a Catalan man kept economic patrimonial independence within the marriage even though she

didn't have legal standing in the eye of the courts (but if she married a non-Catalonian man the head of the family imposed its regionality). During Franco's era equality and autonomy of partners wasn't guaranteed. At that time, married women needed permission from their husband to work outside the household but in Catalonia marriage didn't presume, as often as in the other Spanish regions, an interruption of salaried activity (Solsona, 1994).

At the beginning of the redemocratisation period (1976), the first public debate on radical or left feminism, after 40 years of silence during the dictatorship, took place in Barcelona. During this period, feminist movements were given assistance in aspects such as family planning, abortion, separation, etc., before the young democracy addressed these issues. The first Family Planning Centre was created in Catalonia. Subsequently, that assistance work was transferred to suitable public institutions (Women's Institute, Health Services and Welfare Assistance).

As a consequence of all that, currently in Catalonia the deinstitutionalisation of the family is a fact. The family biography is not the only possibility for women, their life cycle has become more independent from the family cycle. The separation between sexuality and reproduction, an old vindication of the feminist movement, is now clear. Marriage is not the only frame for sentimental and sexual relations and it has lost the monopoly on reproduction. The right age to get married and to have children is questioned. Marriage takes place later or doesn't take place at all. Women have children later or they don't have children. Cohabitants and couples without children have begun to be easily accepted. Gay and lesbian collectives are present in public life and claim the right to educate and adopt children. The percentage of children born outside marriage is higher in Catalonia than in all of Spain, and the transition from cohabitation to marriage when children are born is not so frequent as in other European countries. One person households are more frequent in Catalonia, and are concentrated in some neighbourhoods of Barcelona City where dwelling prices are cheaper. More women can face up to a divorce or a separation, even though social provisions for them are almost non-existent¹¹. One-parent families are increasing and have higher social acceptance.

In fact, currently, regional differences in Spain in the degree of women's emancipation and social integration are quite important. The percentage of women aged 20-24 years old enrolled in University Studies in Catalonia is almost double that in Andalusia, and on the contrary in this age group the percentage of those in Andalusia who declare themselves as housewives is twice that in Catalonia. The percentage of married women with nonagrarian salaried jobs is higher in Catalonia than in any other region, so, dual career nuclear families are more frequent. The percentage of minor children who attend school every day is also higher. The percentage of

¹¹ In Catalonia as well as in other Spanish Autonomous Governments there is a minimum salary called PIRMI (Programa Interdepartamental de la Renda Mínima d'Inserció) of about 37,000 pesetas plus 6,000 pesetas per child, but very few single mothers can receive it.

primary schools with a 9 to 5 schedule including dining hall, organised not by the State but by Parents associations, and making working activities easier for parents, is higher in Catalonia than in other regions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Recent trends in the process of constitution, maintenance and dissolution of unions and families in Catalonia have common features with the rest of the European Community countries. Nuptiality and fertility are declining and occur at a later age, cohabitation and births outside marriage are increasing, as well as instability of unions, etc. But household composition doesn't seem to follow the northern trends. In our country, for instance, households composed of unrelated people aren't frequent, emancipation and constitution of new households by young people is strongly related to a family constitution, and in the case of divorce or separation the family plays an important supportive role. In other words, in spite of the deinstitutionalisation of the family, living arrangements and mutual help are still based on family relations. There are three main reasons that explain such differences. First I should mention the insufficient development of the welfare state in terms of care provision and financial help to people who are not economically independent. Second, the incapability of the labour market to supply enough jobs in order to ensure people their economic autonomy is relevant here as well. Finally, cultural factors related to the family orientation of society explain the persistence of more complex kinds of households. This family orientation goes together with increasing individualisation, and in fact, family support lets individuals choose their way with more freedom. Here there is an interesting paradox: family help reinforces the development of the individualisation process in our country, a fact which calls into question most of the assumptions made by family sociologists who studied Western societies in the sixties and seventies.

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