

Chapter 12

Family Policies in Spain

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Abstract This chapter presents an overview of social policies addressed to family protection in Spain, starting from a historical perspective and focusing in the socio-economic, political and demographic factors that influence the processes of decision-taking and implementation of these policies. Both the characteristics of the Spanish welfare state within the larger Southern European welfare model as well as the impact of Franco's dictatorship are pointed out as the main contextual elements that allow us to understand the general traits of current family policies in Spain. We will present an analysis on maternity and paternity leaves, childcare services, conciliation policies, fiscal measures towards families, economic benefits, long-term care policies and programmes for fighting against gender violence. The chapter ends with some recommendations, proposals and suggestions for the future development of family policies in Spain.

Keywords Family policies • Spain • Social care • Gender equality

Introduction

Throughout these pages, we will find a synthesis of the policies developed in Spain regarding family protection, focusing exclusively on explicit family policies as defined by Kamerman and Kahn (1978; see also Kamerman, 2009), as well as including all policies, measures and programmes which aim deliberately at the improvement of the welfare of children, of individuals in their family roles and of families on the whole.¹ That is, family policy must put together, on the one hand, the regulation of rights and duties within the family and between the family and all the other social institutions and, on the other hand, the supply of services and economic benefits (Rodríguez, 1994). Starting out from this definition, we will thus analyse the policies of protection to maternity and paternity and their relationship with employment, the policies destined to ensure a minimum standard of living for families with

¹ By implicit family policies we will thus mean all policies that do not have as their main aim modifying family life conditions, but which have important effects on them. We do not mean to understate here these implicit family policies, as, in the Spanish case, they have been abundantly shown, (please see for example Flaquer, 2002). We nevertheless understand the aim of this chapter to be that of introducing the reader to those policies that are specifically aimed at families.

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children, the childcare services, the policies of conciliation of work and family lives and also the services and benefits to care for individuals in a dependency situation, understanding in this latter case that, as explained by Saraceno and Keck (2010; see also Saraceno, 2011), long-term care policies contribute to shape the intergenerational relationships and obligations of the families.

The present chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, we will set out the main sociohistorical, political and economic factors which frame the development and current configuration of family policies in Spain, paying particular attention to the Spanish welfare system and the role of families in social care, as well as to the main social processes and actors that have had an influence on the design of family care policies. We will then analyse the existing policies in each of the intervention areas that are usually gathered under the same dome of family policies. Thirdly, we will comment on the process of implementation and assessment that family policies in Spain have followed, focusing on the assessment mechanisms and the main challenges that are pending in relation to this matter. Finally, conclusions that aim to synthesise a group of recommendations and examples of best practices in the development of policies for families in Spain are presented.

Impact of the Sociohistorical, Political and Economic Context on the Families and Policymaking in Spain

Welfare State and the Role of Families in Spanish Social Care

The Spanish welfare state has been classified, first, as belonging to the category of conservative states, according to the typology brought up by Esping-Andersen (1990), as it has a strongly contributive basis that links social rights to the social, working and occupational status of individuals. However, the proposal for classification that this Dutch researcher suggested got a substantial torrent of criticism, which allowed both to draw attention to the specifics of the welfare states in southern Europe countries and also to qualify the role of women and families in social care.

A group of researchers (Ferrera, 1996; Sarasa & Moreno, 1995) consider that, despite being welfare systems with a contributive basis, countries like Spain, Italy, Greece or Portugal have the feature of the pre-eminent role given to the family as regards providing social care, thus distinguishing them from France or Germany.

A second series of hard criticism towards Esping-Andersen's typology came with the researchers of gender and social policies (Langan & Ostner, 1991; Lewis, 1992). Stemming from a critical analysis of the use of the concept of de-commodification by Esping-Andersen, these authors took the contribution of families to social welfare back from oblivion (Daly, 1994; Orloff, 1993), as well as stressing the fact that women's social rights were second rate, as they depended on their husbands' involvement at work.

From this reflection comes one of the most productive analytic categories in the analysis of welfare states from a gender perspective – the male breadwinner model (Lewis, 1992; Lewis & Ostner, 1994) which, in its purest form, prescribes formal work to men and house and care work to women, thus causing substantial gender differences as regards the entitlement to social rights, levels of public spending and investment on services and involvement at work. Added to this concept, we have that of defamilialisation. Suggested by McLaughlin and Glendinning (1994) for replacing the gender-blind concept of de-commodification, this term indicates 'the terms and conditions under which people are engaged in families, and the extent to which they can uphold an acceptable standard of living independently of the (patriarchal) family' (p. 65).

With these new analytical tools, the characterisation of welfare states and, particularly, Mediterranean welfare states, such as the Spanish one, becomes more accurate. Thus, the familism that distinguishes the welfare states in southern Europe is an ambivalent familism, according to Saraceno

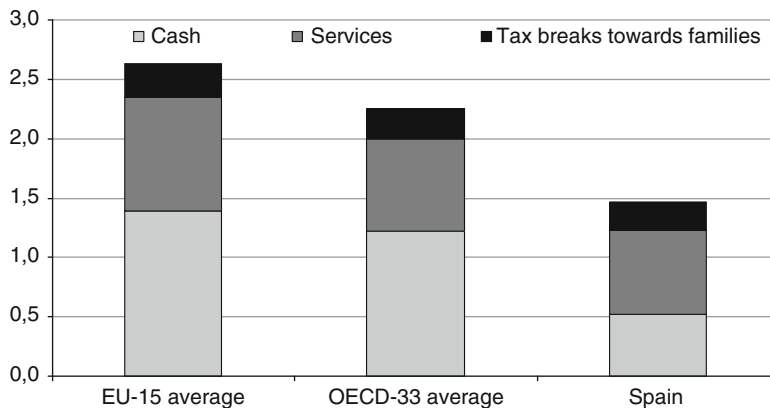


Fig. 12.1 Public spending on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures (% of the GDP), 2007 (Source: Author's elaboration based on information from the OECD Family Database. Note: There is no data regarding tax breaks for Greece, so the EU-15 average in this case has been calculated for the 14 other countries)

(1994, 1995), because, on the one hand, families are the main providers of social welfare and one of the highest-regarded institutions in these countries and, on the other hand, there is a very meagre development of policies destined to its protection (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Navarro, 2006, p. 52).

Thus, investment in family care by the Spanish welfare state is way below the OECD and EU-15 averages. As we can see in the following figure, the average spending as related to the GDP is lower for the three mechanisms considered – economic benefits (cash), services and tax breaks, although in the latter Spain is closer to the European and the OECD averages (Fig. 12.1).

The system by which families confer themselves on this beneficent role lies, more than in the figure of the male economic supplier, in the solidarity of relatives from the extended family, as well as in the essential responsibility of women for giving care (Saraceno, 1995, pp. 279–280). That means, Mediterranean welfare regimes involve the most gender inequality, as they consider women primarily as in the role they have in their families – reproducing and caring, leaving them unprotected towards the market in the case of economic need, as they do not promote reconciliation between family roles and work roles (Trifiletti, 1999).

And actually, this absence of a support to families and the consequent delegation of care work to women have, as a basic result, the very low female involvement at work, one of the lowest in the European Union. Moreno (2005, 2007), who analyses the relationships between welfare models and employment paths, characterises Mediterranean welfare states as countries with scarce part-time employment offers and a low level of tertiarisation of family services. This becomes obvious when we analyse the differences by sex in employment rates. In the following figure, we compare employment rates depending on sex and age groups in Spain in the last years, and as we can see, male employment rates are, always and for any age group to be compared, highly above female rates (Fig. 12.2).

Family Policies in Spain During Franco's Dictatorship and the Period of Transition to Democracy

The impulse given to family policies by Franco's regime in Spain, as well as its own direction and the symbolic dimension they acquired during those times, has marked the subsequent development that these policies have had during the democratic period.

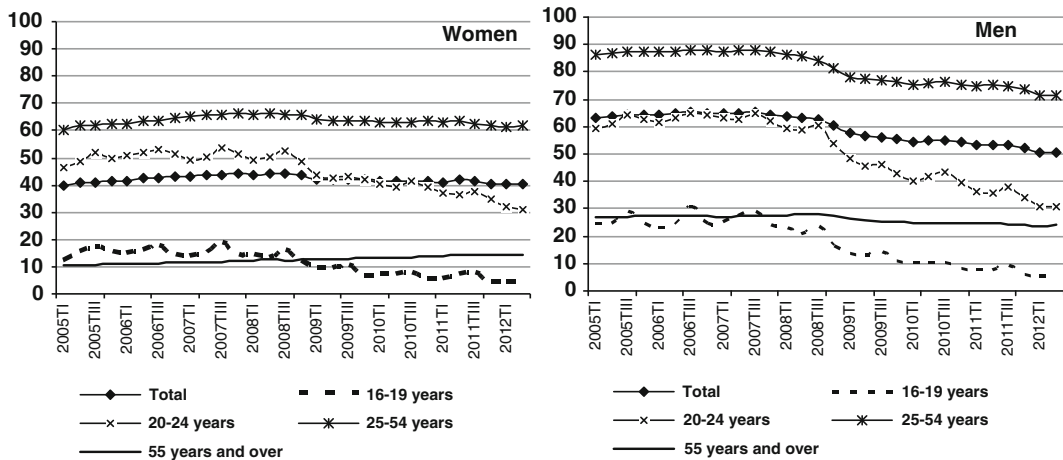


Fig. 12.2 Employment rates by sex and age groups, 2005–2012 (*Source:* Author's elaboration based on information of Encuesta de Población Activa (Labour Force Survey))

With Franco's dictatorship and the influence granted in social care matters, at least during the first half of his rule, to Falange and the Sección Femenina, the Church recovers its prerogatives regarding family forming (marrying) and women's rights as citizen suffer a backward movement (Manrique, 2007). Francoism encourages a patriarchal family ideal which is based, on the one hand, on the impulse of natalist measures (Nash, 1991) and, on the other hand, on the strengthening of a strict division of roles between men and women, under the belief that women working outside home meant a threat to the stability of the marriage and of the family (Meil, 1995, p. 52).

During what some authors call the peak of Francoist family policies, between 1939 and 1959 (Iglesias & Meil, 2001), 'family benefits' were introduced,² which consisted of monthly paid cash to employees depending on how many children under 14 years of age they had, and which did not vary in amount, so they did not change according to different levels of income in families (Iglesias & Meil, 2001, pp. 35–36; Valiente, 1996, p. 153). In the early 1940s, 'birth awards' were established, rewarding those families with the highest number of children, a clear natalist message from the regime.

Few years after that, the 'dependants bonus' is created (1945). Aimed to employees and almost totally paid by employers, this extra pay, quite high in a moment when salaries were generally low, comes from the notion of 'family salary', assuming thus an acknowledgement of the worker's 'dependants', consisting of his wife, his children and his elders living with them.

The second stage in the Francoist family policy development (between years 1963 and 1975) is marked by the loss of influence of the Falange and the rise of the technocrats of the Opus Dei. This is how the Act Ley de Bases de la Seguridad Social de 1963 abolishes the family bonus, although the wife support benefit was kept (Iglesias & Meil, 2001, pp. 56–57; Meil, 1995).

As far as tax relief is concerned, its protecting scope was very small, not only because few people had to submit the appropriate return forms but also because there was little or no progressiveness at all and the reductions per child were made exclusively in the case of large families. In short, family policies during Francoism were focused on the promotion and preservation of the 'traditional family', with a breadwinning male and a housewife, the latter with maternity being prescribed as her main obligation, encouraging and rewarding, this way, large families.

The role given to family in the rhetoric of the Francoist dictatorship was precisely one of the causes mentioned by many authors as explaining the abandonment of family policies during the transition

² Spanish Act 'Ley de Subsidios Familiares de 18 de julio de 1938'.

Table 12.1 Indicators of the second demographic transition in Spain within the context of the OECD and EU-15

		<i>Fertility rates</i>				
		<i>1970</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2010</i>		
OECD average		2.67	1.69	1.74		
EU-15 average		2.41	1.54	1.70		
Spain		2.90	1.17	1.38		
		<i>Percentage of births out of wedlock</i>				
		<i>1970</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2009</i>		
EU-15 average		6.25	23.75	36.63		
Spain		1.36	11.09	30.32		
		<i>Cohabitation rate and other forms of partnership (recent years)</i>				
		<i>Single, living alone</i>				
		<i>Married</i>	<i>Cohabiting</i>	<i>Others</i>		
OECD-25 average		15.20	49.90	6.80	27.90	
EU-15 average		14.25	46.72	6.99	25.35	
Spain		8.60	53.60	3.30	34.50	
		<i>Household composition (recent years)</i>				
		<i>Single-person households</i>	<i>Sole-parent families</i>		<i>Other private households</i>	
			<i>Total</i>	<i>Of which sole-mother households</i>	<i>Of which sole-father households</i>	
OECD-25 average	57.59	27.71	9.10	84.53	15.47	7.03
EU-15 average	57.93	28.78	8.59	84.08	15.92	4.71
Spain	62.90	20.30	9.90	81.10	18.90	6.90

Source: OECD Family Database, 2011

Notes: Data regarding cohabitation rate and other forms of partnerships and household composition for the EU-15 average does not include information for Sweden. There is no information available either for the distribution of sole-parent families as headed by the mother or the father in Belgium. The averages calculated have been adjusted accordingly

and first years of Spanish democracy (Valiente, 1995, 1996; Cousins, 2005). Not only was there a need to leave policies behind and, particularly, the family ideology of the preceding regime, but the ways for social and family organisation of Spanish society had experienced deep changes too, so the Francoist family policy, as well as old-fashioned, had turned obsolete.

Indeed, after a quick and intense first demographic transition, the behavioural patterns of the Spanish population started to point towards the individualisation process brought by the second demographic transition. In the mid-1980s, a decline of fertility rates starts, placing Spain as the second country with the lowest fertility rate, after Italy, way under the generational replacement index (2.1 children per woman) and classifiable as one of the countries with the lowest-low fertility (as defined by Kohler et al., 2002).

In parallel with this, the regulations allowing divorce and dissociating it from the Catholic Church³ gave cause for the birth of new family forms, and, in general, the processes of modernisation and individualisation boosted a pluralisation and diversification of family forms in Spain (Table 12.1).

³ The first rule regarding this is the Ley 30/1981, modified in 2005 to allow a faster speed in separation and divorce paperwork.

In spite of these new regulations dissociating family forming and breaking processes from their religious side, the development of care policies towards child upbringing costs or those family forms more prone to poverty tended to be scarce during the years following transition and practically until Spain joined the European Union, when the impulse given by the Community institutions, mainly when it comes to work and conciliation policies, would revive the political interest in social care for families.

Brief Evolution of Family Policies in the 1980s and 1990s in Spain

Authors such as Flaquer (2001) or Iglesias and Meil (2001; see also Meil, 2002), experts in the analysis of the development of family policies in Spain, hold that during these last years, conciliation policies have been replacing policies for public compensation for family responsibilities in the Spanish social policy agenda. A result of the rejection of the Francoist heritage and symbolism that imbued family policies, in Spain, there has been a false contradiction, especially among left-wing parties, between policies to support families and policies which sought to promote the incorporation and permanence of women in formal work (Meil, p. 53; Cabré, 1990), to the detriment of the development of family policies.

As a result, the balance of family policies during the two first decades of the democracy recovered in Spain is quite poor. To the secularisation of the processes of family forming and breaking we have mentioned, we can add the regularisation of the first maternity leaves and their extension, in the early 1980s, from 12 to 14 weeks, and to 16 weeks in 1989. The Estatuto de los Trabajadores being passed also means the possibility to reduce the working hours for maternity reasons to a third or 50 % with the appropriate proportional salary reduction and the introduction of a breastfeeding leave that makes it easier to reduce the daily working time by 1 h, as well as to take 1 year off albeit with no guarantee of keeping the job. Moreover, mothers will be able to give 10 from their 16 maternity leave weeks over to fathers, which is seen, in the beginning, as a measure to encourage joint responsibility in looking after children.

Also, improvements are made in order to avoid problems for women when they return to work after a leave of absence which is taken to look after the children, establishing the obligation to keep the job for the woman for the first year of leave and keeping also the job link for 3 years, which is the maximum length for this type of leave.

In short, family policies in the 1980s and 1990s have favoured the acknowledgement of rights above the implementation of political measures, such as budget sums for cash benefits or social services (Parella, 2000, p. 436).

A Review on Spanish Family Policies

We must start this introduction by setting out the main changes that occurred in Spain regarding the definition of the institutions of marriage and family. As mentioned in the previous section, the main milestone for this is the separation between the Church and the state in the formation and dissolution of marriages, especially the passing of the Act that regulates separation and divorce, which will bring about the expansion of family forms such as single parent or reconstituted ones.

The two following alterations which we will mention vary in scope, motives and magnitude. Firstly, in 2003, the concept of 'large family' is modified, in order to update it according to the

recent evolution of fertility and families resulting from divorce processes. Secondly, in the year 2005, the Civil Code is altered to enlarge the right for homosexual couples to marry and adopt.

In the year 2003, the concept of large family is modified, after remaining unchanged since the late years of the Francoist dictatorship. It had been regulated under a pre-constitutional regulation⁴ which was also clearly obsolete when it comes to the derived current processes of large family formation. Thus, the Act Ley 40/2003 for protection of large families aims to, on the one hand, redefine the concept of large family to fit better to the reduced fertility rates seen in Spain since the mid-1980s⁵ and, on the other hand, to host under this definition large families formed from divorce processes, resulting mainly in reconstituted families, as well as single-parent large families. On the other hand, this new regulation also contains adoption and fostering in the definition of large family.

As regards social benefits for large families under this new rule, that means, not counting those common to the rest of families or tax breaks for children to care for, which we will tackle later, there is provision for a 45 % bonus in National Insurance contributions if a childminder is employed as long as, in the case of general families, the parents are doing work in the labour market. Besides, they have preference when applying for social housing, studies and grants and educational benefits. A reduction, and even exemption in some cases, is established for the fees in state education as well as public transport.

The approval of same-sex marriage, as well as the right to adopt, was possible in Spain thanks to the alteration of the Civil Code in what concerns the definition of marriage undertaken during the first term of office of the socialist government led by President José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero. In that moment, Spain joins the other pioneer countries in the acknowledgement of maximum institutionalisation of unions of same-sex people, only preceded by the Netherlands (2002), Belgium (2003), Canada (2005) and the state of Massachusetts in the United States (Gómez, 2008).

This reform, achieved by the influence of the LGBT movements in Spain, according to some authors, goes beyond acknowledging the rights for pensions or legacy and means that '(the) battle is fought around family/marriage as a concept' (Gimeno & Barrientos, 2009, p. 24), that is, it means there is a questioning of the symbolic order that surrounds the institution of marriage.

The approval of same-sex marriage has not lacked controversy in Spain. When it was put to the vote in the Spanish lower house, the Congreso de los Diputados, in June 2005, the parliamentary group of Partido Popular voted against it and so did Unió Democràtica de Catalunya, a Catalanian nationalist party of Christian Democrat undertones. This opposition, along with the abstention of other parties and the absence of some PSOE members of parliament when the voting took place, marked the beginning of the resistance in the street that would take place later orchestrated by the Partido Popular, the Catholic Church via the Conferencia Episcopal (synod) and Foro Español de la Familia.⁶ The law regulating this right has been subject to an appeal on unconstitutional grounds because of the pressure exerted by these three fronts and, mainly, because of the campaign carried out by Partido Popular. The Spanish Constitutional Tribunal has sentenced in November, 2012 the constitutionality of same-sex marriage.

⁴It is the Act Ley 25/1971, de 19 de junio, de Protección a las Familias Numerosas (Large Family Protection).

⁵In this sense, a large family is defined as that formed by one or two parents with three or more children, whether or not these may be common to both of them and reducing this number to two children if either of these is disabled. Two categories of large family are also established- (a) Special: those with five or more children; (b) General: all the rest. Those families with four children and salaries that do not exceed 75 % of Minimum Wage will be considered special large families.

⁶Foro Español de la Familia is a social organisation contrary to abortion and same-sex marriage, and it defends the 'traditional family'.

Childcare Services

The development of childcare services is linked, on the one hand, to children being regarded as a collective good, which assumes the need that the state is involved and responsible for their care and, on the other hand, with the legal definition of the ages of voluntary and compulsory education.

Only until the passing of the LOGSE ('Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo', Act for the general regulation of the educational system) in the year 1990 was this possible in Spain. This Act establishes that education includes ages 0–6, corresponding to what is called 'Educación Infantil', even though this is a voluntary period. Besides, there are two cycles for these school years – one for children younger than three and the other for children between three and six.

Nevertheless, the schooling rates per age show substantial differences between children under three and those between 3 and 6 years of age. Thus, according to the statistics from the Ministry of Education, in the school year 2009–2010, only 7.6 % of children under one were in education, this rate becoming 27.6 % for 1-year-olds and 44.8 % for 2-year-old children. From age three onwards, the net schooling rates reach and surpass 99 % (MECD, 2012). Besides, only half of the schoolchildren under three go to state centres.

The Government has hardly got involved in the development of the Educación Infantil centres, most of them belonging to municipal authorities. From the slightly over 7,000 Educación Infantil centres existing in Spain today, only half of them are state owned, and among them, 65 % belong to town authorities. This implies that, beyond the deep territorial inequalities in the access to these services (González, 2004), people with lower incomes will encounter greater difficulties to ensure the outsourcing of care for their children under three.

In fact, there is an obvious direct relation between mothers' employment and schooling rate in the first cycle of Educación Infantil. In the school year 2009–2010, over 60 % of children under three whose mothers had a job went to school, in comparison with those of unemployed mothers, who were below 30 %. Furthermore, the higher the mothers' level of education, the greater the schooling rate, being 30 % in children under three whose mothers had completed primary or lower education and 58 % in those whose mothers had completed higher education.

So how do Spanish mothers do it then to make their work compatible with childcare? If we consider that the fathers' involvement in childcare is still scarce in Spain, a good part of the strategies turn to the intergenerational solidarity among women, that is, the help of grandmothers, mainly maternal grandmothers (Fernández & Tobío, 2005). The use of paid domestic help, albeit growing, partially thanks to the peak of female immigration into Spain, is still scarce, being the main conciliation strategy in 10 % of the cases only (Fernández & Tobío, 2005).

Cash Transfers and Tax Treatment of Families

The development of family policies via tax measures has replaced, to a certain extent, the little attention paid in other areas, such as care services for children under 3 years of age (Zufiaur, 2007).⁷ That is, until the relatively recent strength of conciliation policies, the Spanish family policy was particularly focused on tax breaks on the basis of family dependants. As an obvious result of this, the main problem brought by directing help for families through this route is that it excludes those people and families most disadvantaged, that is, those who do not achieve the minimum required to have the

⁷ Regarding this, Alberdi (1997, p. 82) notes that 'when there is no explicit definition of family policies, these can be deducted from the analysis of income taxes reflecting support to certain forms of cohabitation or, on the contrary, withdrawal of that support while raising the taxes to other forms of family organization'.

obligation of doing the income tax return, which nowadays is Euro 22,000 gross per year. However, within the all the cash transfers to families, tax breaks are still more generous than the rest of cash benefits of the system, which we will also deal with in this section.

In this section we will mainly deal with the tax treatment received by families in the personal Income Tax, as we understand it to be that with the largest scope and effect for family units.⁸

There are three main ways to tackle family taxpaying. The main intervention tool is the actual definition of the taxpaying unit (the individual or the family) and the dependants (children, elders, dependent or disabled individuals, etc.). Then there is the establishment of exemptions for certain family benefits and allowances, which get to increase the available income for the families, as these are free of tax. Last, there are the actual tax breaks according to the dependants in the family that have been established in the first place. Here we will study separately each one of these mechanisms.

As far as the contributing unit is concerned, this corresponded to the marriage unit until a sentence of the Constitutional Tribunal in 1988 established that income tax had an individual nature. Yet, the coexistence of joint and individual tax returns was allowed, and actually the former was encouraged by having established variable deduction, which offered advantages to those families in which the income differences between both spouses were considerable, discouraging thus women's work (Pazos, 1999). Instead, family forms that were growing substantially throughout the 1990s and all of the twenty-first century, such as single-parent families led by a woman, got no tax benefit of any kind, nor did they get any additional benefit from the Social Security (Pazos, p. 12). Even with the income tax reform of 1999, which replaces variable deductions with the family minimum, consisting of a reduction in the tax base according to ancestors and descendants who depend economically, as well as their disability status and their age, the favourable treatment to unequal incomes within couples paying taxes jointly is not eliminated.

With regard to the family benefits and allowances that are free of tax, the following are currently considered⁹: state benefits for birth, multiple birth or adoption, children to be taken care of, orphanage and maternity; the cash benefits established by public institutions for fostering disabled individuals, over-65-year-olds or minors, as well as the economic allowances received to fund the stay of over-65-year-olds in residences or day centres; public grants and those given by non-profit organisations to read regulated studies; the annual payments for food received from the parents in case of separation or divorce; the work income derived from benefits in the shape of income by disabled people (contributions to pension schemes, mainly); and public cash benefits received for care and attention within the family environment to dependent individuals.

The family minimum tool per descendants and ancestors is then the main acknowledging tool for dependants in the family in the Spanish tax system. Currently, the minimum for descendants is Euro 1,836 for the first child, 2,040 for the second, 3,672 for the third and 4,182 for the fourth and following children. Likewise, the minimum for over-65 ancestors or for the disabled will be Euro 918, and, if the ancestor is over 75, it will be Euro 2,040. There are also other minimums set on the basis of disabled people being present in the household. This acknowledging system of dependants in the family is more beneficial according to the number of children rather than being progressive. Besides, as the possibility of joint taxation is kept, single-parent families turn out to be penalised by this tax model (De Villota, 2007).

⁸ Even though it is true that, as stated by some authors (Zufiaur, 2007), in order to tackle in a comprehensive way the tax treatment of families, their consideration in the Inheritance and Donation Tax, in the Heritage and Heritage Transmissions Taxes, in the Estate Tax and in the Companies Tax should be taken into account too.

⁹ Regarding this, please refer to Act Ley 35/2006, de 28 de noviembre, del Impuesto sobre la Renta de las Personas Físicas y de modificación parcial de las leyes de los Impuestos sobre Sociedades, sobre la Renta de no Residentes y sobre el Patrimonio (art. 7).

Another of the existing tax breaks consists of a reduction in the differential deduction of Euro 1,200 per year for every child under 3, applied to all working mothers. This amount can be paid in a pro rata manner, with Euro 100 per month.¹⁰ This is obviously a regressive measure, as it is only applied to incomes subject to taxation and the amount is fixed independently of the income.

Around the middle of his second term of office, socialist President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announces a birth-encouraging measure consisting of a cash benefit per birth or adoption of Euro 2,500.¹¹ This tool, which soon would be named 'baby cheque', consists of an income tax deduction for those people who must do the return and a non-contributory benefit of the Social Security of the same amount for those not obliged to declare taxes. That is, this measure does not depend on income, so it lacks any kinds of progressiveness. This 'baby cheque' was then eliminated with the first budget cut measures taken around the middle of 2010 towards the end of the second term of office of the socialist President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.¹²

Now we will focus on the issue of cash benefits per child. According to Obiol (2006, p. 98), these can be defined as 'a group of diverse measures aiming to balance out the economic cost that upbringing and educating children means, in order to avoid the possible negative impacts of this cost on the family income and with it a decrease in the quality of life of families with children under age in their care'.

In Spain, these direct economic benefits, that is, cash transfers from the Social Security, date back to the Francoist family benefits, which we have studied in the previous section, but were modified by the Act Ley 26/1990 which establishes non-contributory benefits. The amount of the benefit varies according to the number of children to care for, as well as their degree of disability, if applicable, and the families' income level; yet the average benefit is around Euro 25 per month, placing itself as the second lowest in the European Union, after the Greek, according to the latest data from MISSOC¹³ (2006).

Because of their low amount of money, but especially because of their weak protective intensity (researcher Obiol points out that they reach less than 15 % of families in care of underage children), nowadays these benefits per child cared for have become more of a device to fight poverty and protect the disabled than an actual measure that makes up for child upbringing costs (Flaquer, 2000; Obiol, 2006).

Apart from these benefits per child cared for, there is a specific benefit per birth or adoption for large families, single-parent families and disabled mothers. This benefit consists of a sole payment of Euro 1,000 and is not universal but means-tested. In the case of large families, this benefit is added to the cash benefit per birth or adoption of a third or following children, of a single amount of Euro 450.76 and of which all those families with incomes slightly under Euro 10,000 per year can benefit. That is, it is again a measure against poverty rather than one that compensates for the costs of childcare.

Policies for the Conciliation of Work and Family Lives

Policies for the conciliation of work life and family life recorded an emergence in the public policy agenda in Spain in the mid-1990s, thanks to the impulse that this objective has received in the EU, surrounded by a demographic concern for the sustainability of welfare schemes and, particularly, the

¹⁰This measure was approved with Real Decreto 27/2003, de 10 de enero de 2003, along with another set of modifications of the income tax.

¹¹This measure appears in Ley 35/2007, de 15 de noviembre, por la que se establece la deducción por nacimiento o adopción en el Impuesto sobre la Renta de las Personas Físicas y la prestación económica de pago único de la Seguridad Social por nacimiento o adopción.

¹²This provision appears in Real Decreto-ley 8/2010, de 20 de mayo, por el que se adoptan medidas extraordinarias para la reducción del déficit público.

¹³Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the EU member states and EEA (Eurostat).

pensions system, and as a result it was decided to increase the contributing basis of the various member states by means of incorporating and stabilising the work participation of women. We do not intend to state here that the conciliation policies have not had a certain development previously in Spain as well as in the European Community in general. The fact is that, with a varying degree of success, it has been the change of direction and the aim in them to get round the interest in gender equality and aim at the promotion of employment (please see, regarding this, the existing link between conciliation policies and the so-called European Employment Strategy) and of birth rate¹⁴ which has made it easier to have the role it has now in the public agenda and also the fact that it has been a conservative government in Spain that has passed an Act to regulate the, until then, disparate regulations regarding conciliation.¹⁵

The Act Ley 39/1999 (to promote the conciliation of family life and work life of workers) gathers and transposes a variety of European guidelines regarding maternity and paternity leaves, parental leaves, leaves of absence and reduction of working hours to look after the children and occasional leaves for family reasons. Despite the ambitious intentions of this new regulation, the fact is that the main substance of the different existing leaves for the care of children and the elderly remains virtually unaltered, for which some researchers do not hesitate to talk about a lost opportunity (Fernández & Tobío, 2005; Salido & Moreno, 2009). Actually, Bustelo and Peterson (2005, p. 33) made an analysis of the discourse used in the text of this Act and concluded that the approach made regards conciliation as a 'problem' that entails the need to 'help' women so that they can combine their productive and their reproductive work, placing this problem, thus, in the work environment and not in the private one.

Emphasising more the need to encourage joint responsibility with care work, the Act Ley Orgánica 3/2007 (for the effective equality of women and men) incorporates a series of measures of positive action, at the same time that it improves the different maternity, paternity and parental leaves that existed until that moment.

As regards maternity leaves, their duration is still 16 weeks¹⁶ gathered in the Estatuto de los Trabajadores of 1995, and six of them are compulsory, having to be taken after birth, while the other 10 may be used before or after birth and are voluntary. The conditions are similar in the cases of adoption and fostering. Those exact 10 weeks are the period of time that can be given over to the father, as part of a 'delegated' paternity leave that we will talk about later.

The leave means keeping 100 % of contributions until a maximum limit of Euro 3,230 per month. The financing of maternity leaves is done by employers and employees, through their National Insurance contributions. Even though all female workers can go on this maternity leave, the Act Ley 3/2007 has improved the conditions for applying for the benefit which permits maintaining the salary. Firstly, the minimum period of contribution is made more flexible, having been fixed until then to a minimum of 180 contribution days within the 5 years before birth. Now there is no minimum period of contribution for mothers younger than 21 years of age, and for mothers between 21 and 26, a minimum of 90 days is demanded within the seven previous years, or 180 throughout all their working lives; for mothers older than 26, 180 days within the seven previous years are necessary or 360

¹⁴ In this respect, it is interesting to consider the analysis made by Stratigaki (2004, p. 30) about the cooptation of the concept 'conciliation of family life and work life' from community institutions, as, even though in the beginning this could be a tool for the promotion of feminist objectives such as the sharing of family responsibilities between women and men, it has finally been destined to satisfy a market target, which is the encouragement of more flexible ways of employment. This problem is also observed by Spanish researchers (about this please see Borràs et al., 2007).

¹⁵ The scattered rules we refer to do not only come from the existence of a variety of unspecific regulations, but also by the superposition of three competency fields- the European, that of the State and that of the Autonomy (Villa, 2004).

¹⁶ This length is extended if the birth is multiple (two more weeks per child) or if the child is disabled (2 weeks).

throughout their working lives. Besides, for women who do not comply with the minimum period of contributions there is a special benefit, equivalent to 100 % of the IPREM¹⁷ during 42 days, counted from the birth (Panizo, 2007, pp. 173–176).

Regarding paternity leaves, until the Act Ley 3/2007 de igualdad efectiva entre mujeres y hombres (of effective equality between women and men) was passed, it can be said that they did not exist as an independent figure with full rights, as only 2 days of paid rest were acknowledged with 100 % of the salary for working fathers because of the birth of their child. Fathers could use 10 weeks of the maternity leave though, if mothers let them have them. That is, it was clearly established that the responsibility in baby care for the first months was the woman's, as she was thus the one who held the maternity leave which she could, should she choose so, partially share (only 10 of the 16 weeks could be passed on to the father) with the father. It was a regulation that discouraged joint responsibility. Ley 3/2007 introduces this way and for the first time a paternity leave in similar conditions to those we explained for the maternity leave and which has a maximum length of 13 days that, added to the existing two, make a total of 15 days of paternity leave, still quite far from being equal in length to maternity leave.

The Act Ley 39/1999 being passed means including a leave of absence for looking after a relative in a dependency situation, and, despite being something fresh with regard to care leaves in Spain as well as in Europe, the bottom line means, according to the researcher Bibiana Escuredo (2007, p. 80), considering the carer a mere resource or instrument in the hands of the formal system, 'as gaining the right to leaves or leaves of absence is related to the situation and need of the dependent person and some aspects are not taken into account (...). With this policy, carers are freed from part of the productive work so that they can take care of looking after their dependants (...)'. As a matter of fact, the payment these people receive for looking after a relative (between Euro 300 and 520.69 per month) is set according to the degree of dependency, without any consideration whatsoever towards the working, personal or family circumstances of the person who goes on a leave of absence.

This leave of absence for looking after a relative has a maximum length of 2 years, during which the working day can be reduced between an eighth and a half in order to look after a relative until the second degree of consanguinity or affinity. The salary is reduced in proportion with the working day reduction, and it is complemented by the amount mentioned above. For the first year of the leave, the workers go on paying National Insurance contributions, so they keep having access to the health system and they add on to the contribution period. This leave implies the guarantee of preserving the job category, but not the workplace.

Long-Term Care

The passing, in late 2006, under the socialist government's rule, of the Act Ley 39/2006 de Promoción de la Autonomía Personal y Protección a las Personas en Situación de Dependencia (of Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for Dependent Persons), commonly known as Ley de Dependencia (Dependency Act), means a radical change in the policies made until that moment to give care to those people who cannot take care of themselves alone. Before starting the System for Autonomy in Care and Long-Term Care (Sistema para la Autonomía y la Atención a la Dependencia) (SAAD), resulting

¹⁷The acronym IPREM means Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples (Public Indicator of Income for Multiple Purposes), and it is an index used in Spain as a reference for the awarding of numerous social benefits. It was proposed in the year 2004 as a substitute of the one used until then, the Salario Mínimo Interprofesional ('SMI', Minimum Wage) and is set every year in the Act Ley de Presupuestos Generales del Estado (national budget). Generally speaking, the path IPREM followed since 2004 has had less growth than SMI, which means an indirect way to restrict access to social benefits. Thus, in this year, 2012, IPREM is the same amount as in the two previous years (2011 and 2010): Euro 532.51 per month. For comparing purposes, SMI in the year 2012 (identical to the one in 2011) is Euro 641.40 per month.

Table 12.2 Distribution of benefits for dependent care by type of service or benefit (year 2012)

		Number	%
Services	Prevention of dependency and promotion of personal autonomy	20,490	2.1
	Tele-assistance	134,451	13.7
	Home help	124,014	12.6
	Day/night centres	65,559	6.7
	Residential care	126,160	12.9
Benefits	Linked to the service	65,269	6.7
	Family care	443,998	45.3
	Personal assistance	1,071	0.1
Total		981,012	

Source: System for the Autonomy and Care for Dependency (SAAD), IMSERSO. Data from 1 August 2012

from the development of Ley 39/2006, the long-term care model in Spain was distinguished by its duality, as it counted by a mainly informal component, based on the centrality of women's unpaid work, and another public component, of a subsidiarily assistential nature (Rodríguez, 2005).

Along with the acknowledgement of the invisibilised contribution of women to care work, the Act also aimed at enlarging the fragmentary, scarce policies of attention to dependency, which until then were disperse and had a very varying intensity of coverage depending on the territorial variable (Sarasa, 2007).

As well as developing a system to assess the different degrees of dependency in people, the law sets a catalogue of services and cash benefits from which the dependent person can choose or even combine. Regarding services, the law considers the following: (a) service of prevention of dependency and promotion of self-autonomy, (b) tele-assistance, (c) home help, (d) day and/or night centre, and (e) service of residential care. As far as cash benefits are concerned, three options are considered: (a) cash benefit linked to the service, which will be given to pay for the stay in a day centre or a gerontological residence when the place of residence of the person does not have enough public positions; (b) cash benefit for the care within the family environment, theoretically of exceptional nature and which would be granted to the dependent person in order for them to be looked after by a relative; and (c) cash benefit for a personal assistant, which will be given to people of active age so that their education and participation at work are made easier. The legal text emphasises in particular the primacy of the development of services on the granting of any type of cash benefits, clearly mentioning the exceptional nature of the care benefit within the family environment.

Nevertheless, currently, with almost 800,000 beneficiaries of dependency benefits, it is proven that approximately half of the awards¹⁸ consist of a cash benefit for care within the family environment (45.3 %), with a much lower service development, as shown by the corresponding rates to home help service (12.6 % of benefits) or day/night centres (less than 7 %) (Table 12.2).

These benefits for care within the family environment had a double aim – on the one hand, to allow that the dependent person may be assisted in their home by someone near and, on the other hand, to reach a certain acknowledgement of the work done by the women who looked after a dependent relative. With this purpose, the cash benefit for care within the family environment meant to be registered with the Social Security system by establishing a specific agreement¹⁹ which any person who was not working in the formal work market or who was retired, disabled or being paid some kind of cash benefit

¹⁸The total of awarded benefits is 981,012, which means a rate of 1.24 benefits per person, because of the possibility of combining some services and/ or benefits so that they can be had together.

¹⁹That agreement was included in the Real Decreto 615/2007, de 11 de marzo, por el que se regula la Seguridad Social de los cuidadores de las personas en situación de dependencia.

(such as unemployment benefit or widow's pension) could subscribe. That means, the family carer was turned into some sort of semi-worker, who could contribute for a future retirement, even though they could not have any kind of acknowledged work protection or right. It has been this legal figure precisely which reinforces women as family carers and considers care as a task that does not reach the rank of being actual 'work', the one that has received most criticism (regarding this, please see Bosch, 2006; Pérez, 2006), the latter being noticed even in the assessment report on the gender impact of this law that the actual Ministry of Labour and Social Matters was carrying out (MTAS, 2006).

One of the main challenges this ambitious system was facing was its financing which, according to one of the best experts in long-term care policies in Spain, had to be sufficient, stable and sustained in time (Rodríguez, 2007, pp. 80–83). The scheme initially anticipated consisted of a tripartite financing, in which a third of the costs would be taken by the state government, another third by the appropriate Autonomous Region and the last third would be funded by the users, thus establishing a copayment system which varies mainly according to the degree and the level of dependency and the income level of the beneficiary.

Nevertheless, the latest cuts on the welfare state that are being made now in Spain, especially by the current conservative government, seriously affect the viability of the long-term care system. In mid-2010, still under a socialist government, a group of measures of budget cuts is applied, meaning the suspension of retroactivity in the award of new dependency benefits.²⁰ Considering the existing time gap between the application and the award and the fact that the beneficiaries are often also people of old age, to eliminate the retroactivity of this benefit means impairing the access to this benefit. In late 2011, a retroactive adjustment is decided in the calendar of access to services and benefits,²¹ which varies depending on the degree and level of dependency of the applicant and which, in practice, means to exclude from the right for care those people who are not in a severe situation of dependency.

Finally, in summer 2012, another group of measures of social cuts is approved, and as far as dependency is concerned, it means a considerable budget adjustment, as the maximum amounts of cash benefits that Autonomous Regions can set are reduced²² and the amounts for the minimum level of funding of the System for the Autonomy and the Care for Dependency (SAAD),²³ which depend on the state government, are limited too. The compatibility between services and benefits is restricted too. Besides, the contributions to the government from family carers are suppressed, so either these people pay for their contributions or their work goes back to being cloaked in invisibility.

²⁰This provision appears in the Real Decreto-ley 8/2010, de 20 de mayo, por el que se adoptan medidas extraordinarias para la reducción del déficit público.

²¹That calendar appears in Real Decreto-ley 20/2011, de 30 de diciembre, de medidas urgentes en materia presupuestaria, tributaria y financiera para la corrección del déficit público. In it, the exercise of the right guaranteed by the Dependence Act is postponed up to 4 years, holding back even more the access to the resources the lower is the degree of dependence. The Real Decreto-ley 20/2012, de 13 de julio, de medidas para garantizar la estabilidad presupuestaria y de fomento de la competitividad suppresses the level scale, so nowadays the measure of dependency is solely carried out according to three degrees – major dependency, severe and moderate dependency. As a result of this latest Real Decreto, the calendar to access benefits and services for care is adjusted.

²²Maximum amounts are fixed as follows: Between Euro 300 (moderate dependence) and Euro 715.07 (major dependence) for the cash benefit linked to service and the one of the personal assistant; and between Euro 153 and Euro 387.64 in case of the cash benefit for care within the family environment. In the latter, the average reduction applied is 16 % from the maximum amounts of the year 2011.

²³These minimum amounts are set, for the new applicants, as follows: Euro 177.86 for people with major dependency; Euro 82.84 for those with severe dependency; and Euro 44.33 for moderate dependents. This means an average reduction of circa 20 % from the minimum amounts of last year 2011.

Policies Against Gender Violence

Policies to fight gender violence are usually not included in family policies, as one of the achievements of Spanish feminism in this matter has been the change of interpretative frames in the policies designed for this, changing from the expression ‘domestic violence’ and the idea that it happens within families and so is a behaviour that belongs to the private sphere to using the expressions ‘gender violence’ or ‘violence against women’, thus acknowledging it as a structural element of patriarchal power and, as a result, discrediting it (De Miguel, 2008).

In this sense, policies designed in Spain regarding this have covered three areas of action: prevention, punishment and protection of women victims of gender violence. In this area of intervention coming from social politics, there have been considerable advances in Spain, despite the number of women murdered by their husbands, ex-husbands, partners, or ex-partners being still high. We will now make a brief synthesis of the regulation and measures implemented.

The landmark regarding regulations on fighting against gender violence is the Act Ley Orgánica 11/2003, because it assumes the establishment of parameters of coordination between the different institutions involved, mainly the State (Administración General del Estado), the Police and the Judiciary.

Before this rule, the main measures take place in the judicial sphere, with consecutive reforms in the Spanish Civil Code that contribute to a complete definition of the phenomenon (including, for example, psychological violence in the Ley Orgánica 14/1999 as modified in the Criminal Code), an extension of the aggressors’ typology (in the 1995 Criminal Code the relationship similar to marriage and in Ley 14/1999 those cases in which cohabitation has already ceased are incorporated) and, above all, a greater punishment for the aggressor (gender violence goes from being considered an offence which meant imprisonment from 5 to 15 days in the criminal regulations of 1971 to the establishment of a custodial sentence from 6 months to 1 year in the 1995 Criminal Code). Besides, these judicial reforms also meant preventive measures or measures for protection of the victims, regulating mainly the possibility to establish estrangement measures.

In parallel with this, there is the work done by Instituto de la Mujer (‘Women’s Institute’, a body dependent on the Ministry of Labour), which creates in 1998 a lasting tool for all-round attention to the problems in gender violence: the Action Plans Against Domestic Violence. These plans last several years and include a group of action measures in this field with an all-round, cross perspective, that is, coordinating the different spheres and powers involved. These plans have a growing budget, which ensures the effectiveness of the measures they provide for.

The Act Ley Orgánica 11/2003 unifies the judicial measures and regulates in particular the estrangement measures, coordinating thus judicial and police authorities. It is a clear antecedent to Ley 1/2004, de 28 de diciembre, de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género (of all-round measures against gender violence), which, for the first time, in its statement of motives acknowledges the structural and extra-domestic nature of the problem stating that ‘*gender violence is not a problem within private boundaries. Quite the contrary, it comes out as the most brutal symbol of inequality in our society. It is a violence that acts on women merely for being women, for being considered, by their aggressors, as lacking minimum rights for freedom, respect and decision-making ability*’. Moreover, the Act creates judicial institutions made to approach gender violence, such as courts of violence against women (specific jurisdiction) and the public prosecutor of violence against women. Tools for protection based on technology are also regulated (tele-assistance) and measures of social protection in the form of cash benefits that ensure that the economic dependency of women does not obstruct the way out of the violent situation.

Ultimately and, in spite of the fact that there is still a long way to go in this matter, the advances made are remarkable both in defining the problem and in approaching it in an all-round, coordinated way from the public institutions.

Assessment and Implementation of Family Policies in Spain

In Spain, in general, there is very little assessment of social policies and their effects on social and gender equality. If the situation is deplorable for all social policies, in the case of family policies, characterised by their dispersal and lack of structure, the existence of mechanisms that help their assessment is still smaller. The reason for this phenomenon must be sought, on the one hand, in the high degree of decentralisation existing in Spain as regards managing and providing social services, as the powers in this matter are transferred to a great extent to the Autonomous Regions, but the municipalities have their share of responsibilities in giving care to their citizens. To the existence of territorial differences, we have to add the already traditional difficulties of synthesising, standardising and homogenising the existing information about social benefits and services, which is a task that makes the availability in Spain of complete, reliable statistics difficult.

The improvement of the statistical information system for this is, thus, a growing demand by Spanish researchers, as is the making of more panel surveys or even taking part in surveys with great research potential in this field such as Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). Nevertheless, we will present in this section a brief synthesis of the most recent works that allow for the assessment of implementation processes and of the results of family policies in Spain.

In the field of conciliation, the research works done in Spain about the influence of conciliation policies in the life of families with children conclude that the impact has been very weak and that private arrangements still prevail over public solutions (Tobío, 2005).

On the variables that explain the profile and motivations of Spanish mothers when hiring childcare services for under-3-year-olds, the contribution of González and Vidal (2005) is remarkable, as they, using data from the seventh wave of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), carry out a logistic regression to predict the likelihood that a family uses care services. Among their results, we have to mention that one of the factors that affect the likelihood to use care services is the number of children. Besides, mothers with steadier jobs and indefinite term contracts are more likely to hire care services, whereas those with more precarious positions in the labour market are discouraged to do so. Moreover, living in extensive families significantly reduces the possibility that the family resorts to care services.

The research about use of parental leaves, maternity and paternity, in Spain, is a currently fruitful land. Researchers Escobedo and Meil (2012, pp. 9–11) in a report prepared for the International Network on Leave Policies gather some of the most recent works. A great part of them have been possible thanks to the existence, from the year 2006, of a statistical source, the Continuous Sample on Working Lives, which contains information about 4 % of the Social Security contributors for whom it also gives information regarding their work situation and income level. These research works are focused on a variety of aspects, such as the impact of a leave of absence on employment, or the variables that explain the use of parental leaves by fathers and mothers (regarding this, please see Escobedo, Flaquer, & Navarro, 2012; Escot, Fernández-Cornejo, Lafuente, & Poza, 2012; Lapuerta, 2013; Lapuerta, Baizán, & González, 2011; Meil, 2011).

Regarding long-term care policies, we regard the consideration of self-assessment mechanisms as excellent, from the very process of deliberation for drawing up the Dependency Act. This way, as part of the initial analysis of requests and needs, a survey about population in a dependency situation was made by the National Statistics Institute and published in the Dependency in Spain White Book (IMSERSO, 2004) with a complete study on the situation of policies for people in long-term care and the proposals of policies to intervene in this matter. By implementing the Act, a Service for Autonomy in Care and Long-Term Care is also created, for the compilation of punctual, complete statistical information about the services, the benefits and the population who benefit from help for dependency. Some assessment and law follow-up reports have already been published as well, including some criticism and proposals for improvements, although the current cuts that this part of social policies is suffering now in Spain spread serious doubts about the possibility of implementing any of the measures there included.

On the other hand, studies have also been made about the influence of awarding services or cash benefits on the decision made by women when they have to decide on the time they use to look after elderly dependants (Sarasa, 2008), or about the relationships between formal and informal care (Vilaplana & Jiménez, 2010).

Conclusions

If we had to define the Spanish system of family protection on the basis of encouragement to policies that give time, money or services to the families to look after children and elders, in Spain it would be, without a doubt, the policies that give time for care. They predominate as well as they try to minimise as much as they can the harm to employment rates (Delgado, Meil, & Zamora López, 2008, p. 1096). In the Spanish case, the need to increase care services, both for children and the elderly and thus allowing an improvement of the terrible current employment situation, particularly among youth, is usually mentioned. It would also ensure conciliation and child welfare. But, despite the fact that the development of these services would be urgent, it is advisable to note that a proper combination of policies that give as much time as services and money is the only guarantee for men and women to freely decide whether they will do productive work or care work (Lewis, 2006).

We will now mention some of the criteria that in our opinion must be considered when designing and improving family policies in Spain, as a result of the detailed analysis we have presented of the diverse protection forms currently existing.

Firstly, it is necessary to incorporate policies and measures that encourage the joint responsibility of men and women when sharing housework and carework. Quoting Borràs, Torns, and Moreno (2007, p. 94), the solutions to the challenges brought by family policies 'must not tolerate the absenteeism of male individuals or, to put it in other words, the excessive presenteeism at work that such people are socially proud to show off'. On the other hand, any measure implemented in family policies must consider the effects it will have on gender equality, social equality and the welfare of children and elders (Fernández & Tobío, 2005). Family policies must be neutral towards the various ways in which a family may organise their living together, not favouring some of them over others, because 'not acknowledging the principle of plurality or neutrality towards matrimony condemns the forms of cohabitation outside the institution of marriage to suffer situations of obvious discrimination' (Parella, 2000, p. 436).

Among the recommendations and measures that we gather here, as a synthesis, there are the following:

- Establishing a systematic assessment system of family policies and, in general, of social policies, which allows to see their impact on the lives of individuals and families and which has consequences for the review and improvement of the designed measures and tools.
- Increase and improvement of the existing statistical information on family policies, as well as on gender and intergenerational relationships and trajectories.
- Increase of the length of paternity leave so that it becomes the same as maternity leave and establishment of an incentive system that favours joint responsibility in the childcare time sharing of both spouses.
- Development of care services for children under 3 years of age and also for people in a dependency situation. This measure would encourage the creation of employment, as well as allow a better conciliation of work and family. Besides, working conditions and contracts should be improved in this type of services, and a greater acknowledgment of the training needed to work in this type of services should be promoted, in short, a tendency to professionalisation, in the sense given by Torns (2005).

- Substantial increase of benefits per child cared for so that they represent a rate which is relevant to the family income and can compensate, at least partially, childcare costs.
- Extension of maternity leave to at least 20 weeks and breastfeeding leave to 1 year.
- Equality of leaves to care for dependent relatives with leaves to care for children in length as well as in guarantees to keep the job.

Sustainability of life and care should be placed in the centre of the design of social policies, particularly those that have a direct or indirect impact on families. This implies recognition of the value of care-related professions, and it will foster the creation of employment in Spain.

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