

**XVI ISA World Congress of Sociology
Durban - July - 2006**

RC06 Family Research

Tuesday, 25 July 2006
Session 06: Family, Work, and Care

Chair: Eva Bernhardt (Stockholm University, Sweden)
Location: UNISA 2B-5
Session ID: RC06_06

**MEN AND WOMEN BETWEEN FAMILY AND
WORK IN EUROPE**

Anália Torres, Rita Mendes, Tiago Lapa

Men and Women between Family and Work in Europe

Anália Torres^{*}, Rita Mendes^{}, Tiago Lapa^{***}**

On the basis of the European Social Survey data (Round 1, 2002 and Round 2, 2004) this paper analysis and discusses the realities of work and family in Europe evaluating the similarities and differences between countries. It is an attempt to create a portrait that, while necessarily only capturing the main trends, acts as a point of departure in the search for evidence that explains the regularities encountered. We try also to identify the dominant family profiles in Europe on the basis of the average family size and the composition and morphology of households. In addition to a variety of other types of information, it will be possible to assess, for example, the age groups in which those who live alone are concentrated and their weight in the different countries.

The work-family relationship is analysed on two planes. Firstly, the variation in the fertility rate in the group of European countries is discussed and variations and indicators possibly influencing it are explored. This is followed by a more systematic approach to the relationship between motherhood, fatherhood and the labour market in the European area, with an attempt also to explain the specificities of the Portuguese case. Also included in the debate are the forms and the role of social policies, in particular those relating to family situations and gender equality.

Finally, a more systematic view is taken of the value attributed to the family in other aspects of life such as work, leisure, politics, religion and voluntary work, with the effect of certain variables also being assessed. This part also discusses the meanings given to these different hierarchies, thus helping to question the idea that the family has lost its central importance in contemporary societies.

^{*} Sociologist, president of the ASP (Portuguese Sociological Association); professor at ISCTE and researcher at CIES/ISCTE

^{**} Sociologist and researcher at CIES/ISCTE

^{***} Sociologist and researcher at CIES/ISCTE

But before commencing the data analysis, it is worth discussing certain overall questions relating to comparability, convergence and divergence among European countries.

1. Families in Europe: convergence and divergence

As is already known, a comparison between countries, in a way of thinking that reflects Durkheim, allows an overall vision and is, in itself, heuristic. In seeing, for example, that a certain demographic indicator in a country insistently goes against the trend in the countries culturally closest to it, we face research situations that, on a sociological level, oblige us to question and seek the cause of the matter. The chance to look beyond a national reality helps us to formulate other questions and seek new responses.

The changes taking place in recent years in all European countries, directly or indirectly related to family situations, have long been identified: the fall in birth and marriage rates and the increase in divorce, cohabitation and female employment rates. What are the reconfigurations in family relationships to which these changes in most European countries have led? Do the points of convergence among them predominate today? Or are those differences being maintained that make geographical frontiers – in as much as they too correspond to social processes and political and cultural contexts with a specific historical density – still relevant? What are the aspects of family life in which it still makes sense to speak of southern, northern or eastern Europe? Where are the frontiers more marked or more indistinct?

In a book on the European family, F. de Singly and J. Commaille stress the need for a comparative exercise of this kind to comply with certain methodological rules, if it is not to arrive at less accurate conclusions. In the authors' view, it is important, among other matters, to make a comparison on the basis of clear and relevant theoretical assumptions, to distinguish what is statistically significant, to take account of the problem of "variable distance" or, in other words, the scale of observation¹ and not to confuse observed differences with the diversity of models.

¹ In this analysis, it is important to present a critical perspective of the work of comparing European countries with each other, considering that emphasis may be being placed on differences that would be attenuated if we compared Europe with other regions in the world (Singly and Commaille, 1997).

With regard to the last rule, they consider it possible to speak of a European family model, with the differences between countries representing the effect of the specific processes of achieving this general model. According to the authors, two principles govern family relationships in a European context: respect for the independence of family members and respect for communal life, with the diversity of family types that exist in Europe being an expression of the different forms or arrangements between the two principles².

In the thinking of Commaille and Singly, the varied religious heritage, the different importance placed on individual fulfilment, the objective conditions of the applicability of a model that lays value on independence, and other specificities help to explain the different forms adopted in the process of making this European family model autonomous and real in the various countries. However, having a greater or lesser degree of cohabitation or divorce, more or fewer young people living alone and a higher or lower rate of female employment represent distinguishing characteristics that other authors may consider as sufficiently important to contradict the idea that a single family model exists. But when we leave the synchronic analysis aside and move on to a diachronic perspective of the processes that have occurred in the last 40 years, the different authors generally tend to converge. The same phenomena have, in fact, been noted in all countries – divorce, female employment and births outside of marriage are on the increase and the number of marriages and the birth rate itself are on the decrease.

Louis Roussel also contributed to this debate in an article that he published at an earlier point, in the early 90s (Roussel, 1992). In that article, he analyzed the demographic data for the family at the end of the 80s, discussing convergences and divergences between the different European countries at the time, though arguing that the synchronic cross-section necessitated, at that time, that emphasis be placed on the disparities. The European figures for fertility, marriage, divorce, cohabitation and births outside of marriage varied. There was a particular contrast between the data for southern Europe and the countries in the north, especially in Scandinavia. These two subgroups represented the poles in relation to which the others were closer or farther away – the

Similarly, the differences noted within each country are sometimes more significant than those found between countries (Roussel, 1992).

² Defending the existence of an ideal with regard to the European family, the authors quoted mention the proposal of Franca Bimbi who also suggests that in Europe there is a shared set of symbols relating to the family that are based on “the presence of women in professional work and their investment in a career, the importance of children for the emotional life of the family, the responsibility of the public sphere regarding childcare, the democratisation of family decisions, the participation of the father in his children’s care” (F. Bimbi, 1996 in de Singly and Commaille, 1997: 11).

first with their low rates of divorce, cohabitation, births outside of marriage and fertility and the second with their high values for the same indicators.

When, however, the author mentioned the data for recent developments, he indicated a clear “ground swell” with the same trends in all countries: everything seemed to indicate that in the centre and south the phenomena were being followed that had already been noted in Scandinavian countries, albeit with varying time-frames – more cohabitation, more divorce and more births outside marriage. With respect to fertility, after the Scandinavians had witnessed a slow erosion in their figures from the 60s, the 80s revealed a change and, at the end of the decade, the process of recovery and a rise in the number of births had already begun. On the other hand, at the end of the 80s, after a significantly later and more abrupt fall than had taken place in the north, the countries in the south recorded very low figures in the fertility rates. These figures, moreover, would be maintained during the whole of the 90s and even at the beginning of the new millennium.

The social processes that help to explain these common trends in development, the ground swell mentioned above, are relatively well known. They include social recomposition phenomena such as de-ruralisation and the expansion of the middle classes, socio-economic changes such as the growth of the service sectors, de-industrialisation and the greater participation of women in the labour market and, additionally, profound cultural changes. They are transformations that, at the level of values and, more precisely, those values relating to the family, are reflected in another set of phenomena known as secularisation, emotionalisation, privatisation and individualisation (Ester, Halmann and Moor, 1994; Shorter, 1975; Kellerhals, 1982; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). The processes of female assertion in the public sphere, which may also be termed the transition from the idea of a woman by nature to a perspective of the woman-individual, are also relevant (Torres, 2001).

We can therefore say that the ground swell that has led to such significant upheavals in demographic indicators in recent years is grounded in similar social processes that have cut across most European countries. But though these processes have identical effects on the level of major trends, they still present certain specificities in the individual countries. A greater or lesser commitment to the independence of family members or the greater or lesser influence of institutional attitudes towards the family and marriage, for example, may be explained by specific social, economic, institutional and cultural configurations.

In a recent book in which he analyses changes in the family throughout the world, in particular during the 20th century, Goran Therborn concludes that the diversity of family models persists, though they have all suffered great changes. With regard to what he calls the European family system, he states that certain internal distinctions that could already be determined in the past have ultimately re-emerged after substantial social changes (Therborn, 2004: 306). He also argues that crediting urbanisation and industrialisation alone with the role of providing the principal motor for the family changes observed in the last hundred years does not seem sufficient to understand these changes. Therborn takes the example of the pioneering role played by Scandinavian countries in certain transformations that, with regard to the family, are today considered as the “norm” in other European countries³ – gender equality in marriage, the freedom to choose a partner, the greater value given to individual rights and a secular vision of conjugality. In accordance with this, he tends to give pre-eminence to political, cultural and ideological factors such as strong secularisation to explain the differences in the European family system that can be observed between countries (Therborn, 2004: 78).

It is, thus, essential to bring together the specificities of each individual country or group of countries in order to understand certain differences or similarities. For example, to understand the reason why female employment rates in Portugal are comparable to those in Finland, a country with innumerable basic differences in relation to Portugal, it is of fundamental importance to take account of the fact that here, besides the lower salaries for males, there was a colonial war from 1961 to 1974, that is, for 13 successive years in which young males were obliged to join the military services for four years and fight in Africa for at least two. In combination with other factors, this situation ultimately represented an opportunity for women to enter and remain in the labour market, whether they had little schooling or a higher level of education. Later, the April Revolution (25 April 1974) allowed the legal changes that were necessary for the development of the discourse on equal opportunities for men and women in the different spheres of life, as well as in the access to paid work. In a comparative analysis, therefore, it is also necessary to take account of the fact that, for the same indicator,

³ The Swedish author explains that when some of the basic legislation on marriage, the family and women's rights was applied in Scandinavian countries at the very beginning of the 20th century, a large part of the working population was still engaged in agriculture (Therborn, 2004: 77). Accordingly, he tends to question the acknowledgment of urbanisation and industrialisation, made in particular by W. Goode, as the fundamental factors in the change in family structures in the world (Goode, 1963).

countries may present similar values which veil specific cultural and social conditions, histories and meanings that are considerably different.

The distance between Scandinavian and southern countries can be further confirmed with the most varied examples. To quote just one more, in Sweden, among the many movements and measures to protect equal opportunities for men and women, in existence since long before the 60s, sex education has been obligatory in schools since 1955 (Roussel, 1992: 144). In southern countries, on the other hand, not even today is it possible to speak of a similar situation despite the current general use of contraception⁴.

However, in addition to the recognised effect of the difference arising from Catholic or Protestant influence or, as Therborn states, the greater or lesser influence of secularisation on topics associated with the family, the existence or absence of policies on gender equality or sexuality, which cannot be understood as simply the mechanical consequences of religious attitudes, is also a factor to be taken into account in explaining these differences.

The dynamics of change in social, political and ideological contexts produces effects that must be taken into account. For example, to understand the sharp fall in the birth rate in Eastern European countries, it is necessary to consider not only more general influencing factors but also a combination of factors connected with the loss of job security, the privatisation of childminding services and the departure of the young people from these countries (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: 119-127; Therborn, 2004: 258).

But conjunctural alterations such as changes in the political direction of governments do not fail to affect existing policies in both the area of family policies and that of unemployment. An example of such change is the alternation in the same country between social democratic/socialist governments and conservative governments, which makes it possible to introduce modifications in the direction and variations in the related effect. This is the situation in the United Kingdom, which, while maintaining a liberal model, has seen certain policy alterations in the areas that we have mentioned. Between the years 1995 and 2001 it was also the case in Portugal⁵.

⁴ The most obvious signs of the general use of contraception, even when the church advises against it in southern countries, are the birth rates themselves, which, in countries under Catholic influence, have been consistently among the lowest in the whole of Europe since the late 80s.

⁵ Between 1995 and 2001, a set of public policies was implemented in Portugal in the field of childminding and pre-school education. They partially filled a gap in coverage that was particularly

The different interpretations of the role, operation and provisions of the welfare state in the various countries also have a decisive influence on their planning greater or lesser institutional support or the implementation of policies that may affect the decisions of individuals (Torres et al., 2001). The fact that Finland and Spain have very similar youth unemployment rates but completely different birth rates – far higher in the Scandinavian country – have been explained precisely by the existence in Finland of an array of social and educational amenities for children and support arrangements for mothers which are ultimately reflected in the different fertility rates (Tobio, 2001 and 2005; Oinonen, 2004: 340).

It only seems possible to accept that a European family model exists, in different concrete forms as Singly and Commaille propose, if we understand it as a set of very general characteristics. In fact, shared family concepts can be seen in the great majority of European countries at the present time – a high level of conjugalization, individual freedom in the choice of partner, the predominance of feelings in the conjugal and parental relationship to the detriment of external criteria and institutional ideas, and the principles of equality between partners and equal access to the labour market for both sexes. This group of “shared” practices and symbols (F. Bimbi, 1996, in Singly and Commaille, 1997: 11) is what really seems to be capable of explaining the convergence of movements in the demographic indicators relating to the family in most European countries.

But in practice, as the same authors also state, these very general attitudes are matched by different behaviours and even contradictions such as those connected with the total discrepancy between gender equality defended as a principle and the inequality that women experience in daily practice in family life and paid work. In addition to such contradictions, in order to distinguish countries and even internal groups in each country, differences count that we can term cultural and structural conditioning factors (e.g. the weight of religious constraints and inequalities of income). They interfere in the way that the so-called notions of emotionalisation, secularisation, privatisation and individualisation can be experienced and carried through to their conclusion. It is thus necessary to pay attention to what is most hidden in these transformation processes, which some authors have identified as the presence of a “modernised traditionalism” in the context of the family (Levy, Widmer and Kellerhals, 2002).

obvious in a country with such a high employment rate among mothers of small children. There is still no public coverage, however, for the group of children aged 0-3 years.

If on a very general basis, as has been mentioned above, it seems in fact possible to identify a European family model, even so, it is still necessary to insist on the importance of localising and analysing its differences and asymmetries. Identifying a general model allows us to capture the meaning of certain common transformations and also define, with clearer contours, the values that are today considered fundamental acquisitions of civilization in relation to the family. They contrast with a past vision of family relationships that stressed authoritarian, patriarchal, institutional and traditional aspects that have been and are still being questioned. Nowadays conceptions that lay stress on the importance of personal fulfilment and well-being within the family and on equality between the sexes do not entail abandoning the idea of having children or caring for others (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2001). This comes out very clearly in the ESS results that we are going to analyse.

In addition to these major common trends, it is also essential to give an account of the marked asymmetries that subsist both between and within countries. This may be considered a question of different models or different manifestations of the same European model but the decisive element seems to be the consideration of this array of conceptions and situations. Beyond the symbolic level – with its greater insistence on the religious or institutional aspect or the dimension of individual assertion – various constraints have a bearing on the way in which family relationships are experienced. Dependence on the operating mechanisms of the labour market, precarious situations that make it difficult to build a family, and unemployment that may take individuals by surprise at later points in their life cycle are just a few examples of situations that can make themselves felt more strongly in certain countries, at given moments in history or in certain social sectors. Family life is lived in a specific framework of constraints that, without obviously hindering individual action or strategies, sets limits that sometimes cause contradictions between what is actually desired and what can be achieved.

2. The Europe of “couples”

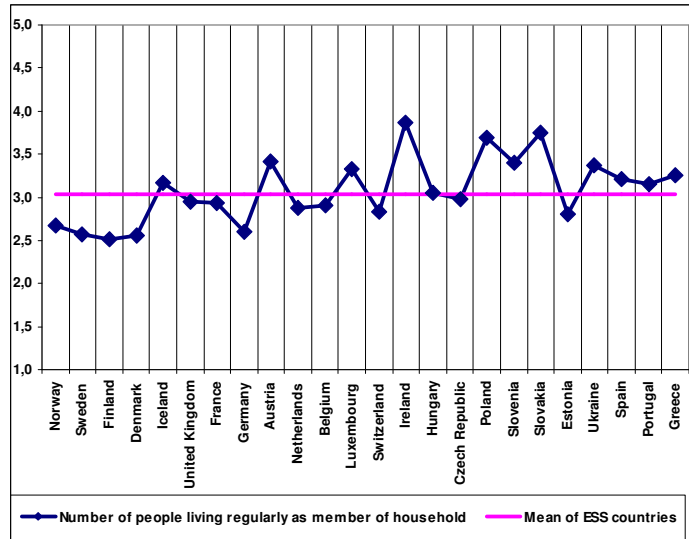
With regard to the picture of European family profiles, an initial indicator is the average size of households. Europe presents a common pattern of small families containing an average of three people, although this size varies. An increase occurs between the Scandinavian countries (2.7 people per household) and the countries

belonging to southern Europe and the area of eastern countries (3.3 people per household). This movement can be seen in Figure 1.

Household averages in ESS countries (2004)

(Mean)

[FIGURE 1]



The ESS data also shows that Denmark presents the lowest percentage of larger households, i.e. with more than five people (1.9%). In this field it is closest to other Scandinavian countries, namely Finland with 2.1% and Sweden with 2.2%. At the other extreme, Ireland is the country with the highest percentage of households with more than five people (16.4%), followed by Slovakia with 12.8% and Poland with 12.4% which is consistent with the fact that both of them, on average, have the largest households.

The progress of the fall in family size can be clearly illustrated by the Portuguese example, which moved from an average of 3.8 people per household in 1960 to 3.2 in 2004. In addition to this, Portugal has witnessed a marked fall in the percentage of households with more than five people, which was 17.1% in 1960 (Almeida *et al.*, 2000), while the ESS data indicate 5.1% for 2004.

Europeans either live in partnerships, which is the case of the overwhelming majority, or alone, as can be seen in Table 1, with various generations sharing the same household to a progressively more limited extent. Single-parent families and people who live with their parents have little significance in the whole, though there are variations between countries with respect to the latter. These overall trends clearly

illustrate, on the one hand, the processes of “conjugalization” and family modernisation that are so well described by Durkheim (Durkheim, 1975; Torres, 2001) but, on the other, they also illustrate the individualisation processes in the family context that have been analysed by various contemporary authors (Kellerhals et al., 1982; Kaufmann, 1993; Singly, 1993; Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2001).

With regard to the differences between countries, which are presented in Table 1, they can be perceived in a more systematic manner if we use the statistical method of hierarchical cluster analysis. This method allowed us to identify four main groups, while safeguarding the analytical consistency of such identification, as can be seen in Figure 2⁶.

Composition of households⁷(2004)
(%)

[TABLE 1]

	Living Alone	Couples without children	Couples with children	Single-parent families	Living with parents	Other situations	Total
Norway	19,0	32,2	33,3	6,2	5,8	3,6	100
Sweden	22,2	34,3	28,7	5,8	1,9	7,2	100
Finland	22,3	34,4	28,8	5,8	7,1	1,5	100
Denmark	20,6	36,3	29,0	6,1	5,3	2,8	100
Iceland	11,9	23,2	42,5	8,3	7,9	6,1	100
United Kingdom	14,0	29,1	30,1	9,7	7,9	9,2	100
France	12,8	31,0	37,9	7,3	7,3	3,7	100
Germany	20,8	32,1	28,0	6,7	8,3	4,0	100
Austria	9,9	19,2	35,4	6,9	17,0	11,5	100
Netherlands	14,1	33,9	35,8	5,6	8,1	2,6	100
Belgium	13,8	29,4	31,8	8,9	11,2	4,8	100
Luxembourg	9,2	21,8	35,1	7,8	18,3	7,7	100
Switzerland	16,5	32,1	32,7	5,1	9,9	3,8	100
Ireland	4,4	14,6	41,8	7,7	19,1	12,4	100
Hungary	12,2	24,0	31,2	10,0	13,2	9,4	100
Czech Republic	11,7	25,8	34,4	7,9	12,0	8,3	100
Poland	7,4	15,4	35,6	8,3	16,9	16,4	100
Slovenia	9,0	17,3	35,3	7,0	16,1	15,3	100
Slovakia	8,4	14,3	33,6	9,0	16,3	18,4	100
Estonia	18,4	23,6	26,9	11,8	9,7	9,5	100
Ukraine	9,1	23,2	27,3	10,0	8,0	22,4	100
Spain	9,1	20,7	34,3	7,0	16,2	12,7	100
Portugal	8,3	25,3	32,5	6,7	12,7	14,5	100
Greece	7,3	23,1	38,3	6,9	11,8	12,6	100
Mean.....	13,4	26,9	32,2	10,2	7,8	9,6	100

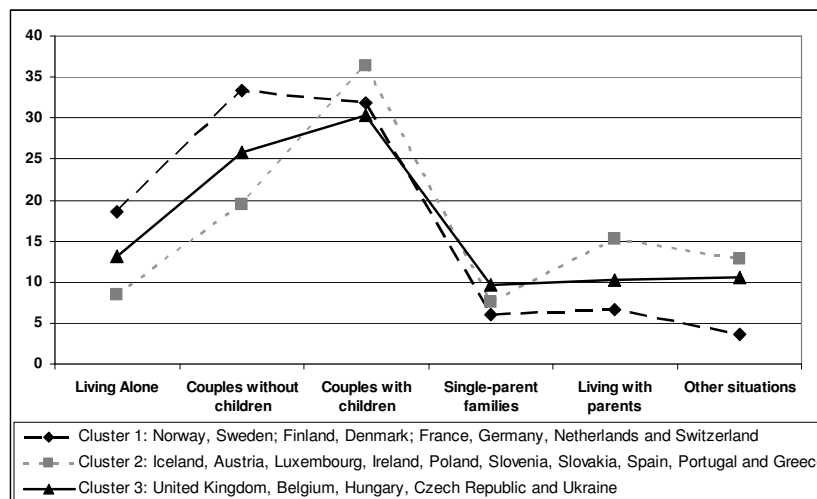
Source: European Social Survey, 2004

⁶ Hierarchical cluster analysis aggregates countries in clusters that become progressively larger. The identification of four groups does not take a technical criterion into account but rather the analytical criterion of the researchers. A different decision, such as considering more groups of countries, could have been taken, which would imply that the differences between groups of countries would be more meticulous and less clear.

⁷ Categories constructed taking the perspective of the respondent into account

**Hierarchical cluster analysis
for the composition of households (2004)**
(%)

[FIGURE 2]



The first cluster, composed of Scandinavian countries (except Iceland), France, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland⁸, is characterised by the greater number of couples without children, which is higher than the percentage of couples with children. It also has a higher percentage of people who live alone, which is consistent with the fact that in this group of countries there are fewer people living with their parents. It is to be noted that this first group also presents a small percentage of other situations. Regarding the data on single-parenthood, there are no great differences between the clusters.

The second group, consists not only of some countries from the north and centre of Europe (Iceland, Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland), but also of some eastern countries (Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia) and of Southern countries. Distinguishes itself from the other clusters in registering the lowest percentages of people living alone and that has the largest households, the lowest percentage of couples living without children and the highest number of individuals living with parents, in accordance with what other recent studies have concluded, especially for the southern European countries (Saraceno, Olagnero and Torrioni, 2005: 10).

⁸ The reservation should be made that this aggregation only takes household size and composition into account. The Scandinavian countries are different from the rest of the countries in such important aspects as social policies, which may be reflected in differences in indicators like the fertility rate, or systems for coordinating conjugal life and work, as will be discussed below.

The third group, made up of the United Kingdom, Belgium, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Ukraine records intermediate percentages for those living alone, for those living in couple without children and those living with their parents. This group has the lowest percentage of couples with children and has the highest percentage single parents.

If we take a more careful look at each of the categories in the composition of the domestic groups, it can be seen that the weight of individuals living alone in Scandinavian countries (without Iceland) is two times and a half greater than that for the southern countries as a whole. This is a clear indicator of the differences in the degree of independence in relation to the larger family group.

It is to be noted that, in Scandinavian countries, between 21% and 25% of young people live alone, which distinguishes them from the other countries and adds to the evidence of their early independence. At the other extreme, we have countries such as Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Spain and Portugal with very low percentages of young people living alone (no more than 4%).

The old people in Scandinavia and Estonia are also among those who most often live alone. The south and Ireland is characterised for having not only fewer young people living alone but fewer old people, too.

Another perspective is the analysis carried out just for the group of individuals who live alone, to shed light on how they are distributed among the age groups and how the different countries compare.

In the Scandinavian countries, the weight of the youngest people in the group of those living alone is greater than in the other countries. In addition, it may be noted that afterwards there is a somewhat more equitable distribution among the various age groups. In the generality of the northern and central European countries, among those who live alone we may note the increasing weight of the older age groups and the lesser significance of the young people in relation to the previous cluster.

In Ireland, in the eastern countries and Portugal, a large discrepancy is to be noted between the weight of the young people and the old people. More than 50% of the people who live alone are over the age of 60, a situation that, within the context of the lowest incomes, may indicate vulnerability and social exclusion associated with old age.

In Greece, the weight of the young people among the few individuals who live alone is, curiously, equivalent to that of the Scandinavians, while, on the other hand, the weight of the oldest people is closest to that of Portugal. It may be remembered that,

with regard to the total number of people living alone, Greece compares with its geographical group, southern Europe.

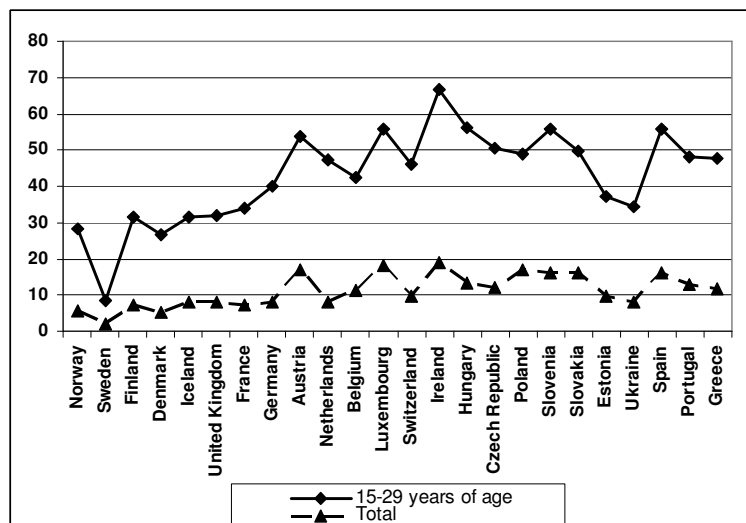
A person's independence of older or younger generations is certainly greater in Scandinavian countries as a result of cultural factors that attach importance to this independence, though, also, as a result of the social protection systems. In contrast, in other countries there are greater obstacles to this independence, not only for cultural reasons but also, particularly among the young people, because of social inequalities and the difficulties encountered in entering the labour market (Pais, 2001; Guerreiro and Abrantes, 2004).

With respect to the distribution of couples without children – including those who had never had children and those who were not living with their children at the time of the survey – higher percentages are observed in the Scandinavian countries, Germany, France, Netherlands and Switzerland than in the other ESS countries. This not only reflects the degree of independence achieved among the younger people but also the increase in average expectancy with regard to life together as a couple. This indicator also represents an item of data that is consistent with the smaller average family sizes in these countries.

Another quite illustrative indicator of the different levels of independence among the European sons and daughters is the percentage of respondents who live with their parents, especially the youngest.

Respondents who live with their parents
(%)

[FIGURE 3]



As can be seen in Figure 3, the great majority of the young people in Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom and France have left the parental home. In contrast, Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland, Hungary, Slovenia and Spain register more than 50% of the young people living in their parents' home.

With respect to young couples with children, Norway, Iceland and Estonia stand out with the highest figures. Nevertheless, the Scandinavian countries share a greater range of options for young people who leave home – starting a new family, living as a couple without having children or living alone – with most of the northern and central European countries.

The ESS data shows that, for young people from the southern and enlargement countries who are not living with their parents, the formation of a family is the exit point *par excellence* from the parental home. This fact confirms other research results which show lower percentages for couples without children and young people living alone in southern and eastern Europe (Saraceno, Olagnero and Torrioni, 2005: 11).

Ukraine, Poland and Portugal have the highest percentages of young married people in all ESS countries (29,7%, 25.4% and 22,7% respectively). But with regard to Portugal, it is to be stressed that when the youngest people start a family this is accompanied by early school leaving, which leads to the low qualifications of these young Portuguese and drives them into low-paid employment that is often precarious⁹.

Young people leave home late in countries like Spain, on account of uncertain and erratic transitions often marked by advances and retreats, precarious employment and youth unemployment, as an array of qualitative research demonstrates (Pais, 2001; Guerreiro and Abrantes, 2004; Brannen *et al.*, 2002).

Thus, when the young people remain in their parents' homes or postpone independence, a conjugal situation or the starting of a family, this cannot simply be put down to an extended education. These difficulties of transition to independence may be indicators of the perverse effects of precarious integration into the labour market, against a background of retrenchment in social security systems that leaves the individuals to rely more on themselves (Beck, 2000).

⁹ In fact, the ESS data (2004) shows that the young married Portuguese state that they have an average of 9.9 years' schooling, the lowest in Europe, for which the overall average is 12.5 years, in sharp contrast to the average of 15.2 years' education for young married respondents from Iceland. A piece of data that allows a similar conclusion is the fact that the average number of years' education overall, as declared by the young Portuguese, is 11.2, which means that those who are married are precisely those who do not extend their education.

Generally speaking, it may be said in summary that, for young Europeans, the opportunity to live independently or start a family is set within a framework of differences in cultural and gender values, socio-economic conditions and the circumstances of access to the labour market and the forms of integration into it. Of equal significance is the presence or absence of policies that make employment, independence and the starting of a family simultaneously possible (Saracens, Olagnero and Torrioni, 2005; Oinonen, 2004).

The data for single parenthood – whether among young people or in an assessment of the figures for the respondents overall – do not show great variations. France is conspicuous in the youngest age group, followed by countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and, also, Estonia and Ukraine. Most Europeans in single-parent situations, however, are aged between 30 and 59, which may be explained by the fact that most divorced people are to be found in this age bracket. Perhaps the most obvious fact to be pointed out is precisely the small percentage of single parents, which means that generally, as with the situation of divorcees, it involves situations that tend to develop into new conjugal and family configurations.

In summary, northern Europe has smaller families and is notable in that it has more young people living alone, fewer couples with children and fewer respondents living at home with their parents, which are all indicators of a greater assertion of independence. The number of households where three generations live together is very limited.

Families in southern and enlargement countries tend to be slightly bigger and have fewer individuals living alone, with the greater part of the latter being older people. These countries are also characterised by a larger number of respondents living with their parents, especially young people. We are, thus, dealing with a continuation of the differences that Roussel (1992) and Therborn (2004) have already pointed out. But the extent of these differences has been diminishing over recent years, as longitudinal analyses show, and signs of convergence are also to be seen.

3. Motherhood and female employment: a positive correlation

From the range of relationships that exist between work and family we decided to give more in-depth treatment to the relationship between motherhood, fatherhood and

work, taking the ESS data as the base. In the first place, in a combined form, the analysis covers the development of fertility indicators and the proportion of mothers in work, in an attempt to understand and explain the differences observed between countries. The analysis that follows deals with the way in which men, women, fathers and mothers are positioned with regard to the labour market.

For a considerable period it was generally believed that one of the fundamental factors that could help to explain the marked fall in birth rates was the increasing participation of women in the labour market. If it is true that, for several years, the correlation between fertility and female participation in the labour market was negative for OECD countries (Del Boca and Locatelli, 2003: 152), since the end of the 80s the effect has been precisely the opposite. Figure 9 shows that, for most EU countries, the greater the rate of female participation in the labour market, the higher the fertility rate. It is still the case, however, that no EU country attains the values necessary to replace its population.

How is this inversion to be explained? Before we seek to understand these processes, it is worth observing the data on the development of both indicators in the different European countries. When we consider the development of the fertility rate¹⁰ in the EU since the 60s, we see that in northern, central and, particularly, Scandinavian countries, there was an early and smooth downward trend until the 80s, with a slight rise later in 2000. On the other hand, in southern countries, the slowdown in fertility was sharper and came later¹¹, since it fell abruptly, beginning with the 80s, and has maintained extremely low values up to the present day (Del Boca and Locatelli, 2003: 152; Therborn, 2004: 285).

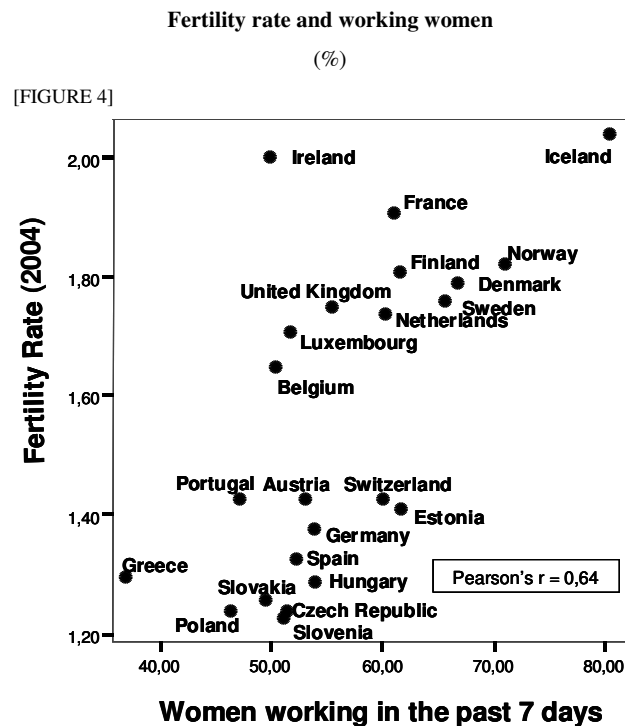
With regard to the female rate of employment, it is steadily rising in all countries, though in Scandinavian and some northern European countries it was already high in the 80s¹²; in contrast, in southern countries female participation in the labour

¹⁰ The number of children per woman or, more exactly, the number of children that would be born per woman of fertile age (15-49 years of age) according to the age-specific fertility rates

¹¹ According to the data monitoring fertility rates over the successive generations of women (beginning with those born in 1930), southern countries start off with the highest fertility rates in Europe in the older generations and then present a large fall in this indicator over the generations (Eurostat, 2004).

¹² See the examples of Denmark, which in 1980 registered a fertility rate of 1.55 and a female employment rate of 72.8%, Finland, which for the first indicator registered a result of 1.63 and for the second 72.9% , and Sweden, where an average of 1.68 children were born per woman and 78.3% of women worked (Eurostat, 2004). In southern countries precisely the opposite took place: in the same decade, the fertility rates were higher and female employment rates were lower. It may be noted that the fertility rate for Greece was 2.21, for Portugal 2.18 and for Spain 2.20 and the female employment rate was 40.8%, 59.8% and 34.7% respectively (Eurostat 2001, data referring to 1980).

market was weak during those years and, for all that it has risen since, it is still low in relation to the other countries, with the exception of Portugal¹³ (Del Boca and Locatelli, 2003: 152; Engelhardt and Prskawetz, 2002). We thus reach the year 2004 with a positive correlation between the participation of women in the labour market and the fertility indicators.



Sources: Eurostat (data referring to 2004); European Social Survey, 2004

As has been demonstrated, southern countries, with the exception of Portugal, have both a rather low proportion of working mothers and fertility indices among the lowest in Europe. Scandinavians occupy precisely the other extreme, with the extensive participation of mothers in the labour market and high fertility indicators. We also find a group of countries with a certain proportion of working mothers and intermediate fertility indices. Finally, Ireland (with a fertility rate of 1.99) and Iceland (2.03) stand out as the countries that most closely approach the value at which the population replaces itself (2.1) in 2004. With regard to the countries in the east, if they all have

¹³ According to Eurostat data from 2004, in the year 2000 the fertility rate was 1.76 in Denmark, 1.73 in Finland and 1.54 in Sweden and the female employment rates were 72.1%, 65.2% and 69.7% respectively. In 2000, the fertility rate was 1.30 in Greece, 1.25 in Italy, 1.54 in Portugal and 1.22 in Spain and the female employment rates were 41.3%, 39.3%, 60.4% and 40.3% respectively.

very low fertility levels, they differ on the point of the employment rate among mothers, with the Estonia recording appreciably higher values.

How can we explain these correlations, which, for some, are certainly unexpected? Studies have shown that the development of policies aimed at increasing women's participation in the labour market and, simultaneously, a set of measures to improve maternity and infancy/childhood support may be the basis of both the relative recovery in fertility and the retention of mothers in the labour market. In effect, in a practically unequivocal manner, these are the results of various examples of research work that compare groups of European countries against the same indicators or others related to them (Del Boca and Locatelli, 2003; Oinonen, 2004; Klement and Rudolph, 2004).

In contrast, the types of policy mentioned may not exist, as happens in southern European countries. Given that the youngest women tend to want to join the labour market, as is well known in the case of Portugal, and also Spain (Tobio, 2005), there is greater hesitation about embarking, without reservations, on motherhood and it is particularly difficult to have more than one child.

An identical phenomenon, though with a distinct historical background, seems to exist in the countries in the east. After the political changes at the beginning of the 90s, both the employment rate among mothers and the birth rate went down. Factors such as precarious employment, greater instability at the level of social security and the privatisation of public facilities formerly intended for childcare seem to have generated this double effect (Beck, 2002: 125; Therborn, 2005: 258).

The way in which each country has confronted the issue of the falling birth rate and the relationship that can be established with a higher or lower rate of female employment thus seems to be predicated, as indeed other authors conclude, on the role played by the welfare state and its philosophy of greater or lesser intervention with respect to equal opportunities between men and women and the protection of children's interests (Sainsbury, 1994; Torres *et al.*, 1999; Torres *et al.*, 2001).

But to explain the higher or lower birth rates and female employment rates in the various countries, other factors also have an influence on the matter, such as youth unemployment and precarious forms of integration into the labour market, which are closely related with the difficulties of starting a family (Guerreiro and Abrantes, 2004; Brannen, *et al.*, 2002). It is also important to consider ideological and cultural attitudes towards the question of who should take care of the children (Brannen, Moss and

Mooney, 2004). Furthermore, it is quite clear that there are different obstacles in the way of making decisions on motherhood or fatherhood, when it is concluded that Europeans would like more children than they in fact have (Fahey and Spéder, 2004).

However, the data analysed seems to indicate quite clearly – positively in the case of the Scandinavian countries and negatively in the case of southern and enlargement countries – that policies seeking to reconcile work outside the home and motherhood can have a positive effect on increasing the average family size in Europe.

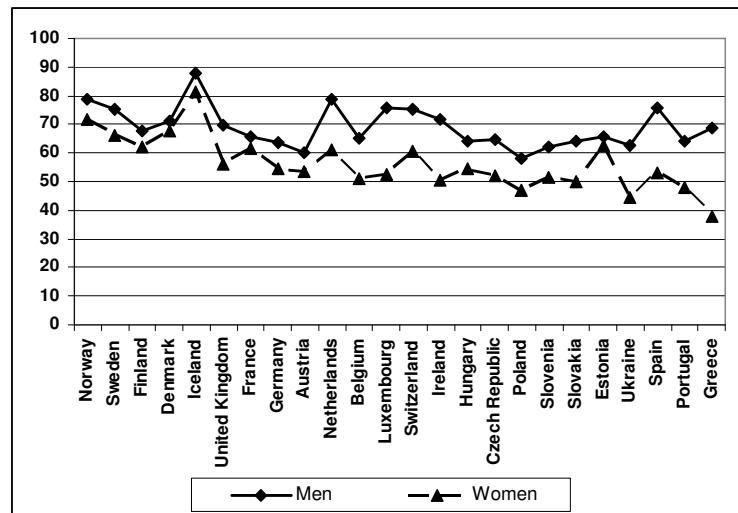
4. European women in the labour market. Explaining the Portuguese case.

On the basis of the ESS data, let us now look at the actual figures for men and women in the labour market and the hours that they spend doing their job.

Figure 5 presents the proportion of women and men who stated that they were engaged in paid work in the seven days before they completed the questionnaire.

Paid work in the past 7 days
(Individuals between 15 and 65 years of age)
(%)

[FIGURE 5]



Reinforcing the contrast mentioned above, Scandinavian countries diverge from southern European countries in that more than 50% of women were engaged in paid

work. Northern and central European countries also have high results for female participation in the labour market.

In southern Europe and the enlargement countries these figures reach their lowest value, even if these numbers should be interpreted with a certain caution: they may also reflect the high level of female unemployment, not just expressing a declared intention by the women to remain at home. Estonia is the exceptions to the low figures for female employment.

In the case of Portugal, it is worth pausing to explain why the country is so different from its southern counterparts, clearly distinguishing itself by the strong presence of women in the labour market. The specificity of Portugal, which has been manifested since the 70s and is maintained to the present day, can be attributed to the combined effect of various factors. Besides the socio-economic conditions of the population and the low salaries of male workers, we must take into account the Colonial War (1961 to 1974), the processes of emigration and the fact that post-revolution politics, i.e. from 1974, reflected a period in which the protection of egalitarian perspectives was given a favourable reception.

Among the most deprived social sectors, the indirect effect of emigration was a certain female activism. The women who remained behind were obliged to take decisions alone, were confronted with new situations, took positions, managed and organised family life, and experienced a certain degree of freedom. Those who left the country with their husbands discovered different ways of life. The development of this female protagonism, albeit forcibly, and the knowledge of other worlds helped to create a new situation and a new image of female capacities outside the home. These have been presented in various pieces of qualitative research in which occupational activity appears as an important form of personal assertion (Torres, 2004; Monteiro, 2005).

In other more highly educated social sectors, the thirteen years of the Colonial War brought about a number of changes. The relative economic expansion of the end of the 50s had created employment for middle and senior management but the war and compulsory military service delayed the entry of young males to working life for four years, when it did not demand their departure or other changes. On the other hand, young women with a university or secondary education had potential husbands who were finishing their courses before going to war or who had already gone to war with or without their education completed. The market offered them compatible employment opportunities – the civil service, teaching or business. The waiting time for the men to

come home seemed too long and the opportunity arose not only to occupy their time but also to generate money. Thus, many of these young women grasped these opportunities and, once they had entered the world of work, they rarely left it. In the attempt to reconcile working and family life, these social sectors could still, at this time, count on cheap and abundant paid domestic help¹⁴. Strengthening this activism, the 25 April emerged later as a period in which the country opened up to ideas of male-female equality and reformulated obsolete and patriarchal laws. The specific history of this generation of working and more educated women had a series of repercussions¹⁵.

The conclusions of various pieces of research point to the importance, at the level of behaviour, of the effects of transmission from one generation to another. They show that a mother's occupational activity has unquestionable effects on her daughter's entry to the labour market. These are, indeed, specific effects of socialisation: the higher the educational level attained by the mother, the stronger they will be¹⁶. From this point of view, the participation of young women with a secondary and university education in the labour market in the 60s and 70s may help to explain the present high levels of Portuguese young women in higher education (Guerreiro and Romão, 1995) – some of whom will certainly be their daughters – even in sectors that were traditionally a male preserve¹⁷. It will also partially explain their tendency to seek to fully reconcile their occupational activities and family life¹⁸.

¹⁴ In the 60s, with the decline in agriculture and the migratory movements of the population to the big cities and abroad, there was a large increase in the unskilled female labour force employed in domestic service.

¹⁵ The women who made up this group probably explain the fairly high number of women, in relation to men, who completed PhDs in Portugal in the 80s in areas that in other countries tend to be more of a male preserve e.g. mathematics (49%), physics (44%), chemistry (63%) and biology 61%. In comparison to other countries, Portugal also has a higher percentage of full female professors: in 2001, we could find 14% in this category in France, 12% in Italy, 10% in the United Kingdom, 10% in Germany and 19% in Portugal. It should be noted, nonetheless, that, as in other countries, the gap between men and women is maintained in Portugal, with men being far better represented in highly qualified and/or management positions in university and scientific institutions (Amâncio, 2003: 189, 191).

¹⁶ Authors such as Louis André Vallet, Claude Thélot and François de Singly, quoted by Martine Segalen (1993: 194), consider that there is a hereditary element in the models for choosing an occupation. According to Vallet, a daughter's future depends more on the mother's position than the father's, i.e. when a mother has an occupational activity, the daughter will more easily follow. Thélot and Singly show, in turn, that the higher the education of the mother, the greater the probability that the children will reach a better position in their occupation.

¹⁷ Still on the topic of participation at university, it is worth stressing that in the early 90s Portuguese women had the largest contingents in courses that were traditionally considered male strongholds. In the 1992/93 academic year, 28% of engineering and architecture students were women (European average 18%), as were 61% of natural science students (European average, 44%) and 45% of mathematics students (European average, 28%) (Torres, 2002).

¹⁸ The results of a survey of the young people in the municipality of Loures show that almost 90% of women support total symmetry between men and women in the performance of occupational activities and the sharing of domestic chores (Torres, 1996a).

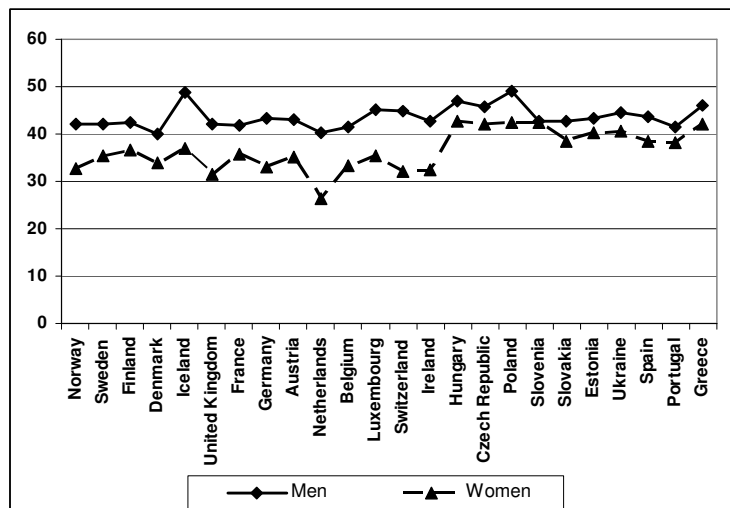
Returning to the ESS data, the variations in the values in Figure 5, which charts the inclusion of women in the labour market in the countries under analysis, reflect different social and economic processes, diverse cultural traditions and varied political conceptions and attitudes that are peculiar to each country, as we specifically saw in the case of Portugal.

Moreover, if we simply analyse female occupational activity according to the rates of unemployment and labour market integration, this does not give a full picture (Pérvier and O'Dorchai, 2003). It is necessary to consider the total number of hours spent in carrying out the paid work, since some countries register high levels of female labour, though in the form of part-time work, while others, such as Spain and Greece, present low indicators of female activity and a high number of hours.

We may consider the case of the Netherlands, with relatively high values for female participation in the labour market – over 50% of Dutch women stated that they were in paid work in the seven days preceding the study. This case, however, also reveals the highest levels of part-time female labour: 70.6% of working women stated that they worked according to this form (Moreno, 2002: 91).

Average number of hours worked weekly (2004)
(Individuals between 15 and 65 years of age)
(mean)

[FIGURE 6]



An analysis across all the countries shows that Scandinavian countries and others in central Europe combine a higher percentage of women with full-time work and a high average number of hours worked per week.

It is the women in the enlargement countries who work the most hours weekly of all the countries analyzed, though they are also among those who register some of the lowest results for female work, with the clear exception of Estonia. As mentioned above, the fact that during the 90s the enlargement countries saw a reduction in economic, political and employment stability on account of the recent structural and social changes is also consistent with this phenomenon. The low female representation on the labour market may also reflect the high unemployment indices that characterise these countries at present (OECD, 2002).

In Greece a lower rate of female work activity is associated with the highest number of working hours in Europe. This indicates that, though there is also a high number of women who are not in paid work, as in the enlargement countries, female workers are basically engaged in full-time work. This data confirms the recognized absence of a tradition of part-time work in southern Europe (Torres, 2004; Moreno, 2002; Périvier and O'Dorchai, 2003; Klement and Rudolph, 2004).

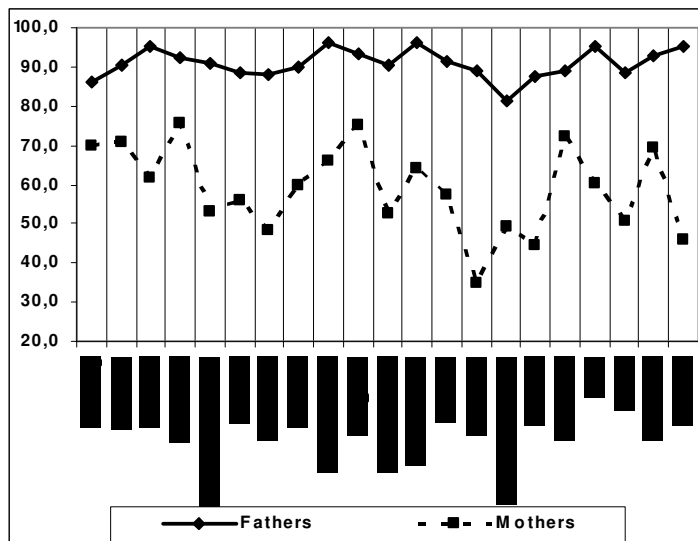
5. European mothers and fathers greatly involved in the labour market

To make a closer study and gain an understanding of the relationship between parenthood and occupational activity, it is worth analyzing Figure 7, which presents the figures for the proportion of mothers and fathers with children under 10¹⁹ who stated that they were engaged in paid work in the 7 days before the questionnaire was completed.

¹⁹ The methodological option of isolating and analyzing only the mothers and fathers with children under 10 is due to the fact that children under 10 years of age need the kind of care that entails the constant presence of their parents. This will be the criterion throughout this chapter whenever figures referring to mothers and fathers are presented.

Mothers and fathers with children under 10 who carried out paid work in the preceding 7 days²⁰ (2002)
(%)

[FIGURE 7]



The percentage of European men who have children under the age of 10 and work varies between 80% and 90%. That is, throughout Europe, the numbers are not only higher than those for working people in general, but also quite significantly more homogeneous, with southern European fathers being those who work most from among all the countries under analysis.

The percentage of mothers who have joined the labour market and have children under the age of 10 varies from country to country. In spite of motherhood, however, there is a clear female presence on the labour market, with the great majority of countries registering a figure of more than 50%. The traditional model of the man as the father and only breadwinner is, in fact, in decline (Crompton, 1999).

The extensive presence of mothers on the employment market is particularly conspicuous among the countries of the enlargement. In Germany, Greece and especially Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, less than 50% of mothers work outside the home.

In Germany, for its part, these figures may reflect a tradition that attributes more responsibility to women for the care of infants or old people²¹, through political

²⁰ The construction of this variable took into account all the men and women who stated that they had some occupational activity in the 7 days before the questionnaire was completed and who, at the same time, were living with children born after 1992.

²¹ It is to be noted that care for infants or older people is not institutionalized: it is entirely a private responsibility.

measures that promote part-time work or even departure from the labour market after childbirth (Klement and Rudolph, 2004). On the other hand, in the countries of the enlargement, the low figures for working mothers may be due to situations of economic instability, a precarious labour market and, especially, the loss of public support facilities for infants and young children – factors that are known to associate low entry to the work market with a fall in the birth rate (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2001; Oinonen, 2004). In Scandinavian countries, social and political strategies that are more focused on combining motherhood and an occupation are certainly reflected, as can be seen, in the higher proportion of working mothers.

Comparing the performance of Europeans of working age with those who have children under 10 years of age, on the basis of an analysis of Figures 6 and 7, we see that in all countries, without exception, there are more fathers engaged in work than working-age men. Though this difference is relatively small in Norway and the Czech Republic, it is noteworthy in Slovenia, Poland, Finland, Luxembourg, Italy and Hungary where, in relation to the total percentage of men who work, there are 25 to 30% more fathers who work.

We may understand the specificities that each social, economic and cultural situation displays with regard to the implications of motherhood and fatherhood in the daily working life of men and women, but there are still information gaps to be filled. Thus, the distribution of mothers and fathers in the labour market is known but how many hours do they work? Table 2 presents the average number of hours worked weekly by mothers and fathers with children under the age of 10.

Hours worked weekly by mothers and fathers with children under the age of 10²²(2002)
(%)

[TABLE 2]

	Hours worked weekly by fathers	Hours worked weekly by mothers
Norway.....	42.8	33.8
Sweden.....	43.8	36.3
Finland.....	43.4	37.6
Denmark.....	42.7	36.1
United Kingdom.....	45.7	26.7
France.....	42.4	33.8
Germany.....	44.6	26.4
Austria.....	45.3	30.8
Netherlands.....	43.3	20.8
Belgium.....	44.6	36.1
Luxembourg.....	40.9	28.5
Switzerland.....	46.5	23.5
Ireland.....	50.1	31.7
Hungary.....	50.3	40.8
Czech Republic.....	46.7	41.9
Poland.....	51.4	40.0
Slovenia.....	46.4	44.2
Italy.....	46.2	37.8
Spain.....	44.8	38.4
Portugal.....	46.4	45.9
Greece.....	53.3	40.4
Mean	45.5	31.6

Fathers and mothers: $F= 735.172$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.195$
Countries: $F= 10.654$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.069$

In all countries, fathers work more hours than the male working population. This may result from the pressure that greater family responsibilities, besides other objective conditions, place on a young man whose household has increased and who has seen his expenses and financial obligations increase. Thus, in this phase of life, these factors seem to weigh more than the competing need for great devotion to the family.

In more conservative countries, from the gender role point of view, it can be seen that motherhood-protection policies without an occupational scheme seem to generate a greater difference between working women and working mothers, as the results presented in Figure 11 for the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and Austria clearly show. In contrast, in countries where measures promoting equal opportunities for men and women are simultaneously combined with motherhood and fatherhood protection, as in Scandinavian countries, occupational activity is carried out in parallel to motherhood, as can be observed from the results in Figure 11.

It is also noteworthy that, when mothers from southern and enlargement countries²³ work outside the home, they spend more hours on this activity than other

²² The construction of this variable took account of the weekly working hours of all men and women living with children born after 1992.

European women, as has already been confirmed for the women of these countries as a whole. Moreover, this is what is concluded from comparative studies, which reveal that the longest work schedules and the highest poverty levels are to be found in countries without support policies for working mothers and fathers (Gornick, Meyers and Ross, 1997; Gornick and Meyers, 2003: 262, 266).

One of the factors explaining this fact may be pressing economic needs, since, in these countries, the state does not offer public responses to the need for small children to be looked after: childcare and childminding are the entire responsibility of the families. As grandmothers are, increasingly, still active in the labour market, the alternatives are crèches or private minders, solutions that represent an enormous financial burden.

Nevertheless, questions such as greater individual liberty, more decision-making power within the couple and the desire to experience intimate relationships with a higher degree of democracy are not detached from the importance that women lay on the financial independence won by their entering the labour market (Klement and Rudolph, 2002; Tobio, 2005). Yet for most of them this conquest is also reflected in an obvious overload, since they tend to combine domestic chores and childcare with work commitments.

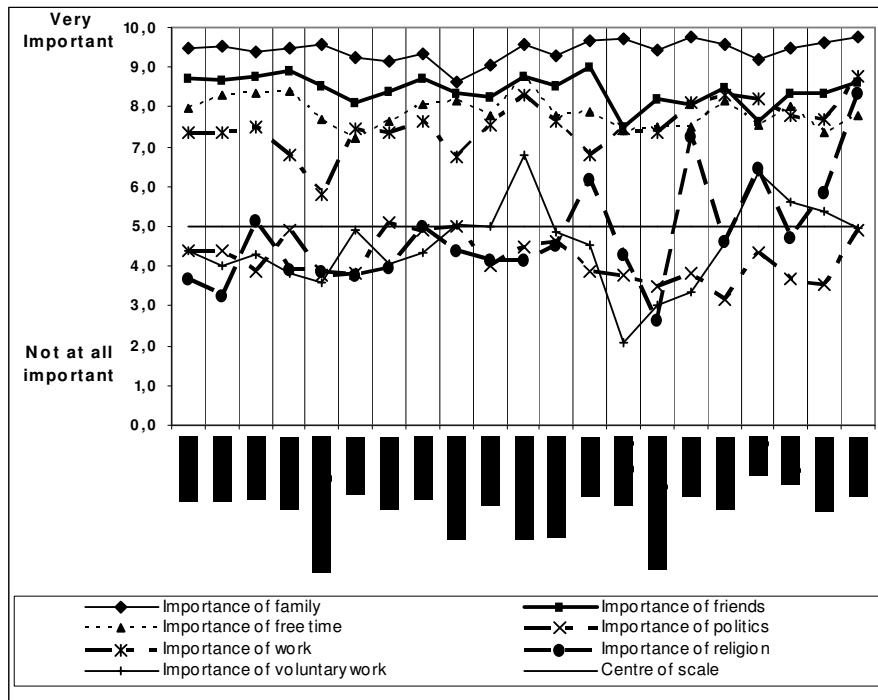
6. Family, the first priority. Work, equally important for men and women

The European Social Survey data in 2002 also provided an overall picture of the dimensions in life to which Europeans give priority. Presented in Figure 8, this picture gives an answer to two questions that relate directly to transformations in the family sphere. The first is whether social processes such as the greater independence of the members of the couple and the individualisation of life's opportunities represent a fall in the importance of the family in relation to other spheres in life. The second is whether European countries differ among themselves in the various arrangements between the principles of independence and those of the organisation of a life together. Figure 12 responds to both questions with a resounding "no".

²³ It should be noted that in Portugal working mothers work 3 hours a week more than working women as a whole. This difference is the greatest among all the countries under analysis, which means that Portuguese working women are those who work the most hours in Europe.

The importance of each aspect in life
(mean)

[FIGURE 8]



With regard to the first question, in fact, the aspects connected with feelings (family, friends) appear in the top places, with religion and politics generally occupying the bottom places in the hierarchy. It is also to be seen that the family is an independent value in relation to the others, not being connected to religion, for example. For the second question, the family is no more important in certain European countries than in others. It is an acquired value for all ESS countries, since, on the topic of the importance given to the family, Scandinavian countries register very similar values to Spain and even higher values than those for Italy.

The family is not, therefore, in a state of crisis: on the contrary, it is the main sphere of personal investment. The factors that do seem to have changed are the family models and the representations and the forms of investment in the family. Phenomena such as the fall in fertility and the general spread and playing down of divorce and cohabitation cannot therefore be interpreted as symptoms of the decline of the family, but rather as symptoms of new investments and feelings associated with it, such as the elimination of the idea that the family is essentially defined by the formal bond. With the assertion of independence and the devaluing of both the institutional component of marriage and the rigid differentiation of gender roles, the construction of the family

remains the most important dimension in the life of Europeans. It now defines a place where they hope to find the maintenance and affirmation of individual liberty as well as space for full emotional self-fulfilment.

It is also important to know if there are gender differences in the priority attached to the dimensions “family” and “work”, in spite of the actual differences in work regimes and labour market integration for men and women. The ESS data shows that men and women rate the family aspect as the most important in their lives (with results above 9, on a scale from 0 to 10) and the importance given to the work aspect is relegated to third or fourth place, though with very similar results for both sexes.

Contradicting the stereotypes – which tend to consider that, by “nature”, men attach greater importance to work and women to the family – this data thus shows that the discrepancies between the sexes are far narrower than the differences between countries. The greater differences within the sexes than between them conform to the conclusions of other studies carried out in the field of gender sociology (Amâncio, 1994; Kimmel, 2000; Connel, 2002).

The parents of small children attach greater value to the family aspect, though this does not mean that the value attached to work is affected. The opposite is rather the case: the work aspect is also more highly rated by working mothers and fathers than by working men and women in general, perhaps as a result of an instrumental attitude.

The ESS data on the importance given to work and family also reveals that women are committed, or would like to be committed, to both fronts. It rebuts the common idea – often explained by the fact that motherhood entails a pattern of discontinuous employment for women (Klement and Rudolph, 2004) – that, in being workers, women attach less importance to the family or that men attribute more importance to work than the family. It is certain that these are very general deductions with regard to values. Qualitative research work has shown that, even if in their discourse men put a high value on family life and consider that women have the right to personal self-fulfilment through an occupation, they tend to act in *practice* as if responsibility for their respective spheres still conformed to the patterns of the old gender asymmetries (Torres, 2004).

With regard to women, the new light that this data perhaps throws on the matter is precisely that, for them, work is something of value in itself that goes beyond the economic need for two incomes: it tends to be a part of a strong female identity model, even in countries where fewer women have entered the labour market. In this respect, it

is possible to talk of a European convergence of shared symbols. However, the ability of women to see the harmonious implementation of this desire for a double investment in work and family depends on actual and specific conditions that vary from country to country and may, in some cases, create dilemmas and impose undesired choices²⁴.

Some of these dilemmas can probably be guessed when questions related to motherhood, family and work are posed in a very stereotypical way. A specific module in ESS Round 2 (2004) proposed some of these type of questions. We will identify, quiet quickly, some of the results.

In general terms the respondents of the ESS answered they were happy, calm, fresh and that they did interesting things in the past two weeks. Nevertheless, women expressed less joy and energy than men.

In most of the countries, women tend to agree more with the sentence that “Women should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family”. The countries where are more women agreeing with this opinion are France, Hungary and Ukraine. Conversely, in the Scandinavian and northern countries, most women disagree with that statement.

It is also women that agree more with the statement that “men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children”. In what concerns the opinion that “men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce”, in the Scandinavian, northern and central countries, most men tend to disagree. On the contrary, in many of the eastern and southern countries, the majority of men tend to agree with that statement. Regarding women, clearly there is a general disagreement with the opinion concerned. However, in Hungary, Portugal and Greece most answers still fall on the agreement side.

The respondents from the eastern and southern countries are the most traditionalists concerning marriage and family life since in these countries many agree that “when there are children in home, parents should stay together even if don't get along”. There is a difference between sexes since women are more peremptory in the disagreement. Only in Portugal and Greece, the majority of women tend to agree.

²⁴ A motherhood ideology that does not support female employment and the entry of mothers into the labour market may create personal dilemmas for women in the management of the family/work relationship and, in some countries, even make an unintentional and perverse contribution to lowering the birth rate, as seen above.

Family seems to be a very important value for everyone, since the agreement with statement that “a person's family should be the main priority in life” is consensual for both sexes, though slightly higher in women.

More women than men totally agree that they have “many things to do at home, that they often run out of time before I get all done”. Also, they are the ones complaining more with the monotony of housework. There is also a highest percentage of agree totally agreeing that they can choose when and how to do the housework. Regarding how well is the home of the respondents equipped for housework, the answers vary much more in terms of social class.

More women have the task of looking after others relatives in household, such as children, ill, disabled or elderly relatives. In the Scandinavian countries a lot more people recurs to paid childcare facilities while in the other countries, the respondents say that the grandparents are the first option other than themselves or the partner, for taking care of youngest child in household. Nevertheless, in almost every country, most people are satisfied with the childcare support they get in present situation, but in France, 15% desire a lot more help and in Portugal, that percentage reaches 40,9%.

6. Conclusion

This broad view allows us to underscore the strong representation of women, including mothers, on the labour market. It reveals a positive correlation – for some, certainly unexpected – between this female participation in working life and fertility rates.

The value of the family as an absolute priority in the personal life of Europeans is another very clear result. An analysis of the order of importance assigned to values also indicates a modern rather than traditional vision of the family. In most countries, after the family, value is attached to friends, then in third place to leisure and in fourth place to work, with the latter two values exchanging positions in certain countries. The attachment of value to the family is completely dissociated from religion. Friendships and the time to enjoy them, in close association with work, undoubtedly represent the dimensions in life on which Europeans lay the most importance.

To deconstruct essentialist visions of the differences between men and women, it was also very interesting to note at the level of values that, in relation to the value

attached to work, the differences between the sexes are practically eliminated, a fact that shows this to be a key reference for both of them.

But when we move to a narrower view, a considerably more multifaceted image appears: its contours certainly result from the crossing of the internal dynamics²⁵ of each country and the transverse social mechanisms of change to which we have referred, according to different timetables and rhythms.

In northern Europe, and in particular Scandinavian countries, there are smaller families, more young people living alone, fewer couples with children and fewer respondents who live with their parents. Here, also, there are higher numbers of people who cohabit, who are divorced and who declare that they have no religion. The processes of individualisation, secularisation and independence – in particular among the young people and women – seem to have arrived first in these countries.

In the southern and enlargement countries, families tend to be slightly larger, with more respondents living with their parents, especially the young ones, and with fewer individuals living alone. Most of those in the latter situation are older people. In the same large group, together with Poland and Ireland, religion has greater importance and it is here that the highest number of marriages is to be found, along with the fewest divorced people and the least cohabitation.

A central factor for change in most countries has been the growing integration of women into the labour market, both proportionately and in the number of hours worked. However, the effects of this reorganisation of gender roles on work and the family vary greatly, depending on structural factors such as incomes, youth unemployment rates, social protection schemes and, especially, policies that allow the two worlds to be reconciled. Without this support, either women are overloaded or they withdraw from work activity when they are mothers, or, again, there is an undesired fall in the average family size. It has been seen, moreover, that in Scandinavian countries, where they tend to adopt a clearer, individualised vision of women as workers and mothers and where gender equality policies are applied, the highest fertility rates in Europe are to be found, with the exception of France, although they have still not reached the point of replacing the population.

²⁵ Countries also differ from the point of view of the existence or absence of policies promoting a higher birth rate or supporting working mothers or of legislative regimes and social security; they also differ in the forms of combining work and family, i.e. in the different visions of what is a public or private problem. Also of importance are the different legislative alterations to family law that reflect claims and changes in social representations and the way in which the law assimilates and facilitates more egalitarian conjugal situations.

As has been confirmed, women and men give practically the same importance to work. However the female labour system and its forms of payments betray asymmetries. It has also been shown that parenthood and work are objectives that are simultaneously pursued, practised and valued by European men and European women alike. It thus makes less and less sense to define a woman – or a man – on the basis of an event that is circumscribed in time and space, such as the birth of a child.

Family life, moreover, takes place within a specific framework of constraints that, without obviously hindering individual action and strategies, sets limits and is often the cause of contradictions between what is really desired and what can be achieved. An example of these discrepancies is the fact that the young people in many countries – especially the young women – experience difficulties in the process of gaining independence, of having their own life and space and even of reconciling the desire to start a family and the forms of occupational self-fulfilment.

At the end of the journey, it can be concluded that the ways of life in Europe and the ways in which value is attached to the family reflect modern, more pluralistic patterns and reject the traditional vision that emphasises the authoritarian, patriarchal and institutional features of family relationships. Greater insistence is laid on the importance of the emotional dimension, self-fulfilment, personal well-being within the family and gender equality, without renouncing the idea of having children. However, within this general framework, the differences between countries are to be seen not only in the way that this overall model is put into practice but also in the tonic accent that they place on the values mentioned.

Bibliography

ALMEIDA, A., GUERREIRO, M., LOBO, C., TORRES, A., and WALL, K. (2000), «Family relations: change and diversity», in Viegas, José and Costa, A. (eds.) *Crossroads to Modernity: Contemporary Portuguese Society*, Oeiras, Celta.

ALMEIDA, A. (2004), *Fecundidade e Contraceção*, Lisbon, ICS.

AMÂNCIO, L. (1994), *Masculino e Feminino, A Construção Social da Diferença*, Porto, Edições Afrontamento.

AMÂNCIO, L. (2003), «Gender and science in Portugal», in *Portuguese Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, 3, pp.185-198.

BECK, U., BECK-GERNSHEIM, E., (2001), *Individualization*, London, Sage.

BECK, U. (2000), *The Brave New World of Work*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

BOZON, M. (1992), «Sociologie du rituel du mariage», in *Population*, 2, pp.409-434.

- BRANNEN, J., MOSS, P. and MOONEY, A. (2004), *Working and Caring over the Twentieth Century*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, ESRC.
- BRANNEN, J., LEWIS, S., NILSEN, A. and SMITHSON, J. (2002) *Young Europeans: Work and Family Life; Futures in Transition*, London, Routledge.
- CONNEL, R. (2002), *Gender*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- CROMPTON, R. (1999), *Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment. The decline of the male breadwinner*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- DEL BOCA, D., LOCATELLI, M. (2003), «Fertility and Women's Work Status», in Meuldeurs, D., Henau, J., O'Dorchai, S. (eds.), *The Rationale of Motherhood Choices: influences of employment conditions and of public policies*, Belgium, European Commission, pp. 149-169.
- DEL BOCA, D., PASQUA, S., and PRONZATO, C. (2003), *Analyzing Women's Employment and Fertility Rates in Europe: differences and similarities in Northern and Southern Europe* in, <http://www.demogr.mpg.de/papers/working/wp-2002-052.pdf>
- DURKHEIM, Emile (1975), *Textes, Fonctions sociales et institutions*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit.
- ELLIOT, R. (1996), *Gender, Family & Society*, New York, Palgrave.
- ENGELHARDT, H., PRSKAWETZ, A. (2002), *On the Changing Correlation Between Fertility and Female Employment over Space and Time*, in www.demogr.mpg.de/papers/working/wp-2002-052.pdf.
- ESTER, P., HALMAN, L., MOOR, R. (1994), *The Individualizing Society. Value Change in Europe and North America*, Tilburg, Tilburg University Press.
- FAHEY, T., SPÉDER, Z. (2004), *Fertility and Family issues in an enlarged Europe*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, European Commission.
- GIDDENS, A. (2001), *Transformações da Intimidade. Sexualidade, Amor e Erotismo nas Sociedades Modernas*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.
- GOODE, W. (1963) *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe.
- GORNICK, J., MEYERS, K., ROSS, E. (1997), «Supporting the employment of mothers: Policy variation across fourteen welfare states», in *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol.7, 1, pp. 45-70.
- GORNICK, J., MEYERS, K., (2003) *Families that Work. Policies for reconciling parenthood and employment*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation.
- GUERREIRO, M., ABRANTES, P. (2004), *Transições incertas – Os jovens perante o trabalho e a família*, Lisbon, Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego, DGEEP, CID.
- GUERREIRO, M. and ROMÃO, I. (1995), «Famille et travail au Portugal, la coexistence de différentes dynamiques sociales», in Willemsen, T., Frinking G. and Vogels R. (eds.), *Work and Family in Europe: The Role of Policies*, Tilburg, TUP, pp. 151-165.
- INE (2000), *Inquérito à Ocupação do Tempo, 1999*, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Lisbon.
- KAUFMANN, J. (1993), *Sociologie du couple*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- KELLERHALS, J., et al. (1982), *Mariages au quotidien – inégalités sociales, tensions culturels et organisation familiale*, Lausanne, Ed. Pierre Marcel Favre.
- KIMMEL, M. (2000), *The Gendered Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

- KLEMENT, C., RUDOLPH, B. (2004), «Employment patterns and economic independence of women in intimate relationships» in *European Societies*, Vol. 6, 3, pp. 299-318
- LEVY, R., WIDMER, E., KELLEHALS, J. (2002), «Modern family or modernized family traditionalism?: Master status and the gender order in Switzerland» in *Electronic Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 6 (4) in, <http://www.sociology.org/content/vol006.004/lwk.html>.
- LOBO, C. and CONCEIÇÃO, C. (2003) “O recasamento em Portugal”, in *Sociologia Problemas e Práticas*, 42, pp. 141-159.
- MONTEIRO, R. (2005), *O que Dizem as Mães*, Coimbra, Quarteto.
- MORENO, D., ESCOBEDO, A., and MOSS, P. (ed.) (2002), *Surveying Demand, Supply and Use of Care: EU Harmonised Data Sources*, (care work in Europe: current understandings and future directions).
- OECD (2002), *Employment Outlook: Statistical Annex* in, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/42/1939233.pdf>.
- OINONEN, E. (2004), «Starting the First Family», in *European Societies*, Vol. 6, 3, pp. 319-346.
- PAIS, J. (2001), *Ganchos, Tachos e Biscates. Jovens, Trabalho e Futuro*, Coleção Trajectórias, Porto, Ambar.
- PÉRIVIER, H., O’DORCHAI, S. (2003), «Women’s employment and public policies», in Meuldeurs, D., Henau, J., O’Dorchai, S. (eds.), *The Rationale of Motherhood Choices: influences of employment conditions and of public policies*, Belgium, European Commission, pp. 85-124.
- PRINCE-GIBSON, E., SCHWARTZ, S. (1998) «Value Priorities and Gender», in *Social Psychological Quarterly*, Vol. 61, pp. 49-67.
- ROUSSEL, L. (1992), «La famille en Europe occidentale: Divergences et convergences», in *Population*, 47, pp. 133-152.
- SARACENO, C., OLAGNERO, M., and TORRIONI, P. (2005), *First European Quality of Life Survey: Families, Work and Social Networks*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, European Commission.
- SAINSBURY, D., (ed.) (1994) *Gendering Welfare States*, New York, Sage Publications.
- SEGALEN, M. (1993), *Sociologie de la famille*, Paris, Armand Colin.
- SINGLY, F. (1993), *Sociologie de la Famille Contemporaine*, Paris, Nathan.
- SINGLY, F., COMMAILLE, J. (eds.) (1997), «Les règles de la méthode comparative dans le domaine de la famille», *La Question familiale en Europe*, L’Harmattan, Paris: pp.7-30.
- THERBORN, G. (2004), *Between Sex and Power. Family in the world, 1900-2000*, London, Routledge.
- TOBIO, C. (2001), “Working and mothering. Women’s strategies in Spain” in *European Societies*, 3, 339-71.
- TOBIO, C. (2005), *Madres que Trabajan. Dilemas y Estrategias*, Valencia, Ediciones Cátedra, Universitat de València, Instituto de la Mujer.
- TORRES, A. (1996), *O Divórcio em Portugal, Ditos e Interditos*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.
- TORRES, A. (1996a), «Os jovens e a família» in Almeida, J. F. et. al., *Jovens de Hoje e de Aqui*, Departamento Sócio-Cultural da Câmara Municipal de Loures.
- TORRES, A., SILVA, F. (1999), *Childcare and the division of work between men and women*, WORC, Tilburg, Tilburg University Press.
- TORRES, A., SILVA, F., MONTEIRO, T., CABRITA, M., (2001), *Men and Women Between Family and Work*, Tilburg, Tilburg University Press.
- TORRES, A. (2001), *Sociologia do Casamento*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.

TORRES, A. (2002), *Casamento em Portugal*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.

TORRES, A., SILVA, F., MONTEIRO, T., and CABRITA, M. (2004), *Homens e Mulheres entre Família e Trabalho*, Lisbon CITE, Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego.

TORRES, A. (2004), *Vida Conjugal e Trabalho*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.

TORRES, A., BRITES, R., MENDES, R., and LAPA, T. (2004a), *Famílias no contexto europeu: alguns dados recentes sobre o European Social Survey*, Braga, 12-15 May 4, in, <http://www.aps.pt/vcongresso/ateliers-pdfs.htm>.