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## Romulus and Remus or Just Neighbours? A Study of Demographic Changes and Social Dynamics in Italy and Spain

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### Abstract

The inclusion of Italy and Spain within the same label of “*familistic systems*” has proved to be theoretically and empirically relevant to understand the individuals’ demographic and reproductive behaviour in each country. However, the academic literature has mostly treated Italy and Spain as familistic in a very static way. Both countries have gone through deep-running changes regarding the family, women and the reproductive and employment decisions over their life course although the change has perhaps been more profound in Spain (in part due to different views and behaviours concerning the role of women that facilitate more rapid and divergent advancements towards gender equality and varied family forms in Spain). However, the so-called *reorientation* in Spain and *inertia* in Italy have had different levels of intensity and outcomes, the greatest being in attitudes, less so although still substantive in policy and the smallest in behaviours. However, the recession since 2007 may have obstructed further developments and pushed Spain a step back towards certain converging patterns again, at least in the two latter spheres: policy and behaviour.

### Keywords

Family, fertility, employment, familistic systems, Spain, Italy, Southern Europe

*Note:* This paper is the introduction to Special Collection 4, which can be found here: <http://populationreview.com/special-collection-4/>

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## **Aim of and Rationale for the Special Collection**

In 2008, Francesco Billari and Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna published a book in Italian entitled *La rivoluzione nelle culla. Il declino che non c'è* (Billari and Dalla Zuanna 2008). The book aimed at answering the following question: is Italy today really facing a demographic problem? With an accessible, critical and provocative style, the authors tried to refute such approaches which claim that Italy is reaching a phase of demographic *decline* with disastrous consequences due to low fertility levels and the corresponding aging of the population. Contrary to this catastrophic view, the authors sustained that it would be better to speak of a *revolution*, not a *decline*, which undoubtedly offers new opportunities to Italian society but in parallel, obliges policy-makers and social/political actors to adopt brave measures to face these new socio-demographic challenges.

A Spanish reader may have found some of these reflections extremely useful to understand what was also going on in Spain. No such book existed to describe and explain systematically and comprehensively the recent socio-demographic changes occurring there. Two years later, a colleague and I decided to edit and translate Billari and Dalla Zuanna's book into Spanish to establish a parallelism between the two countries and contribute to the academic and social debate in Spain (Billari and Dalla Zuanna 2010). It was extremely enriching for us to translate the book through the lens of some knowledge about fertility and family dynamics in Spain. More often than not, while translating, we ended up asking ourselves whether what we were reading for Italy could also be true for Spain. The authors maintained a critical view of the socio-political situation in Italy and very often a positive one about Spain, in line with the widespread opinion in Italy at that time (before the recession), both in society and in academia, that tended to a certain "admiration" for –almost "idealization" of– the deep-running transformations that were occurring in Spain and its place within the European context. Was Spain really "taking-off" and moving away from Italy as much as our Italian colleagues seemed to think?

In September 2010, I decided to organize an international workshop under the title *Spain and Italy: As Similar as Thought? A Comparative Reflection on Living Arrangements and Family Relationships*. This special issue is the fruition of the lively discussions which took place during this two-day workshop in Madrid. Hopefully, this work will help widen both the debate and the literature on the specificities of the family model in Southern Europe.

## **A Brief Note on the Very Late and Very Low Fertility in Southern Europe**

In Europe, fertility has been below replacement levels for almost three decades now. Population ageing and decline, together with labour-shortages and welfare deficits, seem to be the well-documented unavoidable outcomes. However, ageing and declining populations vary significantly depending on whether fertility levels are low or very low. Spain and Italy are no longer leaders occupying the bottom position but they are still in the group of countries with a

fertility (well) below replacement in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Until 1975, Spain had a total fertility rate (period TFR) close to 3.0, among the highest in Western societies. Spanish fertility went below replacement in 1982 for the first time and since then, it has dropped sharply, reaching one of the lowest-low fertility levels in Europe in the late 1990s (1.1-1.2). This lowest-low fertility has long persisted in Spain although there was a small recovery in the 2000s, with the TFR going up to 1.45 in 2008. In the last two years, it has dropped again (1.39). In Italy, fertility started to decline earlier than in Spain and it had already dropped below replacement levels in 1977. Since then, it has sharply declined. In the early 1980s, the Italian TFR fluctuated between 1.3 and 1.4 and later, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, the lowest-low fertility remained constant around 1.2, as in Spain and several other countries. Italy also witnessed a timid recovery in the recent past, with the TFR rising to 1.41 in 2008.

In demography, it is a well-established fact that the reproductive capacity declines with age so overall fertility declines hand in hand with the increase in the mean age of entry into motherhood. Over the past decades, the mean age at first birth has increased everywhere for women as a result of the growth in education opportunities and paid employment for them. From a socio-economic perspective, this increasing postponement is viewed as an attempt, especially for highly educated women, to get their career going before embarking on motherhood. The average age of women giving birth has experienced a drastic increase in Spain and in Italy, as elsewhere, but both countries have the record of occupying the top position of mothers' mean age at first birth in Europe (31.21 and 31.18, respectively). The distribution of age at first birth differs widely by education attainment but all women, including the lesser educated, have increased their mean age at motherhood in the two countries. The proportion of mothers by age 30 has dramatically decreased across generations in Spain and in Italy, more so than in other European societies (Adsera 2005). For instance, in 1990, for first birth orders in Spain, 42.29%, 15.82% and 3.69% of new mothers belonged to the age groups 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39, respectively. Two decades later, the corresponding figures are 24.42%, 38.40% and 18.30% (Eurostat 2012). It is clear that Spanish women have intensively postponed first motherhood over the last decades.

A wide range of research, however, has shown that postponement does not necessarily translate into low fertility. The average age at first birth is now more or less the same in all Europe. In Sweden (30.75), the UK (29.91) or France (29.42), the average age at first motherhood is similar to that of Spain or Italy, but the former have higher fertility rates: 1.98, 2.00 and 1.94, respectively (Eurostat 2012). Therefore, the effect of postponement on the decline of women's overall fertility cannot be predicted straightaway and it is not a sufficient explanation for cross-country variation in fertility. In this way, empirical evidence suggests that the lower the fertility in a country, the higher the effect of delaying motherhood. In Spain and in Italy, the delay effect is high, it has not weakened in recent cohorts and "it implies a relative reduction of completed fertility between 2.9 and 5.1 percent for each one-year delay in the onset of motherhood" (Kohler et al. 2002: 647). In other contexts, postponement is counteracted by the catch-up effect, i.e., postponement is associated with an increased fertility at older ages and this is not

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<sup>1</sup> According to Eurostat, in 2010, 8 European countries had a fertility below the Spanish one (Latvia, Andorra, Hungary, Moldova, Latvia, Romania, Portugal, Malta), and 6 more (Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Germany, Serbia and Liechtenstein) had it between Spain and Italy.

fully reflected in a decreased completed fertility. Sweden, France and the UK, among others, are examples of successful fertility recuperation in Europe.

Therefore, it is the catch-up effect and not the delay in motherhood that matters most and the question that follows is: what makes women in some countries satisfy their desire to become mothers and have more than one child while we see a gap between ideal and real fertility in Spain and in Italy? The reason why Spanish or Italian women end up having fewer or no children at all cannot simply be that young women in these countries have a preference for fewer children than, for instance, their Swedish counterparts. Preferences seem to converge with those in Europe and evidence suggests that women are also inclined toward the two-child norm in Spain and in Italy, irrespective of their education attainment (Delgado 2006; FFS-GGS 2003). Explanations for this child gap must be found elsewhere.

During the last decades, nuptiality patterns have also changed drastically in Spain and in Italy. Since the early 1980s, people marry less and later and nowadays the mean age at first marriage is 31.01 for women and 33.23 for men in Spain (Ine 2012) and 30.1 for women and 33.1 for men in Italy (Istat 2012). In other societies, cohabitation offsets the trend toward fewer and later marriages but this is not the case in Southern Europe where (increasing) cohabiting unions are not sufficiently prevalent and late marriage clearly implies a late onset of union formation and a significant postponement in parenthood. The transition to adulthood in Spain and in Italy is also characterized by the late exit from the parental home, the high incidence of non-residential partnerships among young adults, and the low proportion of youths who live alone while single (Domínguez-Folgueras and Castro-Martín 2008). Together with the above-mentioned “lowest-low fertility” (Kohler et al. 2002), terms such as “latest-late transition to adulthood” (Billari 2004) or “postponement syndrome” (Livi Bacci 2001) have been coined in the literature to refer to the South European pattern of fertility and family formation.

Yet, how to explain this apparent “paradox” of very late and very low fertility coexisting with traditional family practices in Southern Europe? A vast amount of empirical research has emphasized historical cultural norms (Reher 1998), limited secularization and strong family ties (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli 2004), tight housing markets, high (youth) unemployment (Goldstein et al. 2009), precarious and unstable job positions (Baizán 2006; González and Jurado-Guerrero 2006), the scarcity of family- and women-friendly policies (Naldini and Saraceno 2011), and asymmetrical gender relations, especially in the private sphere (Cooke 2009), that both countries seem to have in common.

### **Spain and Italy: As Similar as Thought?**

Notwithstanding the above, recent research has also shown that Spain now has some of the most advanced legislation regarding gender equality, that the transformation of the Spanish welfare state has been much more steady and profound than that which occurred in Italy, Portugal or Greece (Guillén and León 2011), and that Spaniards, particularly the younger generations, have gone through rapid value shifts which have been translated into a profoundly changing society,

high female labour participation, and diverging patterns of family dynamics. Yet most studies still consider both Spain and Italy to be “traditional” societies in terms of welfare system orientations and family practices.

True, both countries maintain strong family ties that imply an intense exchange among members of the family (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli 2004). Moreover, their welfare regimes support the family as a unit (familistic welfare state), but presume that the family is primarily responsible for the well-being of its members. As an outcome, most literature on comparative welfare and care regimes maintains the prevalence of the traditional male breadwinner model through familistic practices in Southern Europe. Labels such as the “Southern model” or the “Mediterranean model” group these countries with distinctive assumed political, socio-economic and cultural traits into a different category from the three well-established regime types (Esping-Andersen 1999). According to Esping-Andersen’s typology, Spain and Italy show similar characteristics to the conservative system, although the commitment to the male breadwinner model is stronger in Southern Europe. The absence of social protection makes the family (and especially women) play an important role as the main provider of care and welfare for children and dependent individuals and therefore, does not make it in any way easy for women to participate in the labour market and to be economically independent. However, are both countries as similar as we might think at first glance?

This argument was accepted with no controversy in the first half of the 1990s (Ferrera 1996) and sustained by numerous scholars on social demography and social policy ever since (Ferrera 2000, 2005; García and Karakatsanis 2006). But, despite the distinctive welfare arrangements and family dynamics that characterize Southern countries, the fact that Spain and Italy begin to score differently on some of them raises some doubts as to the accuracy of maintaining both countries as part of the same family model in all cases. Spain and Italy no longer present identical welfare assumptions, family arrangements or patterns of family formation with regard the female labour market participation, which question their assumed similarities (e.g. the proportion of non-marital births is nowadays higher in Spain; or looking at divorce, the rapid and intense increase occurred in Spain over the space of just one decade places the country closer to the Nordic countries than to Italy with regard the current number of divorces by 1,000 inhabitants per year).

The following articles aim to explore the evolution of family dynamics in contemporary Spain and Italy, in order to see 1) whether there are still convergent trends or whether intra-country variation exists and helps explain different living arrangements and family relationships; 2) the implications of such similarities/differences for family dynamics and social equality in each country. As said, the inclusion of Spain and Italy within the same label of familistic systems has proved to be theoretically and empirically relevant (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli 2004). However, to the best of our knowledge, no further effort has been undertaken to investigate whether these two countries somehow differ.

In our view, the academic literature has mostly treated Spain and Italy as familistic in a very static way, underestimating the processes of deep-running changes that Spain and Italy have gone through regarding the family, women and the reproductive and employment decisions over

their life course. Since Spanish society has experienced a perhaps even more profound change, it is plausible that Spain points towards a certain degree of diverging patterns from Italy in family dynamics. That said, the so-called *reorientation* in Spain and *inertia* in Italy (see Naldini and Jurado's article) may have different levels of intensity and outcomes, the greatest being in attitudes, less so although still substantive in policy and the smallest in behaviours. However, the recession since 2007 may have obstructed further developments and pushed Spain a step back towards certain converging patterns again, at least in the two latter spheres: policy and behaviour.

We look at the difficulties that Spanish and Italian families face and ask whether these family dilemmas and outcomes are identical in both countries and whether they are similar or different to those observed in other societies. This poses the interesting question of what factors may be common to other Western countries that have also surpassed fertility decline to below replacement levels, and which may be unique to the Southern context or specifically, either to Spain or to Italy. For similar individuals, do constraints differ from one country to the other? It is important to identify the differences in labour market characteristics and the potentially mediating impact of welfare state support for families, but also the relevance of gender and family models across and within countries.

The issue of which factors exert a substantial effect, both at the macro and at micro-level, on family and work related issues in Southern Europe has been widely explored. However, some room is still left to further study a much less researched area, that of whether and to what extent these explanatory determinants interact similarly or distinctively in Spain and in Italy due to/despite *common features* in the labour market, welfare state and the family. Is what makes Spain similar to Italy greater than what distinguishes them in relation to other Western societies? Or put another way, is what recently makes Spain somewhat different from Italy in terms of attitudes, policy and behaviour still smaller than what keeps them alike when we compare them with other countries in Europe? Should Spain be characterized as somewhat different from Italy, which family model (liberal? continental? social-democratic?) is it moving to?

Obviously, key to the study of these phenomena is that not only are these external factors decisive in explaining fertility and family formation in recent decades in Southern Europe but also in most Western societies so the relevance of the present collective collection goes well beyond these two countries. Nevertheless, Spain and Italy constitute two case studies of special interest given that nowadays they are perhaps the main exponents –at least in Western Europe– of the two analytical dimensions pursued throughout this publication: the weak welfare state faces a questioned and vulnerable situation in Southern Europe while, at the same time, the change in values and attitudes is still immersed in a deep process of development although the starting point was a very traditional one in both societies. The collective research we include here is a modest but, we expect, a good step forward in the understanding of the demographic changes and social dynamics in/between Spain and Italy within the European context.

Part of the richness of this special issue is that each contributor has been left free to adhere to the common view that Spain and Italy, despite recent and increasing differences, are still to be

labelled together as prototypical representatives of the Southern family model or to place either Spain or Italy openly in the European context, regardless of family regimes. In this latter case, contributors have been asked to highlight similarities with, and differences from, the broad family-regime typologies as a way of better understanding the evolution of socio-demographic changes and family dynamics in either country.

### **Choices and Constraints of Motherhood and Work-Life in Southern Europe**

It is a well-stylized fact that there is not a straight linear negative relationship between women's employment and fertility. Previous studies demonstrate that, at the macro level, the correlation between female employment levels and fertility rates had even become positive and significant by the late 1980s (Ahn and Mira 2002). Yet, Spain and Italy are viewed together as puzzling countries with low fertility and, at the same time, low levels of female participation in the labour market although this is not entirely true for Spain. The greatest increase in the Spanish female labour force participation started in the 1980s, much later than in Italy, and has been the result of the massive entry of younger cohorts into the labour market as they reached working age (much higher than in Italy). In 2007, before the recession's full impact was felt, overall female labour force participation rates were 14 percentage points higher than in Italy, which was lagging well behind, and the proportion of Spanish women aged 25-34 nowadays is even slightly above the EU-27 average for this age group.

Over the last two decades, a substantial rise in activity and employment rates was registered among Spanish women, not only for the highly educated (as in Italy) but also for the less educated as a result of the growth of job opportunities for low-skilled workers during the years of the Spanish housing boom. To what extent do these and other divergences between the two countries in the evolution of the female labour participation challenge their assumed similarities? Have both countries made the transition from a male breadwinner family model towards a more diversified system concerning women's participation in the workforce? Is the breadwinner model equally strong in Spain and Italy? Has there been path-departure from familistic assumptions, features and practices in recent policy changes? León and Migliavacca (2013) attempt to exploit similarities and differences between the two countries with respect to female employment and familism in normative assumptions and policy.

Fertility postponement and decline are seen as part of the *Second Demographic Transition* (henceforth SDT) (Van de Kaa 1987), one of the two most guiding theoretical perspectives in fertility and family research. In Spain and in Italy, as everywhere else, fewer and later children are interconnected with other secular trends such as late and fewer marriages, the spread of other family forms (cohabitation, living-apart-together), increasing divorce rates, lone motherhood, childlessness or one person households. Their common guiding *motif* lies in the spread of post-materialist norms and values which highlight individual self-realization and change people's attitudes toward sexuality, marriage and family. Despite cross-country variation in the scope and speed of the shifts, this value-driven theory has accounted successfully for the overall new fertility and marriage patterns that have occurred in advanced societies in recent decades. Van de Kaa (1987) argues that cross-country differences are due to cultural

specificities that facilitate or impede demographic change. Protestantism, more focused on individual autonomy, has favoured these changes while Catholicism has delayed them. Reher (1998) also stresses the importance of historical legacies that differentiate Northern and Southern Europe: strong intergenerational ties, rooted in the collective culture, are a key element in the Spanish and Italian family model. In this sense, some scholars emphasize that “the strong family has not been weakened by modernisation” and therefore, “the strong family and familism have not changed very much over the past few decades in Southern Europe” (Dalla Zuanna 2004: 13, 18).

Nevertheless, the emphasis on cultural and social values rooted in familism which definitely may characterize social structures at the macro-level and explain demographic behaviour in a significant way at the micro-level, both in Spain and in Italy, does not imply that their populations have been over time and continue to be nowadays homogeneous in assimilating and accepting these social norms. Decreasing religiosity is associated with fertility drops and a flexibilization of traditional family norms in Southern Europe. But, in recent times, the weight of the Catholic Church in shaping family-related issues has been lost more in Spain than in Italy (e.g. the same-sex marriages bill was passed in Spain in 2005). The dual-earner model has also become more accepted in Spain than in Italy where the change in traditional norms has been slower. Naldini and Jurado (2013) show that in Spain, the proportion of dual earner families is similar to that found in Sweden and in France in the late 2000s, far from the Italian one, and that nowadays when asked whether pre-school children suffer with a working mother, almost twice as many Italians as Spaniards still agree.

By contrast, Spaniards agree more than Italians on the capacity of fathers to look after children, especially the younger cohorts. Social norms about who should care for small children may influence female behaviour and assign a higher value to and acceptance of certain employment options over others in each country. In 2005, Article 68 of the Spanish Civil Code was modified to explicitly incorporate both spouses’ duties regarding care and domestic work. Some weeks of the maternity leave (10 out of 16) can be transferred to the father. In addition, in 2007, a 15-day full-paid paternity leave was introduced in Spain (around 80% of men have taken it). In Italy, no such statutory paternity leave exists. The Global Gender Gap Index, a proxy of gender equality between women and men on economic, political, education, and health and survival criteria, nowadays ranks Spain in the 12<sup>th</sup> world position (0.75) compared to Italy’s 74<sup>th</sup> (0.67) (World Economic Forum 2011). Does this mean that Spain is moving faster than Italy towards the dual-earner family model?

Back in the 1990s, differences were already evident between these two countries regarding changes in values: the gap between young and old cohorts in attitudes towards gender roles was one of the narrowest in Italy, whereas this gap was one of the widest in Spain (Künzler 2002). Table 1 below from Domínguez et al. (2007) confirms this attitudinal trend with selected data from the third wave of the European Values Survey (1999-2000): the secularization and acceptance of *atypical* family forms have become widespread in both societies (large inter-cohort differentials appear) but the intergenerational attitudinal gap continues to be much wider in Spain. The weight Catholic views have on family life is lesser among the youth but again, this is particularly the case in Spain. For instance, among the youngest group (aged 15-29) in both countries, the proportion of those who disapprove of a single woman with no partner



having a child is almost five times higher in Italy than in Spain and this percentage is even higher than that for the Spanish oldest group, those aged 50+.

**Table 1. Attitudes regarding religion and family in Spain and Italy, by age group**

		15-29	30-49	50+
<i>Goes to church at least once a month</i>	<b>Spain</b>	13.4	30.2	54.0
	<b>Italy</b>	39.9	49.8	64.5
<i>Thinks church(es) are giving adequate answers to problems of family life</i>	<b>Spain</b>	17.6	29.9	49.8
	<b>Italy</b>	34.0	46.1	56.6
<i>Agrees that marriage is an outdated institution</i>	<b>Spain</b>	30.2	18.9	9.8
	<b>Italy</b>	20.1	18.2	14.2
<i>Disapproves that a single woman with no partner has a child</i>	<b>Spain</b>	6.9	8.5	32.1
	<b>Italy</b>	33.5	33.0	50.9

*Source: European Values Surveys (1999)*

From: Domínguez, Castro-Martín and Mencarini (2007:21)

Regarding fertility and value changes, it is unquestionable that the SDT is associated with the delay in all Western Europe. But is lowest-low fertility also linked to the SDT? Certain values and orientations that initially incited new family forms and new contexts in which to bear children within the SDT, including low fertility, are now linked to a fertility reversal (for instance, fertility is high where out-of-wedlock births are also high). Consequently, values deserve special attention if we are to understand fertility in Spain and in Italy. We know that the TFR in both is now similar. Gender equality at the institutional level differs though, and Spain seems to be ahead and moving faster towards individual autonomy and individualism (survey data reveal that regarding individualism with respect to relationships, Spain is ranked immediately below the Scandinavian countries and is very distant from Italy. Is Spain clearly distancing itself from Italy as far as values are concerned? Arpino and Patrício Tavares (2013) explore whether recent fertility trends are associated with value dynamics, looking at regional differences within the European context, and adds an important contribution to the literature since previous empirical studies on fertility are often followed at national level and hide substantive within-country variation. For a country like Italy, so geographically diverse to the extent that it is constantly defended that there are two different settings for new family patterns (the South and Islands and the rest of the country), this is relevant.

During the past decades, the percentage of civil marriages has risen in both countries: in the early 1980s, only 12% of marriages were not religious in Italy (Istat 2012). Today the proportion has increased to 37%. In Spain, in 2009 and for the first time, there were more civil (54.32%) than religious (45.68%) marriages (Ine 2012). In both countries, marriages have been delayed and have declined and cohabitation has increased although the proportion of cohabiting couples is also higher in Spain than in Italy (Liefbroer and Fokkema 2008). Extra-marital births have also risen as the outcome of shifts in union formation and childbearing behaviour. In 1981, the proportion of non-marital births was identical in Spain (4.41) and Italy (4.43). Two decades later, in 2001, the proportion was almost double in the former than in the latter (19.68 vs. 11.09). Nowadays, despite the constant increase of extra-marital births in both countries over

the decade (marked in Spain and more gradual in Italy), more than one third of births (35.52) occur outside marriage in Spain versus less than one fourth (23.73) in Italy. Although still far from Scandinavia or France where fertility is almost the same among married and cohabiting couples, marriage is no longer the only suitable type of union for childbearing neither in Spain nor in Italy. Southern Europe has passed from one demographic transition of declining fertility to another of diversity in the conjugal context for reproduction and the social/education gradient of these shifts in family structure is particularly interesting.

Are these changes that contest traditional family forms and ties mainly value-driven or pushed also by economic factors? The Southern European setting is particularly good to test the ideational change or the pattern of disadvantage explanations associated with the ongoing transformations of union formation and dissolution (cohabitation, divorce) on the one hand, and motherhood (childlessness) on the other. Broadly speaking, there is a different effect of education as a result of country-specific differences. In societies where cohabitation and divorce have a higher incidence there is less education selection (the “new” behaviour is no longer driven by the so-called *trendsetters* of the highest social strata). However, the structural/economic constraints in Southern Europe may increasingly reduce the gains associated with marriages for those with fewer resources. This would translate into a shift toward a more negative education gradient of cohabitation and divorce, or even a changing gradient of education from positive to negative. This is precisely what Gabrielli and Vignoli (2013) aim at analyzing. Bringing together both cohabitation and marriage disruption dynamics to offer a more complete picture than in the past, this paper shows education- and geographical-specific trends in consensual unions and divorce from 1980 to date for Italy. Have consensual unions and divorce converged across education strata over the past decades or should they both continue to be explained under the lens of the SDT? Which education group has taken the lead in these new behaviours? Do we also find here the constant divide between the “modern” North and the “traditional” South?

Childlessness can also be viewed as part of the secular demographic trends associated with changes in values. Like other countries, Spain and Italy have not only witnessed a delay in childbearing and a fertility decline but also a rise in childlessness although its incidence, as already said, is still comparatively low. However, fertility research has mostly focused on the effect of the postponement of first births on reduced fertility in Southern Europe (Kohler et al. 2002; Billari and Kohler 2004). The issue of why some women in these “traditional” countries decide to forego motherhood altogether has been scarcely explored, especially in Spain. Do the three sets of factors (socioeconomic constraints, lifecourse characteristics and attitudinal orientations) proven to be determinant in explaining fewer and later births in the region also have a weight in remaining childless? The delayed transition to adulthood in Southern Europe opens interesting questions on a) whether it is indeed value-related and not situational aspects (contextual and individual variables) that exert the greatest impact on the decision to remain childless; and b) the fine line distinguishing chosen childlessness from involuntary childlessness since women may end up being childless only because they perpetually postpone the first birth. In other words, is childlessness a deliberate reproductive choice or an outcome of the specific socioeconomic constraints affecting young adults’ lives in Southern Europe? Are its determinants distinct for Spain, similar or different to those already shown in Italy or in line with those also found in other Western societies? These and other relevant questions are nicely identified and discussed by Seiz (2013) in her article.

A second explanation for family formation and fertility decline is provided by human capital theory and the well-known *New Economics of the Family* (Becker 1981). Better education and more career opportunities increase women's economic independence and this is one of the main explanatory factors for fertility decline, together with later unions, more cohabitation and greater couple instability. However, empirical facts do not always match with this theoretical prediction. In some countries, fertility is lower among women with poor labour conditions (unemployed, with term-fixed contracts). Irrespective of the woman's human capital, there seem to be a "minimum set of conditions for having a baby" (González and Jurado-Guerrero 2006). In addition, fertility in Scandinavia is now positively related to education, since the highest fertility levels correspond to women with tertiary education (Kravdal and Rindfuss 2008). This reversal in the education gradient of fertility has much to do with women's position in the labour market: some women benefit from jobs within the public sector that allow them to easily combine family and work-life. Do women working in the public sector have it easier to reconcile also in Southern Europe? Is public employment one of the main public "resources" that the Spanish and Italian limited welfare state offers to women in terms of combining work and family? What makes the difference for women who work in the public sector? Is it their (continuous) employment, their fertility behaviour or both? We see that the gap in employment between highly and poorly educated women is among the highest in Italy, almost 12 percentage points higher than in Spain, and that more than half of highly educated women work in the public sector in Italy (58% vs. 14% for the less-educated). In Spain, the share of highly educated women in public sector jobs is lower (31.6%).

In Southern Europe, women's education has increased profoundly, now even surpassing that of males'. Economists consider education as an investment in human capital and only focus on its *monetary returns* linked to longer and steeper wage curves. However, cross-country studies have qualified this approach by highlighting the *reconciliation returns* also associated with education and showing that education polarizes behaviours to a greater extent where social policies are poorer, employment security is lower (both true in Southern Europe) and gender role norms are more traditional (particularly true for Italy). On top, some *legitimacy returns* may also play an important role since the education gradient of employment is embedded in the institutional and cultural context. More education implies more autonomy in terms of economic independence just as economists predict (more career opportunities and income prospects) but education may also be a measure of individual autonomy in the sense of mental independence linked to greater opportunities and greater control of the individual over his/her own circumstances, including employment and parenthood (Hoem and Hoem 1989). In Italy, where social norms remain gender-specialized, this legitimacy effect of education may be especially important since education will increase the acceptance of "another" role for women/mothers. In this context, Solera and Bettio (2013) investigate the effect of education on Italian women's employment, why educated women are more likely to have continuous careers and whether working in the public sector may offer more than monetary returns to all women regardless of level of education.

The public sector may offer, as noted, different incentives for mothers to remain in the labour market by facilitating lifelong employment but also by improving the incentives for childbearing for working women. Looking at this other side of the coin, Martín-García and

Castro-Martín (2013) investigate whether working in the public sector affects women's fertility behaviour in Spain. The scarcity of childcare and long-term care services and the insufficient measures for the work/family balance in the familistic welfare system make the issue of the linkage between public employment and fertility especially relevant in the region. To what extent do women in the public sector –with better job conditions and time availability in comparison to other working women hit by the harsh constraints of the Spanish labour market– find it easier to become mothers in Spain?

The so-called *Preference Theory* by Hakim (2000, 2003) consists of a shortcut of Becker's microeconomic theory. For economists, women often prioritize family because they are ones who give birth. However, in any given cultural context, women are heterogeneous in assimilating and accepting the wider spectrum of choices they face nowadays, and each woman displays her own family and work preferences. Hakim sets out three ideal types of women: “uncommitted women” to the labour market who are mostly housewives; “committed women” who are fully work-oriented; and “adaptive women” who maintain a dual-role (motherhood and paid work) and are, she says, the vast majority of women in all modern societies. That said, she accepts that there may be “social constraints and contextual influences that help to determine the relative sizes of the three groups in any particular social setting” (Hakim 2000: 4). That would explain why the proportion of traditional home-oriented women is still higher in Southern Europe than in other advanced societies (Hakim 2000, 2003). A wide range of research demonstrates that women have different lifestyle preferences as Hakim argues, but that they are also constrained in their choices (Bernardi 1998; González and Jurado-Guerrero 2006). Women's decisions to become mothers strongly depend on their career choices and we cannot understand women's participation in paid employment without considering their motherhood status. The work-family balance is crucial. In this sense, three alternative explanations have successfully complemented research in recent times.

First, lowest-low fertility in Southern Europe has traditionally been explained by the general “postponement syndrome” (Livi Bacci 2001) with regard to leaving the parental home, entering into a union and the transition to the first child, but also by a different delay syndrome related explicitly to the entry and the attachment to the labour market due to the lack of *career stability for both partners*. High levels of unemployment, job precariousness and financial insecurity make the analysis of Southern Europe of special interest. The Spanish and Italian labour markets, both based on insider-outsider dynamics, share strong constraints which do not make the transition to adulthood, union formation, economic stability or the work/family balance in any way easy. However, Italy and Spain are two interesting national cases as they have different structures in the productive system and different labour market regulations. For instance, we find higher part-time employment in Italy and a very high proportion of non-permanent jobs, together with very low levels of secure part-time work in Spain (Ibañez 2010).<sup>2</sup> Our research shows that Spanish part-time jobs are not a way to combine work and family. Spanish women are more likely to pass to a part-time job not from full-time employment but from unemployment, which entraps women in unstable and precarious labour prospects.

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<sup>2</sup> Nowadays, the proportion of temporary jobs among the salaried population in Spain is the second highest among European countries: 26.7 and 24.2 percent for women and men respectively in 2011 (14.5 and 13.5 in the EU-27).

This opens the question whether it is the assumed proximity between Spain and Italy that still counts to explain convergence/divergence with other European countries or whether job conditions, irrespective of the Mediterranean context, are what matter most. The working research hypothesis is that although divisions in the labour market may be similar and stronger where reconciliation policies are scarce and where mothers' employment is not yet fully spread, these divisions follow different lines in each particular setting. Guinea-Martín and Solera (2013) compare Spain and Italy with other European countries to explain what makes women exit from the labour market more around family formation in one country or another. Do women in female-dominated occupations –a large share of feminized work is within the aforementioned public sector– exit the labour market more? Or do other labour market divisions matter most? This constitutes an important contribution to the current limited literature on the effect of occupation sex segregation on women's exit from the labour market. Guinea-Martín and Solera highlight the similarities and differences between Spain and Italy concerning the main cleavages which segment the female labour force in the two countries: Spain and Italy stand out from other countries where there also exists a polarization in female labour market participation (for instance, from the UK since the occupation sex segregation seems not to matter in the Southern European context). However, there are also differences between them. What counts most is temporary vs. permanent employment in Spain and the segment of the labour market in which women work in Italy. Compared to Italians, Spanish younger female cohorts more often start a labour market career and reach high professional occupations but they also interrupt more. An extraordinary high level of unprotected fixed-term contracts proves to be perhaps the main reason for this difference between the two countries.

The second kind of institutional explanations focus on *family social policies* which also make a difference in fertility and women's employment. Empirical evidence shows that working women have higher fertility levels and mothers have greater employment continuity in countries where generous job protected parental leaves are combined with large childcare provision (Bernardi 2005). The education provision for children from 3 years old until compulsory education is almost universal in Spain and in Italy. However, there is no good availability of education services for children under 3. In Spain, care of children aged 0-3 outside the family continues to be remarkably scarce although it has advanced more than in Italy since 2000. Yet, both countries have similar TFRs. In addition, despite variation of childcare supply across regions in the two countries (Baizán 2009 for Spain), differences in regional TFRs are not all that different, in particular with regard to Italy. This suggests that childcare services, together with maternity/paternity/parental leaves, are necessary but not sufficient conditions to move TFRs up. How feasible and guaranteed it is for a woman to re-enter the labour market after childbirth is decisive.

Are Southern European family policies effective in reducing the opportunity costs of children? Women may specialize in home production by abandoning the labour market or by decreasing the time devoted to gainful employment. Full-time parental leave may avoid exit from the labour market after the arrival of a(or another) child in the first option. Part-time parental leave and part-time employment, when available, are two alternatives which are consistent with the second. Yet, the empirical evidence confirms that the effect of parental leaves (full-time or part-time) vary profoundly depending on their nature and length. Only universal, flexible and fully-paid leaves for both parents encourage their use and ameliorate any possible job penalty upon

return, increasing women's and particularly mothers' employment rates (Aisenbrey, Evertsson and Grunow 2009). In both Spain and Italy, full-time parental leave offers women the right to interrupt a job protected leave after the birth of a child. In addition, part-time leave (absent in Italy) assures less income loss and a return to full-time employment afterwards in Spain (Lapuerta 2012).

Last but not least, attention has also been paid to a third set of explanatory variables and we do likewise here. All Western countries have committed to gender equalization in all areas of society and research has conceded an increasingly important role to *gender equality and its effect on individual and family life* (Cooke 2009). Research shows that fertility is now higher in less specialized and more egalitarian societies. For instance, couples are more likely to have another child when the father took parental leave to care for the first child (Duvander and Andersson 2005) or when the father contributed to housework and caring responsibilities (Broadman et al. 2007). In Southern Europe, an increase in women's participation in the labour market without a parallel redistribution of care and domestic work has provoked a dual burden for women. In addition, insufficient childcare services imply a strong caring burden both for women and men. Women are systematically more egalitarian than men in their family and gender values (ESS 2004) but they still assume the majority of the domestic work. Increased gender equality has improved women's overall well-being, although its extent greatly varies according to the institutional context and geographic location in which women are immersed. Previous studies show that gender equality acts as a determinant of the observed Spain-Italy differential in women's well-being (Mencarini and Sironi 2012).

### **Further Challenges from This Research**

Then, are Spain and Italy so similar? It would seem that, despite Spain often being ahead, there is a resemblance between the two countries in convergent family patterns towards increasing consensual unions, marital disruption and voluntary childlessness (in practice, it is difficult to determine whether it is choice or postponement that explains childlessness in Southern Europe). Dualized labour markets with precarious jobs and, in the case of Spain, very high unemployment rates impose strong constraints for family formation, economic security and work-life reconciliation. In this hostile setting, the public sector is indeed an advantageous alternative for guaranteeing continuous careers and higher fertility in the two countries where parental leaves (long but unpaid in Spain and poorly paid in Italy) do not facilitate dual-earner families with children and reinforce inequalities among women in the labour market. Moreover, a gender-specialized division of household work strengthens gender inequality in the region.

These findings add empirical evidence to the academic literature that so far has considered Spain and Italy to be rather similar. Different articles in this volume illustrate examples of labour constraints and familism in welfare provision (the so-called *Southern institutional inertia*) which hinder solutions to new family dilemmas. However, despite accepting that both countries share traits of this distinctive family cluster, authors on this side of the convergence thesis do not defend such a convergence between Spain and Italy in a static way as traditionally sustained.

Some other works defend an increasing divergence between the two countries when they look more in depth for instance at their gender and value systems, policy developments or drastic changes in the labour market (gender gaps or employment conditions). The view of these authors is that Spanish and Italian society have started to follow somewhat divergent paths and this is expected to be even more so in the future. That said, the divergence of Spanish families and policies away from Italy is proved to be somewhat smaller than the Spanish-Italian divergence as far as ideological change is concerned. Some issues are of relevance here:

1) The first one has to do with values/behaviour vs. policies, the *chicken* and *egg* issue. Have the reforms in social policy had an important and decisive effect on the general social change taking place in Spain and Italy? Or rather, have the new policies been the sign or consequence of the social modernization processes going on in each of the countries? It is argued throughout the different papers that important social shifts have occurred parallel to broad cultural transformations in the region. Comparative studies often consider Spain to be classified together with Italy within the Southern region as a traditional society in terms of values and family practices. This categorization made sense in the past given the important role of the Catholic Church. However, and unlike what we can see in Italian society, this role has been steadily losing influence. This influence is still present in the education system and in certain social customs and habits in Spain, but it is very much on the fringes of family-related legislation. Certainly, Spain has surpassed Italy in progressive laws concerning gender equality (reproductive policies, reconciliation of work and family life, gay marriages, long-term care, etc.). But we do not have a definite answer as to whether attitudes and behaviours have changed more rapidly in Spain than in Italy over the past decade or so thanks to these important policy achievements or whether political and policy changes have been precisely the predictable outcome of the rapid and drastic changes in values and behaviour occurring in Spanish society, especially among women.

2) It is true that some social changes have come about extraordinarily quickly in Spain, as a number of authors in this volume attest (for example, the recent and massive incorporation of the youngest cohorts of women into the education system and labour market). That said, it may still be too early to talk of “real” changes in Spain. And perhaps more importantly, it may still be too early to tell if these changes will last and continue to distance Spain from Italy and from their until very recently common Southern European family model. Without doubt the past decades have witnessed a clear political commitment to incorporating gender equality into policy design and a continuing development within society of values regarding both family and sexual life. The social-democratic impetus of the early years of the Zapatero government and legislative innovations in different areas (laws regarding gender equality, care of dependents and abortion) constitute progressive measures that have placed Spain even on occasion at the head of Europe in some policy areas.

However, one thing is changes in law and quite another is changes in society. Many of the social advances of these governments have come to nothing due to a lack of funding or the political talent to see them through (the care of dependents, for example). Moreover, in the current crisis many “banners” have not so much as been raised (the extension of paternity leave,

child benefit, etc.). The Spanish labour market renders the “real” changes less profound and sustainable than what would otherwise be expected given the values and desirability so expressed in the laws. On the one hand, there are few secure flexibility mechanisms in women’s employment, which hinders their access to and permanence in the labour market and the quality of the jobs available to them. On the other, the welfare state has yet to take on the responsibility of family care, something which has changed very little over recent years given that the main burden of housework and care continues to fall on women in the south of Europe. The revolution in values and roles has been mainly a feminine one. Men have scarcely modified their behaviour within the home, and thus limited the possibilities for “real” change for women.

And so, the recent innovative legislation within the framework of gender equality has perhaps been a *necessary* condition to place Spain within the European context beyond the traditional family model of the south of Europe, but not a *sufficient* condition to effectively achieve equality of opportunity between men and women in domestic and paid work. Clearly, the new measures and initiatives in labour and social policy matters are a first step in giving visibility and political importance to these issues, but their impact is still very limited in terms of providing real solutions to women’s needs (Guillén and León 2011). How to guarantee the free choice of working women to be or not to be mothers and the continuity of working mothers in the labour market still remains to be resolved in Spain. And as such, some of the authors in this special issue are of the opinion that what makes Spain somewhat different from Italy is still less than what makes them alike in labour arrangements and welfare policy in comparison with other countries. For instance, in terms of childcare provision, elderly care, housing support, or different aspects of female labour participation (scarce part-time employment for both women and men, lack of effective job guarantees when re-entering the labour market after childbirth, etc.), Spain is still closer to Italy than to any other Western country.

3) At the time of writing, the Spanish labour market has very high levels of unemployment (above 24%). In Italy, unemployment rates have increased and continue to do so but they are much lower than in Spain (9%). Both countries are immersed in a profound world economic crisis, but Spain is also suffering the collapse of a model of economic growth mainly based on the construction sector which extensively created jobs from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s but without guaranteeing employment stability. How will this impact on family behaviours and relations? Will the crisis cause the widening gap in certain attitudes and family behaviours between Spain and Italy to once again narrow? It is interesting to note that, in terms of differences in female employment between Spain and Italy, the data may confirm the convergence or the divergence thesis depending on how they are selected. In supporting divergence, it is essential to focus on the differences between Spain and Italy in the year 2007, the moment of culmination of the divergence process. Data beyond this point raise doubts about divergence and tend to support the convergence thesis as the crisis is destroying much more female employment in Spain and bringing important advances in social policy matters to a standstill. We shall now take closer look.

In their article, León and Migliavacca (2013) highlight that the current economic downturn “has had a much more devastating effect on female employment in Spain than in Italy”. Spain still has high levels of female participation in the labour market (more similar to other European



countries than to Italy), but since 2008 there has been a sharp decrease in employment rates for women in central ages. Many jobs of bad quality (mainly short-term employment and non-secure part-time jobs) were created during the economic expansion cycle but they have been the first to disappear in the economic recession. This “substitution effect” as León and Migliavacca call it, has been much higher in Spain than in Italy and hinders the shift towards the dual-earner family model in the Spanish case.

Naldini and Jurado (2013) agree that the harsh economic crisis has destroyed a significant share of female employment and aborted some family policy/proposals that were precisely alleged as those differentiating Spain from Italy in the recent past. For instance, there have been severe cutbacks in public spending, the Plan Educa0-3 for small children aged 0 to 3 has been drastically reduced, no new beneficiaries have been included for long-term care provision, the rent benefit for youth has been discontinued and the current paternity leave of two weeks which was meant to be extended to one month as of January 2011 onwards was not, among others.

However, despite all these cuts, the authors defend the survival and persistence of the qualitative change occurred over time in Spain in the assumed family model. In addition, Naldini and Jurado (2013) predict that female attachment to the labour force in Spain will probably continue to be high and higher than in Italy because “women want to” (they have higher working aspirations) “or need to be in the labour market” because they cannot afford to stay at home and not bring in a second income to the household for the payment of the mortgage every month (bear in mind that most families have a mortgage in Spain as a result to a large extent of the housing boom). Lapuerta (2012) seems to reinforce this prevision since her analysis shows that the beginning of the economic crisis in 2007-2008 reduces the probability of a new working mother becoming inactive or unemployed in Spain. It is argued that the opportunity cost of being inactive or unemployed may be higher during the economic crisis and therefore, women try to continue to work as much as they can.

It is true to say that the situation in Spain in recent times has been far from usual. Although the recent arrival of considerable flows of international immigration is a feature common to the current demographic dynamic of Spain and Italy, the social and demographic repercussions in the short, medium and long terms could turn out to be very different for both countries, bearing in mind that the intensity and magnitude of the phenomenon is clearly greater in Spain. The arrival en masse of immigrant women has made domestic service accessible to the middle classes and has contributed enormously to reconciling family and labour for Spanish women, who have reached higher levels of activity than their Italian counterparts, indeed levels comparable with those of other advanced societies in the region. In recent years, many Spanish women have been able to work and be mothers thanks to the immigrants taking care of their children and their elderly. However, if the crisis continues to hit the weakest -among whom we find immigrants, and female immigrants especially- the hardest this social equilibrium could collapse with the result that female participation in the labour market continues to decrease as it has been doing since 2008.

4) Naldini and Jurado’s defence of the increasing Spanish-Italian divergence is also based on the deeper secularization that, in their view, will prevail in Spain, even after the crisis. As

repeatedly argued throughout the individual papers, this cultural change has been stronger among the younger cohorts and this turns our attention to whether the future of Spanish-Italian divergence may be in the hands of the youth. Recent data and surveys reveal that secularization and acceptance of new family forms are now widespread in Spain, more than in Italy, although preferences concerning family and living arrangements show an intergenerational gap in both countries (wider in Spain). Nowadays more children are born outside marriage in Spain than in Italy and the proportion of out-of-wedlock births continues to increase more rapidly. However, young people face a context of economic uncertainty, difficult access to housing and weak state support in the two countries, all of which act as barriers to union and family formation. The open question is whether, despite less traditional attitudes and orientations among the Spanish youth, the economic crisis will cause young adults to refrain from certain behaviours in the future, squeezing their opportunities and making them again more similar to their Italian counterparts. Guinea-Martín and Solera (2013) argue that “less often young Spanish cohorts are permanently excluded from the labour market”. However, this “taking-off” in Spain could be vetoed or reversed by the drastic economic downturn that the country is facing today and as a result there will probably be more homogeneity again among young adults in both countries. Unemployment among the young is higher in Spain than in Italy.<sup>3</sup> Access to housing is also different. In the years before the present cuts a number of innovative benefits were put in place to encourage the emancipation of young adults in Spain. However, the Spanish property market bubble caused prices to soar to such a degree as to make them inaccessible and this has not happened in Italy, or at least not to the same extent.<sup>4</sup>

However, despite all these drawbacks, most authors in this special issue highlight predictable remaining differences as regards to women’s position in society in the two countries. Women are viewed as the main actors for any major social change; hence different views and behaviours concerning the role of women in each country could continue to facilitate more rapid and divergent advancements towards gender equality and varied family forms in Spain. In this sense, we ought to highlight the very high levels of higher education in Spain (higher than in Italy), especially among women and even more so among the younger generations. The starting point for men and women was very different, but it has now reached even higher levels of women than men in university education and in record time. According to the labour force survey, 38 percent of women aged 25-34 vs. 29.5 percent of men had a university degree in Spain in 2011. We may conclude, even in this time of crisis when female employment is being hit hard, that education may still continue to play a fundamental role in the arena of values, attitudes, the role of women, and equality between the sexes in Spanish society. Solera and Bettio (2013) say as much in their article. The “monetary” component of education may be affected by the crisis but the “ideas” component not necessarily. Human capital is economic

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<sup>3</sup> Unemployment is especially high among women and young people in Southern Europe, affecting them at a time in life when they are about to form a family. In 2010, 41.8 percent of women and 41.1 percent of men under age 30 were unemployed in Spain (INE 2010). In Italy, figures are a bit lower but still 32.9 percent of women and 27.7 percent of men aged 15 to 25 did not have a job in that same year (ISTAT 2010). In Spain, the situation has become even more dramatic in the last two years. Nowadays, more than half of the young population looking for a job are unemployed.

<sup>4</sup> Getting a mortgage has become a problem in Spain in the current crisis but the real problem is the increase in the price of housing (which has been far higher than the increase in salaries). Indeed, according to the data of the Sociedad de Tasación de Viviendas, the price of housing in Spain went up from 326 euros/m<sup>2</sup> in December 1985 to 2,376 euros/m<sup>2</sup> in December 2011 (3,191 euros/m<sup>2</sup> in cities such as Madrid). For further information see: <http://web.sttasacion.es/html/menu6.php>

capital but it is also attitudes and preferences. It may be the case that the profound changes in values that have taken place over time will function as an uncrossable red line with regards the advances made in gender equality and in the attitudes towards family in Spanish society.

We agree with those who claim that “valorizzare le donne conviene”<sup>5</sup> (Del Boca et al. 2012). Investing in women is investing in families. The family is not in crisis in Southern Europe. The role of women has been revolutionized and the shifts in demographic behaviours and individual preferences at the origin of the STD have brought new family forms. Spanish and Italian families face new tensions and dilemmas. Our collective findings suggest, we hope, that equity both in education and the labour market but also within the family are a *must* to overcome the *incomplete revolution* (Esping-Andersen 2009) of women’s new roles in Spain and in Italy.

5) Tempo vs quantum effects. As noted by Arpino and Patrício (2013), Goldstein et al. (2009) pointed out that the slowdown in the recurrent postponement is the main determinant for the recent increase in fertility that we observe in some Western countries, particularly in Spain and in Italy. That is, the small recovery in the 2000s in these two countries may be due to the recuperation effect since cohorts of women who postponed their fertility are now –in corner– recuperating it after the age of 35. The real fertility increase (meaning number of children for woman/couple) could only be assessed with cohort fertility, not period fertility.<sup>6</sup> This remains open for further research.

6) Last but not least, the fact that researchers speak of “two” Italys requires an in-depth revision of these and other allegedly predominant features of Italian family life. The north-south gradient is particularly strong in Italy, much more so than in Spain. The Italian territorial fragmentation is responsible for the persisting geographical differences in family attitudes and behaviours and for the structural imbalance in public provision. It could be the case that Spain still very much resembles the north of Italy although the latter is moving away from the south. Gabrielli and Vignoli’s article suggests that if we were able to disentangle regional differences in Spain and Italy, some of the divergent views on Spain regarding its distance from Italian traditional practices could probably be doubted (Gabrielli and Vignoli 2013). For instance, the drastic rise in divorce in Spain over just one decade puts Spain close to other European countries regarding the number of divorces by inhabitants each year, but the authors show that in Northern Italy, “there is the same level of marital dissolution as in the North-Centre European countries (30-40 separations every 100 marriages).” Therefore, Spain may not be that different to the “innovative” North regarding these new family forms although it definitely is different to the “traditional” family model *à la Reher* of Southern Italy.

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<sup>5</sup> Investing in women is worthy.

<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, in Northern Europe the quantum effect seems to dominate.

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