

Studying the dynamics of intergenerational family
solidarity using QLR:
Changing the focus from individual to family

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Introduction

- The *Generational Contract Modification and Home Care Policy Project (COGEASDO)* was founded under the National Plan of R+D of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology.
- This study analyzes changes in the dynamics of family solidarity in Spain.
- We also wonder if the generation contract by which the children care for parents in times of need has been weakened.
- The study of the assistance to dependent elderly in the Spanish case exemplifies the failure of familism.

Data

Multivariate analysis

- CIS Study 2844: Barometer of September 2010 (A representative sample of 2,473 Spanish people stratified by gender, age, autonomous regions and municipality). They were asked about family values.

Descriptive statistics

- Survey of Disability, Personal Autonomy and Dependency (EDAD) conducted by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE) (2008).

Qualitative analysis

Data from 31 qualitative in-depth interviews from the *Generational Contract Modification and Home Care Policy Project (COGEASDO)*. Spaniards from two different generations were interviewed in order to see whether there have been changes in the generational contract within the family. The first generational group interviewed consists on people over 65 years. The second group interviewed consists on people from 30 to 50 years old.

Changes in the Spanish families

In the past three decades, the family in Spain has been affected by a profound change that affects their ability to care for their dependent members, especially the elderly disabled.

Female employment rates have been growing rapidly

- In twenty years, Spain has increased female participation rate in 25%.
- Almost reaches the EU15 average female activity rate (66%).
- The Spanish female activity rate is considerably higher than other familistic countries such as Italy and Greece
- Percentage of women working part time in Spain (23%) is much lower than that of women working part time in France (30%), UK (42%) and Germany (45%).
- In 1988, 42% of the women were engaged only in household chores. In 2008 this figure had fallen to 23%.
- In 1988 nearly 35% of housewives were older than 55 years old. In 2008, this proportion has risen to almost 50%.

The expenditure on social services for families with disabled and chronically ill people is very small

Table 2
Expenditure in Spain in aid to families with disabled dependents, 2008

	<u>Euros per inhabitant</u>	<u>Increase 2003-2008</u>
Spain	10.8	25.9%
France	135.6	37.8%
Germany	203.0	12.8%
Finland	406.8	55.2%
Sweden	1081.4	12.7%

Source: Compiled from data from EUROSTAT, 2010.

Note: The French data are from 2007.

The family is the source of major support and care for the elderly

Table 3
Primary caregivers for people over 65 who need daily care in Spain, 2008

Primary caregiver	Disabled elder (in thousands)	Percentages
Family members	972.1	55.3%
<i>Spouse</i>	<i>(279.9)</i>	<i>(15.9)</i>
<i>Children</i>	<i>(532.8)</i>	<i>(30.3)</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>(159.4)</i>	<i>(9.1)</i>
Public home attention services or charity	32.8	1.9
Employed carers	117.4	6.7
Nursing homes	222.2	12.6
Do not receive any kind of help	135.9	7.7
Non-response	278.0	15.8
Total	1758.4	100

Source: Compiled from data from the Survey of Disability, Personal Autonomy and Dependency (EDAD), 2008 conducted by the National Statistics Institute (INE).

Costs of family care

- Average time spent by family caregivers is 10 hours a day during six years
- 85% of family caregivers expressed negative experiences derived from their work
- Problems of conciliation –making care and work compatible (25% of caregivers said that it is impossible to combine work and care)
- Mostly three out of four daughters who take care of a parent has had to reduce their leisure time. Almost two out of three cannot go on vacation. Half never sees their friends, and more than one out of three says that they have no time to take care of themselves.
- A third of family caregivers believe that their health has been deteriorated or are feeling depressed, and between fifteen and twenty percent are receiving treatment.

Research question:

Whether changes in the labor market and the structure and internal dynamics of Spanish families have weakened family solidarity and eroded the generational contract.

Results:

1. The generation of people who are in the age of caring for their parents (50 to 65 years old) shows a greater tendency to prioritize social services rather than family care.
2. Size of the town and people's religiosity is also closely linked to family solidarity.
3. When we introduce the variable of family structure and relationships among its members, the economic variable loses its significance.
4. The degree of confidence in social services is not significant and explains nothing.
5. The results show that Spaniards' preferences for family dependants' caring options -social services or family care-, depend mainly on such family features as human capital (number of potential caregivers), degree of family cohesion, and emotional wellbeing with family members.

Data from the 31 qualitative in-depth interviews from two different generations of Spaniards confirms that:

1. Family solidarity is no longer an unavoidable duty for middle age generation.
2. Middle age Spaniards' preferences for family dependants' caring options depend mainly on the emotional wellbeing with family members.

“The relationship with my parents was cold because we stood apart during the days of childhood. [...] I

was born during the war. During the post-war period my family had problems. My mother sent me to live with my grandmother. I lived with my grandparents until they died, and **I knew my parents when I was grew up. [...]**

However, I took care of my mother. I could not take care of my father because he was self-sufficient until he died. [...]

We always took care of my mother. I think that it was a kind of duty. If there had been a bad relationship with her, we would have taken care of her anyway.”

68 YEARS OLD MAN. HE IS AN ENGINEER AND WORKED IN TEXTILE COMPANIES AND AUTOMOTIVE. INTERVIEWED ON MAY 19, 2006 AT HER HOME IN BARCELONA.

"We were poor but my husband's mother was from a rich family. She wanted his son to marry a girl with more money than me. She was widowed very young and because of that she leaned heavily on her son. **She never accepted me. [...] We had an extremely bad relationship. She even hit me and wanted to kill me, but it was me who took care of her.** I have never been able to forgive everything she did. I took care of her because it was my duty, because it was my mother-in-law, if it had not been the case, I hadn't done so. [...] My husband always supported me. Otherwise, I would have gone. It upset me that my children grew up in this environment and that they hated her. **My life was very hard until she died.**"

69 YEARS OLD WOMAN. HE HAS WORKED ALL HIS LIFE IN A DELICATESSEN. INTERVIEWED ON MARCH 18, 2006 AT HER HOME IN PUIGCERDÁ (LERIDA).

“I feel responsible for my mother, but not so much for my father. This is due to a poor relationship with him, nothing else. It's always been like this. If the relationship had been more or less good with both, I would have felt responsible for both. The problem is that it was bad with one of them.”

39 YEARS OLD WOMAN. MARRIED WITH TWO CHILDREN. SHE STUDIED PSYCHOLOGY AND IS A COLLEGE PROFESSOR. HER PARENTS ARE ALIVE, IN GOOD HEALTH AND SELF-SUFFICIENT. THEY GET DIVORCED MANY YEARS AGO. INTERVIEW ON SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2006 AT 5 PM AT HER HOME IN TERRASSA (BARCELONA).

“The relationship I have with my parents has an influence because, if it got worse, I would feel that I have less obligation. [...] A few generations ago my grandmother thought that taking someone to a residence was like abandoning him or her because taking care of parents was the duty of children. For me, this has changed. **I don’t think that nowadays there is that obligation.”**

40 YEARS OLD MAN WITH ONE SON. HE WORKS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL. BOTH PARENTS ARE ALIVE, IN GOOD HEALTH AND SELF-SUFFICIENT. INTERVIEWED ON FEBRUARY 12, 2006 AT 5 PM AT HIS HOME IN THE DISTRICT HORTA IN BARCELONA.

Problem:

The concept of care differs between generations

“We take care of them because it is our responsibility. I feel very responsible for my parents. We have always tried that they were well served. **We have not done the work it personally, like changing diapers, because we couldn’t.** If you have a job and children you cannot make such things. **The solution is to put a person to look after them, and what we do is to control that person.** We are always aware of how things go and if they are well served.”

43 YEARS OLD WOMAN WITH THREE CHILDREN. SHE IS AN ENTREPRENEUR, RUNNING A FAMILY BUSINESS. SHE HAS PEOPLE HIRED DURING THE DAY. SOMEBODY TAKES CARE OF HER MOTHER AND BEFORE SOMEBODY TOOK CARE OF HER AUNT. INTERVIEWED ON JULY 11, 2006 AT HER HOME IN SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS (BARCELONA).

Debate para convertir el estudio en longitudinal (QLR)

- No se puede entender si se produce reproducción social y si se erosiona o no el contrato generacional si el concepto de “cuidar” se entiende de manera diferente entre miembros de generaciones diferentes.
- Se necesita un estudio que sea longitudinal, pero el caso no se adapta a un panel cualitativo con entrevistas a las mismas personas a lo largo del tiempo.

Un concepto de generación longitudinal y vinculado a la familia

- El estudio de generaciones, para que sea longitudinal no puede hacer referencia solamente a individuos, debe tener en cuenta necesariamente el contexto de la familia (Gill Jones 1991; Daniel Bertaux y Paul Thomson 1883).
- La generación es entendida como cadenas de individuos y significados que se desarrollan y transmiten a lo largo del tiempo.

Análisis generacional de tipo vertical: otro tipo de análisis QLR

Es un análisis longitudinal que no se centra en el individuo, sino en la familia.

Dos posibles enfoques:

1) Entrevistas a dos personas de la misma familia de dos generaciones distintas que han pasado por la misma experiencia.

- Ejemplo: El estudio *Family fortunes: an intergenerational perspective on recession* de Rachel Thomson, Lucy Hadfield, Mary Jane Kehily y Sue Sharpe publicado el año 2010.

2) Entrevista a una persona que relata dos experiencias similares ocurridas en su familia en momentos temporales distintos, centrando el relato en el concepto de “transmisión”.

- Ejemplo: El estudio *Heritage and its lineage: a case history of transmission and social mobility over five generations* de Daniel Bertaux e Isabel Bertaux-Wiame publicado en 1997.