Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Strong Families or Patriarchal Economies? Southern European Labor Markets and Welfare in Comparative Perspective

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RSC No. 2002/14
Mediterranean Programme Series

EUI WORKING PAPERS

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Printed in Italy in March 2002
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50016 San Domenico (FI)
Italy

Mediterranean Programme

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The Mediterranean Programme has received generous financial support for Socio-Political Studies from three major institutions who have guaranteed their support for four years: ENI S.p.A, Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, and Mediocredito Centrale. The European Investment Bank, Compagnia di San Paolo and Monte dei Paschi di Siena have offered generous financial support for four years for studies in Political Economy which will be launched in Spring 2000. In addition, a number of grants and fellowships for nationals of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries have been made available by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for doctoral students) and the City of Florence (Giorgio La Pira Fellowship for post-doctoral fellows).

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ABSTRACT[*]

Strong family networks in Southern Europe are often credited with protecting people from poverty in circumstances where both employment and social benefits are limited. However it may well be that the economies frequently described as "familial" are more strongly patriarchal than other market economies, concentrating income in the hands of older, married men through both the labor market and welfare state, and creating the combination of weak welfare states, strong family networks, low female labor force participation, and the concentration of unemployment among young people. This paper uses Luxembourg Income Study micro-data to assess the degree to which the Southern European economies may be said to be patriarchal, and explores the consequences of reduced economic autonomy for women and young men. A picture of two types of patriarchal economies emerges. The first is the familial, Mediterranean economy and the second is the liberal, American economy where weak social welfare programs are combined with worsening market prospects of the young.

[*] This paper was presented at the Second Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence, March 21-25, 2001, Mediterranean Programme, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute.

INTRODUCTION[**]

It is frequently claimed that strong family networks contribute to social welfare in the countries of Southern Europe. For instance, many have suggested that strong family networks ameliorate the potentially extremely destructive combination of high unemployment rates and weak welfare states. Caspar, Garfinkel and McLanahan (1994) have shown that Italy's high rates of marriage and low rates of single motherhood prevent the gender disparities in the incidence of poverty found elsewhere, a result echoed for Spain (Fernandez-Morales and de Haro-Garcia 1998). De la Rica and Lemieux (1994) assert that family ties are key to the workability of the Spanish labor market, which combines expensive, mandated health benefits in the formal sector with a large informal sector; married women and young, single people work disproportionately in the informal sector, gaining their health benefits through a covered worker in the family and providing the "flexibility" in the Spanish labor market.

Indeed, Francesca Bettio and Paola Villa (1998) go further, arguing that not only do family networks compensate for weak welfare states in Southern Europe, but that the family plays a large role in service provision in place of a more developed tertiary sector—both public and private.

While this paper focuses almost exclusively on Europe, the "Mediterranean Model" (Bettio and Villa, 1998) may be increasingly descriptive of the economies of the Middle East and North Africa, which are distinguished by several of it's attributes: high youth unemployment rates, low rates of female labor force participation, weak welfare states, a high reliance on family networks for social insurance and—recently—declining fertility rates (Yousef 2001, Olmsted 2001).

However, a less benign characterization of the strong family networks of the Mediterranean is possible. It may be that in societies where patriarchal legacies are particularly strong, neither labor markets nor welfare states offer much for women or young men, whose allegiance is demanded by the family. With income concentrated in the hands of older, married men, women and young men must stay firmly attached to the family, enjoy less personal autonomy, and perhaps "pay" for their keep by providing unpaid labor to the family unit. In other words, it may be contemporary patriarchal economies that

[**] The author would like to thank Jennifer Olmsted and Tarik Yousef for organizing the superb workshop of which this paper was originally written, all workshop participants for their helpful comments, Sylvia Melchiorri for excellent research assistance with Italian sources, and Clifford Lehman for his analytical critique.

simultaneously create the package of weak welfare states, strong family networks, low female labor force participation and the concentration of unemployment among the young seen in Mediterranean economies.

This paper is conceived as an exploratory foray to assess the degree to which Mediterranean economies—as exemplified by those in Southern Europe—might be considered to be particularly patriarchal, to be characterized by a concentration of income in the hands of older, married men. The first section consists of the theoretical context for understanding a "patriarchal economy." The second section presents the evidence from the literature on the relative strength of the welfare state in different countries, focusing on the potential concentration of public benefits on older married men and the comparison of Mediterranean countries with other nations. The third section gathers comparative labor market information, including unemployment and labor force participation rates, as well as unpaid work hours. The fourth section presents the author's calculations of the comparative concentration of income in the hands of older, married men in eight nations, based on Luxembourg Income Study microdata. The fifth section concludes.

I. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

A leading feminist economist defined patriarchy as materially based on "men's control over women's labor power "(Hartmann 1981, p. 15). Preceding capitalism, patriarchy was an economic system in which "men controlled the labor of women and children in the family" (Hartmann 1976, p. 138). Now, in much of the world, the two systems of patriarchy and capitalism exist in relations of "mutual accommodation" (Hartmann, 1976, p. 137).

> Job segregation by sex…is the primary mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labor market. Low wages keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry. Married women must perform domestic chores for their husbands. Men benefit, then, from both higher wages and the domestic division of labor. This domestic division of labor, in turn, acts to weaken women's position in the labor market. Thus the hierarchical domestic division of labor is perpetuated by the labor market, and vice versa (Hartmann 1976, p. 139).

Occupational segregation by sex, then, reflects the continuing operation of a patriarchal economic system, neither necessary to nor created by the dynamics of a market economy—though in the analysis of Marxist political economy, hierarchical social divisions in the labor force such as gender or race are functional for capital (e.g. Reich 1981). It is sex segregation in the labor market that creates lower wages for women, weakening their bargaining position in the family with the result that women provide the vast preponderance of unpaid reproductive work, including childcare, eldercare, cooking, cleaning and marketing.

A weak welfare state, one that does little to socialize either the costs or the work of social reproduction born disproportionately by women, then also functions to sustain a patriarchal economic system. This is particularly true if the welfare state programs that do exist are geared primarily to the needs of men, via the provision of old age pensions or unemployment insurance, rather than mothers' allowances, subsidized childcare, public health care or income maintenance programs tied more to the exigencies of childrearing than to the potential problems of wage-earners.

The particular evolution of social institutions in the context of a patriarchal economic system may reinforce the economically marginal position of women. For instance school and shop hours that are incompatible with most work schedules serve to keep low earners—frequently women—out of the labor market in order to accomplish key reproductive tasks such as childcare and shopping. Similarly the lack of part-time employment may keep people charged with reproductive tasks—women--from participating in the labor market.

Patriarchal economic systems may include "relations of domination between fathers and sons as well as between men and women (Folbre 1980, p. 5)." Historically, in the agricultural economies of Europe and the U.S., young men were tied to their fathers' farms, effectively trading their adolescent and young adult labor for inheritance of the land. Improved land represented both the essential capital stake for setting up an independent household and the specific investment of considerable labor on the part of the sons. The clear connection between the age of inheritance and the age of marriage in the historical record demonstrates the degree to which concentration of family wealth in the hands of fathers held sons as laborers in the patriarchal household (Folbre 1980, Tilly and Scott 1978).

In short then, relations of patriarchal economic domination of women and young men have been maintained historically through the sexual division of labor and inheritance practices. They are now sustained by women's low wages and limited job opportunities, high unemployment rates for young men, welfare states that are weak or geared primarily to male breadwinners, and the familial social systems characteristic of—but not exclusive to—the Mediterranean.

II. COMPARING WELFARE STATES

Classification of welfare states by type and level of generosity has intrigued a number of scholars, creating a substantial literature. Prominent in this field is Gosta Esping-Andersen, upon whose work this paper will rely for measures of the strength of the welfare state in different countries. Esping-Andersen (1990) created an index by which to judge the strength and type of welfare state evident in different countries, which he termed a de-commodification score.

> In pre-capitalist societies, few workers were properly commodities in the sense that their survival was contingent upon the sale of their labor power. It is as markets become universal and hegemonic that the welfare of individuals comes to depend entirely on the cash nexus. Stripping society of the institutional layers that guaranteed social reproduction outside the labor contract meant that people were commodified. In turn, the introduction of modern social rights implies a loosening of the pure commodity status. De-commodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market (Esping Andersen 1990, pp. 21-22).

Esping-Andersen based his de-commodification score upon the generosity and availability of old age pensions, sickness benefits and unemployment insurance payments. His method yields the scores and ranking that appear in Table 1 below. The scores represent only an index number, nothing further, and higher scores indicate greater de-commodification.

Esping-Andersen (1990) categorizes the three groupings of countries generated by the de-commodification scores as

(a) liberal states, where de-commodification is minimal and the market holds sway;
(b) conservative states, where a moderate amount of de-commodification has occurred as a result of conservative or Catholic reformism, bounded by "powerful social-control devices, such as a proven record of strong employment attachment or strong familial obligations" (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 53); and
(c) social democratic states, where de-commodification has preceded to the greatest degree, in previously liberal states that labor has captured for social democracy.

Table 1 Esping-Andersen's De-Commodification Scores for Welfare States, 1980

Country	Score
Liberal States	
Australia	13.0
United States	13.8
New Zealand	17.1
Canada	22.0
Ireland	23.3
United Kingdom	23.4
Conservative States	
Italy	24.1
Japan	27.1
France	27.5
Germany	27.7
Finland	29.2
Switzerland	29.8
Social Democratic States	
Austria	31.1
Belgium	32.4
Netherlands	32.4
Denmark	38.1
Norway	38.3
Sweden	39.1

Source: Gosta Esping-Andersen. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 52.

This categorization is now somewhat problematic. It is not clear that the three more generous nations in the "liberal" group belong there, rather than in the middle category. The events of the intervening years have probably shifted Austria into the conservative group. More important for the purposes of this paper, Esping-Anderson was not yet interested in investigating what has come to be called the Mediterranean type, including Italy, Greece and Spain (Bettio and Villa, 1998)[1]. Italy is the lone example of these among countries investigated, and it appears to have the weakest welfare state of the

[1] And the "Mediterranean" label itself is not sufficiently precise, as it should not include France, given the character of the French welfare state. Clearly the distinction must rest upon the predominant political philosophy of a nation, which is only sometimes related to its geographical location.

conservative group, influenced in Esping-Andersen's account both by Catholicism and by Fascism.

Esping-Andersen's (1990) categorization was tremendously influential, and also much criticized. Feminists in particular found his account of the welfare state and de-commodification to be exclusively and inexplicably focused on the male experience. Esping-Andersen's implicit model citizen clearly worked for pay, unless old, sick or unemployed, and did not seem to bear any responsibility for child- or elder-care.

In response to criticism, Esping-Andersen went on to examine the extent to which different welfare state regimes had pursued "defamilialization," a term first proposed by his critics and understood by Esping-Andersen as a course that would "unburden the household and diminish individuals' welfare dependence on kinship (Esping-Andersen 1999)." Interestingly, de-familialization reduces women's dependence upon marriage as an economic strategy for a decent livelihood, often promoting their commodification through increased participation in the labor market. As framed by Orloff (1993), two key elements of any gender-sensitive assessment of welfare states are (1) access to paid work, for married women as well as other citizens, and (2) women's capacity to form and maintain autonomous households, so that women have viable alternatives to marriage, even—or especially—if they have children.

Table 2 presents Esping-Andersen's measures of the degree to which welfare states attempt de-familialization. This analysis prompted him to separate the "conservative" category into two: (a) Continental Europe including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands and (b) Southern Europe, here comprised of Italy, Portugal and Spain. His aim in distinguishing Southern Europe from Continental Europe is to assess the degree to which the Mediterranean nations are more familial than others, as is often asserted.

Clearly the countries that spend the lowest proportion of their GDP on publicly provided family services are Italy and Spain, in the Mediterranean grouping, and Canada and Ireland, in the liberal category. Public childcare for children younger than three is provided to the greatest extent in social democratic regimes and in "conservative" continental Europe[2]. Interestingly, child benefits—cash payments or tax reductions for families with children—are also highest in social democratic and conservative, continental nations, and lowest in the Mediterranean (Esping Andersen 1999, p. 72) Public assistance with in-home care of the elderly is lowest in Southern Europe, though relatively high only in Scandinavia. By these measures, de-familialization is a strategy pursued

[2] According to Barbara Bergmann (1996), the motivation on the part of the French is patriotic, to acculturate young children.

by the social democratic and conservative, continental nations, and least evident in Southern Europe.

One caveat may call into question the degree to which defamilization has proceeded in the liberal regimes, at least with regard to state support for reproduction. While the United States appears to devote a much larger proportion of GDP to social spending than do Spain and Italy, in fact much of this spending occurs in the form of tax expenditures, tax reductions for families with children. To the degree that these increase with income, greater support is provided to families with higher earnings, far disproportionately those, which include a male earner (Folbre 2001). In practice, to receive this state support women must remain married.

And finally, we should note that while differences among nations appear significant, in fact none of them is spending even three percent of GDP on family services. We may be making too much of the distinctions between them.

These measures relate primarily to the potential defamilization of women, geared as they are to assessing the degree to which the state is taking responsibility for reproduction. However, unemployed young men are in a situation with some parallels to that of women in the family. Without earnings, they are dependent upon the family and the state. For completeness, this analysis must include the extent to which welfare states are compensating for youth unemployment in different countries. This data is important for assessing the patriarchal nature of different welfare state regimes.

While I do not have direct or comprehensive evidence on this point, Italy, Greece and Spain appear to spend the highest proportion of their social transfers on old age pensions of 15 European countries and to be among the lowest third in the proportion of social transfers devoted to unemployment insurance (ISTAT 2000). Italian households headed by someone over 65 receive 57 percent of public transfers, while those headed by someone between the ages of 51 and 65 receive 27 percent, leaving a very small portion for younger families (Banca D'Italia 2000).

Table 2
Esping-Andersen's De-Familialization Measures for Welfare States

	Public spending on family services (% GDP) 1992	Percent of children <3 in public childcare 1980s	Percent of elderly receiving public home-help 1990	
Social democratic regimes				
Denmark		1.98	48	22
Finland		1.53	22	24
Norway		1.31	12	16
Sweden		2.57	29	16
Liberal regimes				
Australia		0.15	2	7
Canada		0.08	4	2
Ireland		0.06	1	3
United Kingdom		0.48	2	9
United States		0.28	1	4
Continental Europe				
Austria		0.25	2	3
Belgium		0.10	20	6
France		0.37	20	7
Germany		0.54	3	2
Netherlands		0.57	2	8
Southern Europe				
Italy		0.08	5	1
Portugal		0.16	4	1
Spain		0.04	3	2
Japan	0.22	n.a.	1	

Source: Gosta Esping-Andersen. 1999. *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 71.

III. COMPARING LABOR MARKETS

This section of the paper examines published, statistical evidence on the labor market and the family division of labor to assess the degree to which the economies of Southern Europe may be said to be particularly patriarchal.

The Labor Market

Access to the labor market is a crucial component of economic autonomy in a market economy. To explore the degree to which older men enjoy greater access to the labor market than do women and younger men, we examine ratios of labor force participation rates and unemployment rates[3]. Table 3 presents the ratio of women's labor force participation to that of men's, as well as the ratio of the labor force participation rate of men in their early twenties to men in their late forties and early fifties. In addition, the relative unemployment rates of men in these same age categories is included. The data on unemployment and that on labor force participation are both provided in an attempt to include the experience of young men who may not be looking for work because they believe that none is available.

In Table 3, these ratios are organized into country groups as suggested by Esping-Andersen's categories; a clear divide emerges between the familial economies of southern Europe and Asia and the other regime types represented. Women's labor force participation rates relative to those of men are clearly lowest in the "familial" nations, followed by the Asian countries, the continental, the liberal and finally the social democratic countries, where they reach their peak at 93 percent of men's in Sweden.

Patterns are a bit more muddled for young men vis a vis older men, but it does appear that unemployment is relatively concentrated among the young in the nations deemed more familial, including those in Asia. By far the highest concentration of unemployment among the young is found in Italy, Greece and Korea. Further, it is not true that high youth unemployment is a simple function of higher overall unemployment; the nations with the highest male unemployment rates in 1997—Spain, Finland, France, Sweden and Ireland—do not show particularly high concentrations of unemployment among the young[4].

[3] Another indicator of a patriarchal economy might be large differences in the wages of women and men, or younger and older men. While the gender wage gap does not appear to be particularly large in the Mediterranean nations, it is difficult to have confidence in this measure, given the size of the informal sector in both Italy and Spain and the concentration of women in the informal sector (Blau and Kahn 2000, Rubery 1998, Rubery et al 1998).

[4] These cross-sectional differences in the degree to which joblessness is concentrated among the young are set in an environment in which relative youth unemployment has been rising generally in the advanced countries. Young people's prospects appear to be declining despite their relatively small numbers and high levels of education (Blanchflower and Freeman 2000).

Table 3
Relative Employment Outcomes for Women and Men, and for Younger Men and Older Men, 1997*

	Relative labor force participation rates of women and men	Relative labor force participation rates of younger and older men	Relative unemployment rates of younger and older and older men
Familial			
Greece		0.59	.726.1
Italy		0.61	.617.5
Portugal[a]		0.79	.762.9
Spain		0.62	.722.9
Turkey		0.37	.984.0
Asian			
Japan		0.69	.773.0
Korea		0.65	.615.9
Continental Europe			
Austria		0.76	.821.4
Belgium		0.73	.702.9
France		0.81	.583.3
Germany		0.77	.831.4
Social Democratic			
Denmark		0.87	.941.5
Finland		0.91	.831.9
Norway		0.88	.861.9
Sweden		0.93	.763.0
Liberal			
Australia		0.76	.972.6
Canada		0.82	.892.2
United States		0.83	.922.9
United Kingdom		0.80	.942.3

* Ratios are rates for men aged 20-24 as a proportion of rates for men aged 45-54, except in the case of Italy where ratios are rates for men aged 20-24 as a proportion of rates for men aged 40-49.

[a] Data for Portugal are from the year 1996.

Source: Author's calculations from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. 1999. *Labour Force Statistics 1977-1997*. Paris: OECD.

This pattern re-appears in the male labor force participation ratios, though the familial, Asian and conservative nations appear more similar than in the relative incidence of male unemployment. The liberal states are at the other extreme, with nearly comparable rates of labor force participation for young and middle-aged men. The social democracies are in the middle on this measure.

Thus far, it does appear that the "strong family" of the Mediterranean is characterized by the economic dependence of women and young men on older, married men. Neither labor markets nor welfare states in the "familial" nations offer as much for women or young men as they do elsewhere. And economic dependence may be expected to entail reduced personal autonomy, deference to patriarchal authority, and greater obligations in the form of unpaid work.

The unpaid obligations of women to the family are clear, and obvious in the premise of a family-based social insurance system. Women are providing the bulk of the childcare, elder care, health care and other services that might otherwise be supplemented by a strong social welfare system. Table 4 presents Esping-Andersen's data on the degree to which families are providing key social services.

As shown, women's unpaid work weeks are quite high in Italy and Spain relative to other European countries, to North America or even to Japan. It's also clear that a far higher proportion of elderly people and unemployed young people are living in a multi-generational household in Southern Europe. (However, as Esping-Andersen (1999) points out, in many countries where the aged tend not to live with their children, they are still cared for by their children; the price of housing and other factors are presumably influential as well).

It may also be true that in the Mediterranean countries young men are expected to make significant contributions of unpaid, or poorly paid, labor in the home or in family enterprises, as was true historically on the farms of Europe and the U.S; this point requires further research.

IV. EVIDENCE FROM THE LUXEMBOURG INCOME STUDY

As a first step in investigating the degree to which the labor market and welfare programs in different countries might be said to favor older married men--to demonstrate more patriarchal characteristics--Luxembourg Income Study micro-data were examined for eight different countries. These eight countries were chosen to include two representative of each national type considered by Esping-Andersen and other scholars to be familial, conservative, social democratic and liberal. Italy and Spain represent familial nations, France and Germany conservative ones, Norway and Sweden are social democratic, and the

U.S. and Australia represent liberal economies. All data are from 1994 or 1995, with the exception of the data for Spain, which are from 1990.

Table 4
Esping-Andersen's Data on Family Welfare Provision

	Percentage of aged living with children (mid 1980s)	Percentage of unemployed youth living with parents (1991-93)	Women's weekly unpaid household hours (1985-1990)
Southern Europe			
Italy	39	81	45.4
Spain	37	63	45.8
Continental Europe			
France	20	42	36.0
Germany	14	11	35.0
Netherlands	8	28	38.7
Social Democracies			
Denmark	4	8	24.6
Norway	11	-	31.6
Sweden	5	-	34.2
Liberal Regimes			
Canada	-	27	32.8
United Kingdom	16	35	30.0
United States	15	28	31.9
Asia			
Japan	65	-	33.1

Source: Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1999. *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

The population over fifteen years of age in each country was divided into eight categories: never married women and men, married women and men under the age of 30, married women and men 30 and older, and women and men who had been married, but are now separated, divorced or widowed[5]. The sources of

[5] In the cases of Spain and Sweden, the categorization is more limited. Three classifications exist for marital status for the Spanish data, married, unmarried and unknown; unknown accounts for fully 33 percent of the sample.

market income identifiable as accruing to a particular individual include wages, as well as public and private pensions[6]. Benefit income identifiable with an individual, rather than a household, includes both social retirement and unemployment benefits.

The proportions of market and benefit income received by each group divided by the proportion of that group within each country's population are presented in Table 5. If a group received the exact proportion of market income as it represented in the population, the number reported will be 1.00.

The point of this analysis is to investigate whether or not the "familial" nations of Italy and Spain manifest a relatively patriarchal concentration of market and benefit income on older, married men, as compared with countries with other regimes.

Concentration of Market Income

It does appear true that in each country, married men earn a disproportionate share of market income, and that the relative proportions are highest in Italy and Spain. However, the Spanish figures are marred

[6] However public pension data are not available for Sweden, Norway or Australia, while neither private nor public pension information is available for France.

Table 5
Concentration of Wage and Benefit Income by Sex, Age and Marital Status

	"Familial"		Conservative		Social-Democratic		Liberal	
% Income type/ % Population	Italy ('95)	Spain ('90)	France ('94)	Germany ('94)	Norway ('95)	Sweden ('95)	U.S. ('94)	Australia ('94)
Market Income								
Single men	0.85	1.18	0.97	1.13	0.94	0.68	0.75	1.00
Single Women	0.65	0.55	0.81	0.98	0.68	0.86	0.59	0.81
Div./wid. Men	0.83	N.A.	1.12	0.65	1.27	N.A.	1.15	0.98
Div./wid. Women	0.48	N.A.	0.42	0.63	0.60	N.A.	0.67	0.40
Young, mar men	1.80	1.98	1.43	1.68	1.53	0.05	1.28	1.58
Young mar. women	0.80	0.54	0.92	0.80	0.80	0.02	0.65	0.90
Older mar men	1.71	1.70	1.34	1.79	1.54	1.97	1.81	1.56
Older mar. women	0.70	0.30	0.90	0.58	0.83	0.65	0.76	0.65
Benefit Income								
Single men	0.12	2.43	0.46	0.15	0.46	0.94	0.26	0.72
Single Women	0.22	3.03	0.61	0.42	0.61	1.19	0.27	0.58
Div./wid. Men	2.82	N.A.	1.62	2.04	1.62	N.A.	1.57	2.10
Div./wid. Women	2.70	N.A.	2.01	2.01	2.35	N.A.	2.18	3.50
Young, mar men	0.08	0.00	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.37	0.14	0.68
Young mar. women	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.10	0.41	0.43	0.09	0.31
Older mar men	1.76	1.57	1.14	1.14	1.29	1.28	1.54	0.87
Older mar. women	0.54	0.21	0.41	0.41	0.68	0.74	0.75	0.71

Notes: Limited data on marital status for Spain and Sweden indicates only married and unmarried; Spanish data includes large group of persons of unknown marital status. Market income sources include wages and public and private pensions, except for Sweden, Norway, and Australia for which public pension data is not available and France, for which no pension data is available. Benefit income includes social retirement and unemployment benefits.

By the high proportion of the Spanish sample for whom marital status is unknown—33 percent! Spanish men of uncertain marital status' market earnings ratio to their proportion in the population is 1.7, so they are probably mostly married men, though they may be high earning singles. The figure for women of unknown marital status is 0.30, again close to that of older, married women.

Given that married men earn a high proportion of wages relative to their numbers everywhere, it is also true that this phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the familial nations of Italy and Spain, as well as in Sweden and the United States. The Swedish figures for young married people's share of market earnings are so implausible as to cast doubt on all of the Swedish results—from this point, Swedish market earnings will be ignored in the discussion. While older married men in the U.S. are doing quite well, younger married men are faring more poorly in the U.S. than in any other nation.

If a hallmark of a patriarchal economy is the relative disenfranchisement of young men in the labor market, it is also true that single men in Italy and the U.S. earn the lowest share of wages of any of the nations investigated, barring Sweden. The Spanish numbers would belie the idea that familial nations are necessarily more patriarchal, were it not for the fact that the Spanish classifications do not allow a separation of divorced and widowed men from never married men. The apparent high earnings of Spanish single men may be an over-estimate, if divorced and widowed men earn more than never married men, as is true in France, Norway and the U.S., if not in Italy, Germany or Australia. However, again, given the large group of Spanish for whom marital status is unknown, little should be made of the Spanish findings.

The U.S. appears strongly patriarchal, based upon the large share of earnings gained by older married men, and the particularly weak position of single men. The relatively low earnings of young married men flags the seriously declining prospects of the young in the United States, connected with the large increase in earnings inequality in that nation. While relative youth unemployment figures do not approach those of Greece, Italy or Turkey, as was seen in Table 3, the earnings of American young men and women have declined significantly in real terms over the last twenty years (Blanchflower and Freeman 2000). This may indeed be a patriarchal pattern, though a different one than that found in Southern Europe.

To sum up, men are earning a disproportionate share of market income in each of the nations examined. While this is particularly true in the familial countries, it is also strongly apparent in the U.S., where inequality along many dimensions, including age, has increased significantly. However, older married men are not doing markedly better than are young married men in general, which may be because the older, married category includes a high number of retired men. Further analysis should perhaps separate the retired population from working people. Single men do appear to be particularly disadvantaged in the labor market in Italy and in the U.S.—disregarding Swedish numbers as unreliable. Interestingly young married men in Italy appear to be faring exceptionally well—disregarding the Spanish numbers as tainted--though this may result from “creaming,” as this category in Italy is so small; it may well be that only the small minority of young Italian men who are doing well are marrying, as the age of first marriage is now quite high in Italy.

Benefit Income

Benefit income is universally concentrated on divorced and widowed women and men. This result is hardly surprising, since the benefits considered are social retirement and unemployment payments. The high rate of benefit recipiency among Spanish single people is presumably due to the lack of a separate categories in the Spanish data for divorced, widowed and never married people. As with the market earnings, it may well pay to distinguish people of retirement age from the rest of the adult population in future work. The group next most likely to receive benefits disproportionate to their numbers are older, married men, who presumably also include a number of retirees.

Divorced and widowed women in all nations, with the exception of Italy, are more likely to receive benefits than are divorced and widowed men, Perhaps a higher proportion of the women are elderly, widows rather than divorced, since women tend to live longer than men do.

These numbers do not provide any suggestion that young men, who are disproportionately unemployed, are enjoying a great deal of support in the form of unemployment benefits. However, never married men are more likely to receive benefits than are young married men, indicating perhaps the greater incidence of unemployment among the unmarried—or the lower rate of marriage among the unemployed—though young single men may also be receiving some form of social retirement benefit, if they are minors with deceased fathers.

Never married women show a higher benefit recipiency rate than do never married men in all nations with the exception of the liberal regimes of the U.S. and Australia. It is difficult, however, to use these figures to gauge support for unmarried mothers. Only the components of income that could be directly attributable to individuals in a multi-person household have been included in this analysis. This means that many benefits of interest—including child allowances, parental leave allowances and veterans' allowances—are not accounted for. Similarly, self-employment income was not included in the section on market income, as it is recorded only for households, rather than for persons.

In further investigations, household level data will be considered, in order to attempt to gain a more comprehensive picture of market and benefit incomes. Indeed, as presently conceived, this analysis suffers from the same limitations that marred Esping-Andersen's earlier work; it excludes too many sources of income that relate to defamilialization. However, the effort to expand the kinds of benefits and sources of income considered includes its own complications—beyond even the necessary assumptions, such as the attribution of household self-employment earnings to particular household members. As Esping-Andersen (1990) has pointed out, it is not clear whether household members perceive benefits income as accruing to women or to men in situations where benefit checks for child allowances are paid to the male head of household. While the researcher may understand such a benefit to be directed toward subsidizing reproduction—traditionally women's work—men to whom the checks are mailed may view the money as income accruing to family heads.

V. CONCLUSION

The evidence marshalled thus far does suggest that the Southern European economies are distinctively familial—or patriarchal—in their concentration of income, employment and benefits upon older married men. Young men are disproportionately unemployed or out of the labor force in Southern Europe--and Asia--as compared with Scandinavia, Central Europe and the liberal, English speaking nations. Never married men's incomes are low in Italy. Women's labor force participation rates are relatively low, and women's unpaid workweeks are high in Italy and Spain. Public welfare programs are limited in Southern Europe and benefits are focused on the elderly.

An unexpected finding is the degree to which the United States appears to also concentrate income in the hands of older married men, a result tied to the high and increasing levels of income inequality in the U.S. It may well be that the category of patriarchal economies does not dovetail well with Esping-Andersen and others' previously developed classifications for describing different welfare state regimes. A more complex system of categorization will be necessary to incorporate a full gender analysis of our economic systems.

The empirical analysis in this paper would be stronger with several additions. First, it is difficult to locate information on the situation of young men, including the degree to which welfare programs support young men in different countries and the amount of unpaid work young men may be providing their families. Second, it would be useful to re-do the analysis of the Luxembourg Income Study data, concentrating on all sources of household income, rather than only on those clearly attributable to particular individuals, as was done here. Finally, it may be constructive to explore the utility of a decomposable Gini index for assessing within and between group inequality among different household types in different regimes (Milanovic and Yitzhaki, 2000).

In future work, the consequences of familial—or patriarchal—economic organization should be investigated. The economic costs of family-based social insurance systems may be significant. Family-based insurance mechanisms are by their very nature are unable to spread risk over more than a relatively few individuals, individuals who are likely to be quite homogeneous in terms of geographical location, occupation, industry, and even educational level.

It may also be that particularly patriarchal economies result in distortions in the labor market. Where older, married men enjoy the strongest social claims on both labor markets and welfare systems, the logical result would be that women's and young men's labor is relatively—and, in some sense, artificially—cheap[7]. Family heads with women's and young men's labor at their disposal face incentives to allocate that labor in less productive ways than would be the case if opportunities were greater for women and young men in the labor market, and social claims on their time were less. In economic terms, we may expect (1) unemployment, underemployment and mis-allocation of women's and young men's labor and, relatedly (2) sub-optimal training and education decisions—human capital investments—made by and for young women and men.

The sustainability of Mediterranean systems may indeed be called into question if the potential for mis-training and mis-allocation of labor results in a technological lag, and underdevelopment of the high-tech and service sectors underpinning growth and competitiveness in the globalizing economy. Outside the Mediterranean, young men and women of all ages constitute both the labor force for emerging sectors as well as markets that may stimulate further development[8].

[7] I call women and young men's labor cheap because their high unemployment rates imply that their labor is cheap or free to household heads. Paradoxically, one of the mechanisms that contributes to high youth and female unemployment rates and low participation rates of these groups in the formal labor market may be relatively egalitarian wage structures—including relatively high wages for women and young men—in formal labor markets (Bertola and Ichino 1995).

[8] On the other hand, of course, many in the United States—where both employment/population rates and work hours are high (Nickell 1997, p. 58)--feel that the American way is not humanly sustainable, that the quality of life has suffered from devoting too many hours to the labor market and too much concern to the acquisition of material things (e.g. Schor 1991).

A final concern for sustainability stems from long-term labor supply, the low fertility rates that appear to be another result of the "familial" social systems, presaging a crisis in the provision of social insurance for the aged (Bettio and Villa 1998, Esping-Anderson 1999).

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