T.Y.R.— The Youngsters’ Reply
Comparison of different parental models

SPAIN’S Report

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1. INTRODUCTION: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS FAMILY CHANGE IN SPAIN

1.1 The transformation of cultural models and the organisation of family life

As in the rest of society, family life is undergoing a process of profound change which is affecting all of its dimensions. Men are no longer the only members of the family who support the family unit and dual-earner families are on the rise. Embarking on a life together is no longer done only through marriage; rather, living together has become increasingly common, sometimes as a test run prior to marriage and others as an alternative to the matrimonial commitment. Divorce as a solution to an unsatisfactory life together is also becoming more frequent.

The models inherited from the past have lost their ability to mould the lifestyles of successive generations of young people. As has been the case in other western countries, the social control exerted on family and individual behaviour has changed drastically in recent decades. While, on the one hand, the social control exerted on the dynamics of power that are developed in the centre of family life has been reinforced, putting individual rights before those of the institution (singularly the rights of the socially weakest members) and this not only on a legislative plane but as far as attitudes are concerned as well, on the other hand the social control exerted on multiple dimensions of family life traditionally subject to deeply-rooted regulatory models has been reduced. This change in the social control exerted on family life has given rise to a social space of individual freedom and the conformation of lifestyles and ways of perceiving and organising life as a couple and as a family. In other words, family arrangements and lifestyles have been privatised and the inherited family life models have lost their binding power. “What will they say”, which is nothing but a manifestation of the internalisation on the part of the individuals of that social control, has been replaced by "it’s none of their business" which establishes a social field of tolerance toward the different ways in which individuals organise and live their private lives.

This process has been synthesised by Ulrich Beck in the concept of individualisation, which attempts to highlight, above all, the more prominent role which today’s culture concedes to individual options and decisions as opposed to social norms in areas such as profession, politics and family life. Individualisation means “the growing independence of individual biographies from the events which in the past guided the appearance of certain milestones in life, such as marriage, the birth of one’s first child, the commencement of one’s working life, etc.; events that were basically determined by sex, age and social or regional origin”. Compared to the “normal” or socially standardised biography, the “chosen biography” brings with it, on the one hand, greater possibilities to choose
basic lifestyle options (the liberating dimension of individualisation) but on the other hand more uncertainty and less security in the validity of traditional social institutions and norms (Beck, 1986).

With regard to the transformation of the family, the concept of individualisation highlights not only the loss of traditional social control over individual lifestyles, which has given rise to new forms of co-existence (such as cohabiting couples, homosexual couples or weekend couples) and the increased vulnerability of unions (divorce by mutual agreement), but also accentuates the fact that these lifestyles, and this is particularly true in the case of women, have been deeply transformed so that individual rights and aspirations now occupy a pre-eminent place not only in the lifestyles of men but of women as well. Hence, the aspirations of women for their lives have ceased to be defined in today’s society only in terms of family life, which is geared toward serving the other members of the family, and now includes the right to have their own professional careers and their own lives. Consequently, the traditional definition of spouses’ roles based on gender is no longer legitimate and the distribution of the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each one of the spouses is now the object of negotiation. Adapting to the different challenges faced by married couples requires that such roles be negotiated, implicitly or explicitly, by the spouses.

As a consequence of these processes, which are not unrelated to the development of the consumer society, the ways in which people enter into, remain in and exit from family relationships have become more flexible, with the forms being adopted as a consequence of negotiation and agreement by the individual parties involved. Social disapproval of the forms that differ from the models inherited from the past is no longer legitimate. And it is within this context of the negotiability of relationships and family roles out of which a “new conjugal pact” (Roussel, 1989) arises and the negotiating family develops. Negotiating in terms of the roles played by the spouses and negotiating also in terms of the norms and scope of individual freedoms that regulate their co-existence. And that culture of conciliation between different visions and interests, in which the father’s authority is no longer the last word or the rule to be followed, has also spread to the intergenerational relations between parents and children. In Spain, as in other developed countries, the family has therefore become a negotiating family (Meil, 2006) and it is within such a framework that the families of the adolescents who have collaborated in this project and the parents who have participated in the discussion groups live.

Parallel to these cultural changes, there have also been significant structural changes, some of which we will discuss briefly to give the reader a clearer idea of the family reality of the parents and adolescents who have participated in the project.
1.2 Changes in the family structure: plurality and reduction of the size of Spanish families

The average household size has dropped by one person in the last thirty years, from almost 4 in 1970 to almost 3 at the beginning of this century. In other words, it has dropped by one-quarter. Compared to the European Union, however, Spanish households continue to be relatively large (2.4 on average, not including the "new member countries"). The household figure, however, does not say much about the real size of families since there are single-person households and others in which other people, who may or may not be relatives, live with the nuclear family.

If we focus our attention on family households only, those which have grown the most in the last decade are single-parent families headed by women and couples with one or two children, while those which have experienced the sharpest decline are families with four or more children.

According to a 2001 census, the most frequent situation is that of a two-parent family with two children (2,867,510), followed closely by two-parent families with one child (2,606,233) and couples without children (there were 1,261,515 in which the age of the person of reference was between 16 and 64). Single-parent families headed by women (1,329,960) are more frequent than two-parent families with three children (782,743) and families with 4 or more children, which are very infrequent (211,922).

**RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO THE 2001 CENSUS**

In absolute values

![Graph showing the relative importance of different types of family households according to the 2001 census.](chart)

Source: INE, 2001 population census, www.ine.es
These data are only a snapshot of the number of children and their parents at a given time, but they do not tell us much about changing trends. But even this snapshot is fuzzy, since the couples with children included those who have not had any children yet, those whose children have left home, and those who cannot or choose not to have children. Some couples may decide to have more children in the future or may have decided not to have any more, even though they may eventually decide to have more children. The census data must therefore be supplemented with birth-rate information which gives us an indication of the trends.

To learn more about changing birth-rate trends, the statistics of the Natural Population Movement tell us that the principal trends in this regard are as follows:

- In 1998, the downward trend in the number of births was reversed, coinciding with a spectacular increase in immigration in Spain. While the recovery of the birth-rate is owing, to a large extent, to the fertility of immigrant women (most of whom are of child-bearing age), the fertility of Spanish women has also increased by 12% over the last 6 years. Hence, the trend toward increasingly reducing the size of families seems to have reached its limit.

- First order births, however, accounts for an increasing percentage of total births. While such births represented 38% of all born in 1975 (when the birth-rate began to decline rapidly), by 2002 they accounted for 54%. In other words, many couples have chosen to have at least one child and the number of single children is rising steadily.

- However, there are still many second order children being born and the percentage they occupy compared to 1975 has increased from 30% to 35% in the same period of time.

- The proportion of third order births has been cut in half, from 17% to 8%, in the last quarter century and the percentage of fourth or higher order births has decreased from 15 to 2.5%. While one might think that large families are disappearing, the census counted just over a half million families with 3 or more children (specifically, 572,932). Of these, 10% are single-parent families, headed in the immense majority of cases by women (47,031).

- The recovery of the birth-rate since 1998 is characterised by an increase in the births of first, second, third and even fourth children, although fundamentally firstborn. Firstborn children account for 72% of this recovery, compared to only 0.1% of fourth children. The number of fifth or beyond order births has decreased steadily.

In short, then, the dominant family size in Spain is the “reduced family” if not the “minimum family” which is becoming increasingly prominent, although the rhythm of growth seems to have come to an end. In our survey of families with children between the ages of 10 and 18, the
immense majority of whom have concluded their reproductive cycles, 58% have 2 children, 24% have one, 13% have 3 and 5% have 4 or more. If one applies Gary Becker's economic theory of reproduction, it could be said that Spanish families (like those of other developed countries) have chosen to invest the increase in their incomes over the last decades not in having more children but rather in education and in raising the level of consumerism to heights never dreamed of in the past.

The dominant family model is that composed of two generations, parents and children, who live together in the same household. However, families in which there are three generations living together are not infrequent. According to the 2001 census, there were more families of this type than large families (specifically, 631,448, including 11,650 of 4 generations). The places where families of three or more generations continue to be most prominent are in those areas where the extended family was always present, such as the northern coast and Cataluña as well the Canary Islands, Murcia and Andalucía, although it is most common in Galicia (10.2% of all households). The extended family is a vestige of the pre-industrial past when land inheritance systems favoured an heir, who continued to run the family business while living with both his parents and his own family. However, the reasons why such households continue to exist nowadays are diverse and could have their origin in post-industrial circumstances such as adolescent fertility, the recomposition of households following divorce, the family situation of immigrants (the young couple arrives first, followed by the woman's parents with the couple's children who were left behind in the country of origin) and caring for the elderly when they are no longer able to live alone (or when the caregiver cannot or does not want to care for them from a distance) and the caregivers do not want them institutionalised. There is no reason why the profound changes in the family which have occurred in the recent past should do away with this type of families, although they are becoming increasingly less frequent.

1.3 Working Mothers

As is well known, in consonance with the changes in the definition of gender roles, there has been a massive influx of women joining the job market. Since women's paid work is conditioned by their family situation and age (both as a consequence of the gradualness of the social change and the problems associated with balancing work and family life), the proportion of families in which both parents work depends on the phase of the family cycle being considered. This proportion currently stands at around 50%, although the figures vary depending on the source. According to a recent study of parents of adolescents (Meil, 2006b), in 48% of cases one of the parents works and the other one does not, and in 2% neither one works (in most cases because either the man is unemployed or both spouses are unemployed). According to the Eurostat
statistics shown on the table below, the percentage is somewhat lower (44%).

Compared to other European Union countries, the proportion of one-earner families is, along with Italy and Greece, one of the highest, not only much more than double the figure for Scandinavian countries but also double that of neighbouring countries like France and Portugal or other large EU countries such as Germany or the United Kingdom. This circumstance is not always voluntary and does not mean that Spanish mothers are more “family oriented”. Rather, it is often the consequence of unemployment or lack of professional skills.

According to a survey taken in 2006 (Meil, 2006a), half of the mothers interviewed who did not have paying jobs were in a situation of unemployment. Women with the lowest educational levels account for the bulk of unemployed women and housewives. However, in the vast majority of cases, the reason invoked by housewives for staying home is family-related, which in many cases may have more to do with the need to give meaning to their own situation than to the employment options consciously pursued by them, notwithstanding the existence of diverse lifestyle options (Meil, 2006a). The lack of adequate professional qualification, the shortage of good jobs and low wages make the cost of opportunity too high and, to a certain extent, the problems of balancing work and family life are, among others, the principal factors behind the comparatively low number of women working outside of the home.

With regard to the length of the workday, the most frequent situation in Spain in dual-earner families is that both spouses work full time. It is relatively uncommon for one to work full time and the other part time. In those cases where this does occur, it is usually the mother who works part time, with the number of cases where the father works part time and the mother works full time, or where both work part time being negligible. This type of arrangement is common in the southern countries of the European Union, while in Central Europe and the United Kingdom the most common situation, on the contrary, is that the father works full time and the mother part time.
### REMUNERATED WORKING PATTERNS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 15 IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In horizontal percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One working parent</th>
<th>Man works p/t</th>
<th>Woman p/t</th>
<th>Man works f/t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Man works p/t</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>27.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>U.K.</td>
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Having presented the basic and fundamental traits of the family situations in which the adolescents and parents who have collaborated on this project live, we will now analyse what adolescents think of the family and what their attitudes and opinions are regarding gender equality and its practical consequences on family life.
2. THE VALUE OF THE FAMILY AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION

2.1 What adolescents think about their parents

The opinion which adolescents of both sexes have of their parents is, with the exceptions discussed below, extremely positive. The immense majority of boys and girls from all social classes, whether both parents work outside the home or just one, express love and affection for their parents and are very appreciative of everything that their parents do for them. The expression of this love tends to be more emphatic the younger the children are, acquiring formulations that are somewhat less expressive among older adolescents, particularly when there are disagreements about how their leisure time is regulated. One of the aspects most highly valued is the love and affection shown to them by their parents and which prevails in the relationship between parents and children:

“There couldn’t be any better parents than mine because even though they don’t let me do everything I want to, they treat me well and they give me everything I need” (S6: mj120)

“My parents are my greatest support in each and every one of the stages of my life. They are the strength that keeps me going day after day” (I1: mj14d)

“I couldn’t have wished for anything better in life than to have such wonderful parents” (L1: mj14).

“I’m proud to have the parents I have” (L5: mj12)

“They’re the best in the world” (A56: v12)

“The best thing about a mother is how she affectionately and lovingly says good morning to you when you get up and fixes your snack for school. And when you get home from school, the same thing. It’s great. For me, a father is the best thing in life. He’s always with you, always helping you in good times and bad and never leaves your side” (Me36: 12 o)

The specialized literature has broadly demonstrated the centrality of this emotional aspect in the development of a child’s personality and his/her psychological equilibrium. Although it cannot be verified in their writings, the children are clearly aware that the emotional relationship with their parents contributes to their wellbeing. Many of them either mention this specifically or hint at it and when they perceive deficiencies in this regard they are either regretful or they demand more affection on their parents’ part. The cases of abuse are heart-rending:
“I think that parents should be a lot more affectionate with their children and that they should buy them many more things” (T8: v12d)

“they work .... and they've never really placed a lot of importance on their children, only on basic things like behaviour... They really don't care what I do as long as I don't bother them and the only thing that interests them about my future is that I earn a good salary... My relationship with my father is based on interest....all we talk about is work and studying” (Ma62 : v16o)

“Sometimes they don't behave the way you would like. My father... (had a disabling occupational accident, GM)... And after that he started drinking, a serious mistake, he spent the money on drinking and drinking, he wasn't happy until he hit us, but without him now (the parents separated, GM) my family is even happier... I can't think of a happier day (than the First Communion, GM). They were all unpleasant and very bad and it's better not to even think about them” (A5: mj14m)

Parental control over their children’s behaviour, the limits they place on their demands for autonomy and the punishment methods used to adapt their behaviour are recognised, in most cases, as part of the parents’ educational plan and a manifestation of their concern for their personal development and safety as well as a sign of their love and affection. Some of the parents in the discussion groups mentioned this. The most restrictive practices by parents during adolescence tend to translate into more or less intense and recurring conflicts; the generational conflict during adolescence when adolescents seek autonomy, particularly in terms of establishing free time activities and schedules. These conflicts, however, translate more often than not into future predictions about more liberal parental roles than an overall negative attitude toward the adolescents’ relationships with their parents or a generalised rejection of the family.

“Just like any other adolescent, I complain a lot about my parents, but deep down I know that they are wonderful people” (L8: mj14)

“Even though they're kind of annoying, I'm actually very grateful to them because I'd be lost without them. They're always on top of me, making sure that I study and I really do appreciate it” (Ma33: v12)

“(My relationship) is very good. Sometimes we fight about what time I come home, studies, things like that. But we've never had serious problems (Ma63: v16d)

“My parents are .... the parents I got. Before, when I was little, they seemed open, kind, pleasant, etc., but now at this age they want to protect me and I understand that, but one thing is to protect me and
another is to get me so upset that I’m not always happy to see them” (Ma59: v16d)
“Better than before (the parents’ behaviour) because before they wouldn’t let me go anywhere but now I can do what I want and go where I want” (Se36: mj15d)

Above and beyond the emotional dimension of the relationship, the compositions frequently accentuate and place a premium on communications between the generations. Many children appreciate the fact that they can talk to their parents, share their happiness and their concerns or problems with them, relate their experiences and find in them someone who will listen to them, “pay attention to them”, show concern for them and their problems, support them and eventually console them, help them or give them practical solutions. In this regard, children appreciate their parents’ concern for them, which makes them feel not only loved but also considered and appreciated. They do not see their parents merely as a resource for alleviating tensions, frustrations and concerns or as advisers, but rather as people they can talk to about common interests and hobbies and with whom they can share experiences, feelings and points of view.

“They’re there to tell them your problems and the good things and to give you affection; they’re the ones who love you the most” (Me34: v13o)
“My mother is more understanding because when I have a problem she gives me encouragement, but my father is more like `you’re not trying’ or `you’re grounded’ and that’s why I like my mother more” (A56: v12)
“I get along really well (with my father). We talk about football, he takes me to practice, we talk a lot and he’s very nice to me” (Ma51: v15d)
“My parents help me with my problems but they don’t listen to me. I say something and they just ignore me. My aunt is the one that listens to me the most, but like my sister they just ignore what I say. In my class they all say the same thing, that I’m very quiet. Of course I am! Why should I talk if no one is going to listen! Sometimes I think that the only one that listens to me is my dog. When nobody listens to me, I go and talk to him I know you must think that I’m silly or something, but I feel better with him and if the others would listen to me too, I would feel better, my life would even be better… I’m not going to have children, I’d rather live alone with my five dogs and be veterinarian” (Ma43: v13d)

Along with these aspects, the absence of abuse also appears as a highly valued aspect of family relations. Growing social awareness of the scope of domestic violence and the repudiation which it increasingly
generates in today’s society is not limited to adults but is clearly perceptible in younger generations, not only in their condemnation of men’s abuse of women but also in intergenerational relationships. It is no longer a matter of those who suffer abuse personally rebelling against it, but rather a growing social awareness in which abuse is condemned by society and the fact that one’s family does not suffer such violence is a highly valued aspect. The absence of abuse is also included as a basic component of the adolescents’ own future family plans. This is true not only among adolescent girls but boys as well. The two elements most highly valued by children in their relationships with their parents, which appear repeatedly in their compositions, are the parents’ affection (love), on the one hand, and mutual respect and the absence of abuse on the other.

“To me, it’s the best family in the world. My parents’ behaviour is very normal. They have their arguments just like anyone else, but not those arguments where the man abuses the women or the woman kills the man or the man kills the woman. My parents don’t have those kinds of arguments. They have normal arguments, like any normal couple” (L6: mj12o)

“My father treats my mother very well, he loves her very much and respects her, which for me are two key factors in a couple's relationship. It seems to be “fashionable” these days to be violent with women. What cowards those men are who abuse the most beautiful thing in the world” (L9: mj14d)

“My father’s behaviour toward my mother is what anyone’s behaviour toward another person should be. He treats her well, as he should. He respects her and she respects him. He’s never done anything strange. Sometimes they argue, other times they agree” (Z8: mj13d)

“Very good. My father never treats my mother badly, he doesn’t shout at her or anything. They’re crazy about each other. My father has never hit my mother and he never will” (Ma8: mj13one)

“My father’s behaviour toward my mother is exemplary and the kind of treatment she deserves and if they disagree on something they settle it by talking to each other, never with violence (L16: v14d)

“My parents are heroes to me. Our relationship could not be better. They’ve never touched me and when I do something wrong they explain why it’s wrong and that’s it” (L18: v13d)

2.2 Relations with the father and the good fatherhood model

The adolescents’ assessment of their relations with their fathers is, in the vast majority of cases, good; in some cases just as good as their relationship with the mother, while in others, on the contrary, the relationship with the mother is better than with the father. There are also
cases, although much less common, in which the relationship with the father is better than with the mother. When the adolescents emphasise that they have a better relationship with their mothers than with their fathers, the explanation tends to lie in the closer contact and emotional proximity to her but also in more frequent interactions with the mother than with the father. The sex of the children also plays an important role, since daughters tend to be closer to their mothers than to their fathers, particularly in the crucial phases of sexual maturity and adolescence, while male children tend to be closer to their fathers, although they also need support and understanding which they do not always find in their fathers.

“I hardly see my father (only on weekends). That’s why I’m always wishing for the weekend to get here. But then… when I want to talk to him, tell him what happened to me during the week, joke with him… he tells me he’s really tired… Then he complains that I don’t talk to him.” (L8: mj14)

“My relationship with my father is great because he’s a special person… Every day he asks me how I’m doing at school and all that. I’ve learned from him to see life in a simpler way, to be more humble, more supportive and to listen to other peoples’ problems” (L9: mj14)

“My father gets angry right away. My mother is the one who knows what’s going on in my life, (although) I usually play with him, but the personal things I tell my mother” (Z4: mj12)

“I feel more at ease with my mother and if I have to tell them something, I tell my mother, whereas I might be embarrassed to tell my father. But I have more fun with my father than with my mother because I play more with my father” (C15: mj14)

“My mother is more understanding because when I have a problem she gives me encouragement, but my father is more like ‘you’re not trying’ or ‘you’re grounded’ and that’s why I like my mother more” (A56: v12)

“sometimes a little bit cold because we often don’t have the same tastes. Other times, we get along like the best of friends” (Me53: v14d)

“My relationship with my mother is better than with my father. I can talk to my mother more than my father because I feel closer to her and because if I told my father some of the things that I tell my mother, he wouldn’t understand” (C13: v13d)

“My relationship with my mother is very similar to my relationship with my father, but even closer because my mother is a fundamental part of my life” (l10:v)

The emotional distance between fathers and children also tends to translate into a more distant and critical assessment of the relationship.
On the other hand, fathers who are involved in their children’s upbringing as well as in their free time activities, doing things with them or sharing common experiences, tend to get better parenting marks from their children and this is highlighted in the compositions. Generally speaking, it can be said that children tend to place a higher value on the fact that their fathers participate in organising their leisure time, either that of the entire family or their individual free time activities (bringing them to practice or to competitions, or being understanding or tolerant of their demands for freedom with regard to coming home) than the fact that they participate in household chores. There are some exceptions to this, however, where the daughters noted this very aspect to illustrate what good fathers they have because they help out with the housework. In this regard, the model of a “good father” that predominates among the younger generations and which is the same one that predominates among adults – as we will see below – is the one that is referred to in English literature as the “playmate” or “friend” and the “nurturant father” who devotes his time and effort on a daily basis to caring for and raising his children and who is also loving and able to show his affection. The traditional differences between the role models of fathers and mothers have disappeared for many children. These new parenting models do not appear to be clearly predominant among the families of the generations analysed, although they are observed quite frequently. However, in view of the methodology used, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the relative frequency.

“What is a father? A father is someone who loves you, takes care of you and teaches you the difference between right and wrong. He teaches you, he takes you to school when you’re small and he loves you with all his heart. What is a mother? A mother is the same as a father and someone who doesn’t shout at you or scold you for doing something wrong.” (Al 1: mj 12)

“A father needs to work to support his family and he also needs to be understanding... A father also needs to help out around the house with the ironing, cooking, laundry, taking care of the children, etc. And a mother can do the same thing: she can work, take care of the children and help out around the house” (Al 37: mj14d).

“(My relationship with my father) is the same as my relationship with my mother. We’re friends. I play with him just like he were a little kid. He’s interested in everything that happens to me” (L14: mj13)

“He’s almost like a friend: he drives me places when I need a lift, he teaches me things, but without losing his authority as a father” (Z5: mj13)

“I get along really well with my father because he understands me more than my mother and my father is more affectionate” (Ma26: mj15o)
“I get along great with my father. We take walks in the mountains and ride our bikes in the village. When we’re at home, we play chess, Parcheesi, cards... He helps me with my homework when I don’t understand something, he teaches me new things about nature, about cities and villages and also new games. My relationship with my father is very good.” (B2:mjXd)

“(My relationship with my father is) good because we do things together since we like the same things, especially sports” (Z42: v13d)

“very good, we go hunting together, and fishing, he treats me to things and buys me gifts, we laugh” (Me52: v14o)

“I get along very well with him, we talk a lot about football, he brings me to practice and we talk to each other a lot. He’s very good to me” (Ma51: v15d)

“good and I spend most of my time with him” (Se27:v14o)

The importance of this need for the father’s involvement, for contact and attention in intergenerational relations, is particularly evident in cases of separation or divorce. The relationship with the father is good when there is regular contact between the father and child, so that children appreciate and highlight as something worth mentioning the fact that they do things with their fathers, that they can share their problems, concerns and experiences with them and their fathers are supportive and understanding and sometimes even more liberal with them than their mothers. Although children suffer during the separation process due to the continuous conflict between their parents, which has a direct influence on the children as is clearly seen in some of the compositions, the children of single-parent families do not express greater rejection or disapproval of their fathers nor do they have a more negative opinion of their fathers than the children of two-parent families. And this is true regardless of how the parents get along with one another, although when the relationship is good they tend to emphasise this as something very important to them.

“when I’m with him it’s very good (the relationship) because he helps me and he supports me in everything (when I’m right) but most of all he understands me and that is very important to me ..... (although) I’d like to be with him everyday .... we love each other very much” (Z19:13, the parents do not speak to each other)

“very good because he plays board games with me and the Play 2” (Z33: v13)

“my father behaves very well and I like my mother but she scolds me more... My father is nicer to us than my mother. My mother gets angry easier than my father does. My father buys us more things than my mother does” (Ma45: v14)
“My parents are the best. I love my family. Even though they're separated they're very good friends (my father even sleeps at our house sometimes). They've given me a good education and I would not change them for anything. I love them both equally.... I would do anything for my parents... My relationship with my father is perfect. I love my father very much and I would not change him for anything in the world” (Ma11: mj13)

“She (my mother) is stricter than my father, but that's a good thing. She loves me very much. She tells me off when I deserve it. My father is like a friend; he's the opposite of my mother, he doesn't tell me off (unless it's something really serious), he lets me stay out later, he lets me do my own thing. We have a lot of laughs together and I have a really good time with him because we like the same things... My mother teaches me about life and is stricter; my father lets me do what I want (although that's not always a good thing)… My father has no relationship with my mother and when they do talk to each other they usually end up fighting” (Ma20: mj15)

The absence of contact with the father is always viewed negatively or ignored, as though the father did not exist:

“I have no intention of talking about that man you consider my father in this composition. He treated us very badly (abuse, GM). I haven't seen him since I was a little girl, nor do I want to” (B3: mjXm)

Z3: 12 does not even mention the father.

“Very bad (doesn't know him, GM)” (Z16: 13)

“My relationship with my father is non-existent because he left us when I was 7 years old and he lives in Barcelona” (Ma4: v12)

“I only love my mother .... I hate my father .... My mother is the best and my father is a moron” (I2: v)

“But the one who raised us is my mother because my father loves me but he doesn’t show it. He doesn’t care whether I have food to eat every day or not... The most important thing is that they show you that they love you because it's not enough just to say they love you, they have to show it.” (Al 27: mj13)

2.3 The adolescents’ opinion of the family in general

In keeping with the adolescents’ positive view of their relationships with their parents in the vast majority of cases, their assessment of the family in general is also positive. Only in a few cases did the adolescents project their frustration with the families in which they live onto the institution in general. Even in cases of domestic violence, for which the father is usually responsible, a distinction is made between the abuser and the rest of the family as well as the institution in general, i.e., the
rejection of the abuser does not spill over to the family and/or the institution in general. Even in single-parent families there is a sense of normalcy, including when the parents do not get along with one another or when the father has abandoned the family and children. In other words, for the most part the adolescents do not have a negative view of the family or family life in these cases.

The same aspects which the adolescents appreciate in their relationships with their parents reappear in their assessment of the family in general. For example, the adolescents underscore that the family is the only framework within which children can have their needs satisfied and develop as people until adulthood. Above all, they note that in the family children are protected and that they receive affection, support and understanding, in addition to being fed and cared for. Let’s look at some particularly illustrative examples:

“I think that having a family is the best and most valuable thing anyone could have. You always have someone to talk to and to support you when you need it. To love someone and have them love you back is wonderful” (B5: mjXd)

“A family is a group of people who love each other and who help each other out at the most difficult times” (A11: mj12)

“A family is the most important thing, the most important thing in life. Your parents and your family will always be there for you and regardless of what happens to you, they support you, they love you, they protect you” (A125: mj12)

Without it, it would be almost impossible to live since our families are the ones who listen to us, support us, protect us and give us the affection we need when we need it.... When I’m with them I enjoy myself, I laugh, I have a good time and I’m happy when I’m with them” (L10: mj13)

“Imagine a little child without a family. Who would feed him, dress him, educate him and all that?” (L7: mj12)

“The family is the cornerstone of our society. As members of a family we are born to give and receive affection. As part of a family we grow and we become adults. We learn to share from the family. The mother’s and father’s influence on the family, at least in the early stages of their children’s lives, is decisive since their children imitate them and use them as an example, until their natural evolution, their education and their maturity enable them to make their own decisions and to behave in the family and in society in the manner they see fit, taking decisions freely” (O 2: v14)

Above and beyond the satisfaction of individual needs, there are also adolescents who appreciate the particularist aspect and the expressive function of family relations compared to the outside world governed by impersonal standards of ability and achievement, such as
school. They perceive and appreciate that in the family one can be "oneself" and people, particularly children, are appreciated for who they are, for their unique individuality and not for their skills, their successes or their failures. They also appreciate the fact that this support is unconditional, unlike what can happen with friends. The appreciation of this central aspect of intergenerational relations is usually expressed using the terms affection, love and support, although there are some adolescents who are fully aware of what that means and they express it in their explanations of what a family is and what it offers children:

"The good thing about the family is that everything stays at home, both the good and the bad, and no matter what happens you know they'll always be there for you" (L2: mj14)

"It's a group of people with whom you feel safe, who support you and with whom you can be yourself" (Z25: mj15)

"The family is very important because you can talk to them and tell them how you feel" (Me7: mj12)

"The family is like a friend except that they never leave you. Friends can last all your life or maybe just a few minutes, but your family is something that will never leave you, unless there's a problem. You always lean on your friends for support during the good times and sometimes during the bad times, but your family is there all the time, at every moment of your life, good times, bad times, financial, death, etc." (B18: mjXd)

There were cases in which the assessment of the family in general was understood as an assessment of the extended family. As occurs with the nuclear families in which they live, the opinion of the extended family in the vast majority of cases is also very positive. The adolescents appreciate having contact with their grandparents, particularly the emotional aspect, and with their cousins, in this case because it generally involves spending free time together and doing fun activities in which the adolescent, particularly the younger ones, enjoy doing things with people other than just their parents and siblings.

"I like big families .... because I have a good time with them and they're always willing to help" (M3: v13)

Despite their overall positive opinion of the family, the adolescents do not tend to have a totally idealised view of the family and family life. On the one hand, they recognise that the more or less occasional disagreements and conflicts are a normal phenomenon of daily family life and on the other hand they are fully aware of the existence of abuse and domestic violence.
“(A family is) a united group that has a squabble at one time or another every day” (A68:12o)

“What would you do without them (the family)? Believe me, friend, you’d be lost... Who’s going to love you or understand you more than they will? No one, not even yourself ... (but) no relationship is perfect. We’ve all got our own personalities and sometimes you don’t even realise it but it all goes back to your family. In other words, any problem you have you’re going to take it out on them, but even so you love them and they love you so much that they are afraid of seeing you suffer or simply of losing you and they would do anything in their power for you” (B21: mj14d)
3. **THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

3.1 **Adolescents’ perceptions of the roles of women and men in contemporary society**

Within the context of these compositions, i.e., in their self-presentation to the adult world and their evaluation of its attitudes and behaviours, the message of the equal rights and obligations of men and women is deeply rooted in the younger generations of both sexes. With only the occasional exception that translates into a sort of chauvinistic pride among some of the males, the clearly dominant discourse among the adolescents of both genders is an affirmation of equal rights and an acknowledgement of the reality of discrimination in social relationships.

The identification of gender-based discrimination tends to be implicitly perceived, noting that the social position of men and women has greatly improved but that full equality has not been achieved, or explicitly, denouncing the existence of discrimination in society and identifying discrimination with chauvinism. When referred to explicitly, discrimination against women is perceived, on the one hand, in general terms (“men are considered to be better” (Me8: mj12d) or “men are more highly valued than women and women have fewer opportunities than men” (Ma64: v16 one), but it is most frequently associated with the workplace, i.e., the types of jobs women hold and the salaries they receive or with family life, i.e., the unequal distribution of household chores, and also with domestic violence against women. Thus, adolescents of both sexes frequently condemn the fact that women do not have the same access to jobs as men do and that their salaries are lower:

“Getting back to the subject of work, sometimes men and women receive different salaries for the same job. I don’t think that’s right. I also don’t think that it’s right to differentiate between jobs for men and jobs for women. I think that both sexes are able to do the same jobs without being discriminated against based on their sex. They shouldn’t receive different salaries either.” (L4: mj12o)

“I think that women and men have the same rights and opportunities to work in the same jobs and that there shouldn’t be any discrimination against them... I’ve been taught to see men and women equally and so I don’t see any big differences between them, except that the first one to say that we are all equal is the Church. But I say that if we are equal, why can the Pope only be a man and not a woman? Why aren’t there women priests? They’re the first ones who should see this, if I’m not mistaken” (L8: mj14d)

“In modern society, women are discriminated against in the workplace since they earn less money. As far as work is
concerned, society still thinks that there are some jobs that women cannot do… Some people think that men are better able to do some jobs such as construction work, although it is preferable to hire a strong woman over a weak man, but there are many people out there who would rather have no employees than hire a woman” (C16: v15d)

“Men can find more jobs than women because in some jobs they are very chauvinistic although some are feminists. Men get paid a little more for their work and men are more highly considered than women. Men can be kings but women can’t” (Me37: v12o)

“…men have it easier than women in everything” (Se21: v15o)

While the girls’ discourse is more assertive and more demanding than the boys’, which shows that they are much more aware of gender-based discrimination, most of the boys also subscribe to the value of equal rights and equal treatment and denounce the injustice of gender-based discrimination. Furthermore, more boys than girls denounced maternity-related discrimination, although the level of awareness of this type of discrimination among the younger generations is still very low, even when discussing their future family plans:

“My perception of men and women is that men in all kinds of jobs reach the highest positions while women get stopped at the halfway point even though they are just as able as men. But raising a family prevents them from getting more involved in their work. Women earn less and they get sacked when they’re going to have children because they lose money. I think that the politicians could do more to achieve equality between men and women” (M1, v13d)

“They both have the same rights/responsibilities but sometimes this is not recognised by their bosses. They don’t hire women because they could get pregnant and then they lose money” (Ma63: v17d)

However, as mentioned above, discrimination is not perceived only in the job market but in the domestic sphere as well. Many girls are aware of the fact that women who work outside of the home work a double shift and, as we will see bellow, they condemn the unequal distribution of household chores. This perception is much less widespread among the boys and requires a much more profound awareness-raising effort. Besides the unequal distribution of household chores, gender-based discrimination in the household is also associated with gender violence. In fact, a high degree of sensitivity toward this social blight is observed on the part of both girls and boys.

“My opinion of the family in Spain is not very good. I think that men believe they are "superior". This is what I deduce from the way they abuse women, which I think is terrible” (A65: v13o)
“My perception of men and women is very different. For example, in many couples, the man abuses the women, mistreats her, makes her do things she doesn’t want to do” (B39: v13d)

“In my family, women and men are equal. However, I see inequality in the world outside my home. I’m bewildered by all of the cases of abuse they show on the television. I don’t understand the brutality of certain people who think they are better than others. I don’t agree with either one of the extremes (feminism and chauvinism)” (L18: v13d)

“In today’s society, we are being told that there shouldn’t be any difference between men and women, but the everyday reality is very different: there’s a thing called “gender violence” against women in which the man imposes his will on her thanks to his physical strength.” (L16: v14d)

In any event, many adolescents of both sexes point out that discrimination has been reduced considerably in recent years in Spain, which is not the cases in other countries, emphasising in this regard the situation of women is Muslim countries. The adolescents who refer to this circumstance tend to associate the Muslim religion with discrimination against women, although there are also those who criticise the Catholic church for discriminating against women by not allowing them to be priests, as illustrated above. Despite this acknowledgement of the drop in discrimination and the erosion of chauvinism, the dominant discourse is that society has still not achieved full equality and that it must continue to strive toward that end until it is achieved. Once again, while the girls are more critical of the achievements, the boys also believe that chauvinism and all gender-based discrimination should be eradicated, although in most cases they are not fully aware of exactly which aspects need to be improved:

“society is improving, although it still has a long way to go. This is a chauvinistic society with traces of antiquity” (Z31: v12o)

“improve, I don’t know what else to write” (Z44: v13d)

“men and women in this society are a little bit more equal than years ago” (Me38:v12d)

“I also believe that women have been climbing “steps” in recent years but they still need a final push to put them on the same level as men, which is where they deserve to be” (A65: v13o)

“There is not as much chauvinism nowadays, but there is still some (chauvinism) and it must be eliminated” (Ma44:13o)

Therefore, the dominant discourse of the younger generations focuses on the need for equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women so that each one can choose his or her own lifestyle according to his or her own aspirations and desires, without their sex conditioning the
expectation or the possibility of making them a reality. This does not, however, preclude the existence of critical attitudes toward the new social prominence of women, in many cases because they feel threatened or berated by the feminist discourse. In this regard, there are numerous criticisms of feminism, equating feminism with chauvinism, even among the girls:

“men should go to work and women should take care of the family” (B30: vXo)

3.2 The adolescents' perceptions of gender differences

In keeping with the discourse on the equal rights of men and women, the dominant discourse on gender differences highlights the non-existence of such differences or the acknowledgement of physical differences only, understanding such physical differences as merely different sexual organs or different sexual organs and the greater physical strength of men. While there are many examples of this, below we cite only some of the different ways in which the adolescents have expressed these ideas:

“we are all born on earth and we all have red blood running through us” (C1: mj14di),

“Men are more hefty, they usually have more body hair and some are more muscular than others and will therefore always be stronger. Men’s voices and reproductive organs are different than women's. On the other hand, women are much weaker physically, they usually have more body fat, their skin is soft and their voices are much more high-pitched than men's and the main difference is that they are the ones who get pregnant” (Z12: mj13o)

“I really don’t see much of a difference between men and women, although it is true, for example, that in the news you always see more men killing women, planting bombs, etc. But there are also women who plant bombs, kill, abuse, etc.” (Ma15: mj13d)

“The difference between a man and a women is only physical, because whatever a man can do a woman can do too, as long as she is prepared” (I11: mj)

“We are all different, regardless of our sex, but we should all be equal in rights and responsibilities” (L19: v12)

“In society, men are only different in terms of their physical appearance, since we are only different physically. Because mentally, men and women think and are both equally intelligent. You don’t need to be a man to decide something; women can do it themselves. Women are not embarrassed to express their feelings, whereas men are” (C16: v15d)
“I don’t think that men are stronger than women. I don’t believe that, nor do I believe that men are smarter than women. I think that the differences vary from person to person, regardless of sex” (M3: v13)

However, along with the dominant equality discourse, there are also adolescents who are particularly assertive and who attribute certain special qualities to their sex to the exclusion of the other. This type of discourse comes most often from women, while among the males, within the framework of camaraderie of the group of friends of the same sex, the discourses tend to be demonstrative of who is the most "macho", but within the framework of public opinion (represented by the composition), they tend to be defensive. The types of attributes which the women usually mention as differentiating them from the opposite sex and which, explicitly or implicitly, should be understood as making them superior to men, have to do with intelligence, sensitivity and industriousness in school and the workplace:

“People think that men are physically and morally stronger than women. I don’t believe that. A woman can outdo a man if she puts her mind to it.... We are smarter, we just don’t have enough opportunities” (M5: mj13d)

“Women have different personalities than men. Women are more sensitive, they like to be perfectionists, they like to do things right. But men are more careless, less perfectionists, they like to do things faster and without paying too much attention.” (L1: mj14d)

“Women are much smarter than men.” “Men may be stronger than women, but women are smarter than men” (I7:v13o)

“Women are harder workers and more careful than men” (S10: v14di)

“Men work a lot and women work less” (Ma 54: v15o)

“Men are better than women ...(although) women have the same qualities as men” (Ma38: v13)

“Women have it easier on competitive exams. Why don’t women do the same physical tests as men to be Civil Guards? Don’t they want the same rights?” (Ma61 : v16o)

“Women are always complaining that men and women are not equal. Women always complain that there very few women in management positions. Women are always boasting about how much smarter they are than men and always calling men “stupid”, “useless”, “awkward”, etc. There are seven women for every man on Earth. If there are so many of them and they are so much smarter than the ignorant men, then tell my why you don’t see more women in government, in those offices they’re not allowed to access?” (Z50: v14d)
“Women want everything ..... Women are worse than men.... And women are more nervous and men have more freedom” (Se9:v13o)
4. ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FAMILY

Ascertaining the scope of the change in the distribution of family responsibilities among the different members of the family and the scope and characteristics of men's involvement is a methodologically complex task, particularly in times of sweeping change such as the times we are living through now (Coltrane, 1996). In Spanish society, and this is demonstrated by the surveys, by the discussion groups and by the adolescents’ compositions, there is a general consensus on the need for a fair and balanced distribution of family responsibilities in which all members of the family, men and women, parents and children, must participate in household chores (Meil, 2005). However, according to a survey conducted by the Sociological Research Centre in 2003 (CIS, 2003), a majority of married women consider that they do more than they should (56%) while half of the married men consider that they do less than they should. It should not come as a surprise, then, that there is a generalised consensus on the need for men to assume more responsibility in family life. However, when one raises the question of what each member of the family should be doing, the men say that they do more than the women admit that they do and the children also state they the contribute much more than their parents recognise. In a context where gender roles are being redefined and when the social norms affirm that everyone must collaborate, each family member tries to present the most favourable image.

In this regard, the qualitative techniques of discussion groups and compositions are not the most suitable tools for ascertaining the scope and characteristics of the changes in the distribution of family responsibilities among family members from a quantitative point of view. The qualitative techniques used in this report, however, enable one to determine how the players involved interpret and view the distribution of family responsibilities, thereby offsetting the limitations of quantitative studies. Below we will analyse the results obtained from the discussion groups, which will enable us to determine how the parents’ view the situation, after which we will focus our attention once again on the adolescents’ opinions.

4.1 The distribution of family responsibilities from the parents’ point of view.

When the parents were asked about this in the discussion groups, the first reaction of the women was one of recognition that things were changing, but underscoring the limited scope of the changes and, above, all, the fact that the responsibility for the smooth operation of the household and the family continues to lie squarely with the woman.
Contrary to this interpretation, the men, referring to their own situations or those of people they knew, noted that the distribution of family responsibilities among the spouses has changed radically compared to their own parent's era and they complained that the women refuse to acknowledge this:

"Man: And I'm the one who has bathed the girls more and she herself recognises this. I'm not bragging here. That's just the way it is and I think there are a lot more people out there like me. The thing is that women, by nature, like to criticise their husbands. I don't know why." (G 1, p. 12).

Despite the different opinions, there is a general consensus on the limited scope of the egalitarian distribution of family responsibilities, especially with regard to household chores. Regardless of the family situations of the people who participated in the discussion groups, there is recognition that in most cases the greater involvement of men is focused on a limited number of domestic chores and/or only for certain limited periods of time (weekends, holidays, etc.). The scope of this participation is described as "help" rather than a shared responsibility, although there was a general tendency to argue that greater change is perceived among the youngest generations of fathers than among the fathers of adolescent children. The most frequent criticism of women is that men do not see (or don’t want to see) the work that needs to be done in the home and that they limit themselves to doing only what they are asked to do, without having any initiative of their own. In this regard, what the women want, and particularly those with paid work, is for the men to be more responsible, i.e. for the men to do the housework on their own initiative rather than as a reaction to a specific request for collaboration:

"Woman: I think that even today men still have the feeling - I think so, I don't know - that the woman is the one who runs the home, regardless of whether or not the woman works, she is the one who runs the home and he helps out .... Woman: My husband, for example, if I tell him to empty the dishwasher, he empties it, or if I tell him to load it, he does it, but he doesn't think of doing it himself. (G 1, p. 11)
Woman: .... I don't know whether they can't see or they just don't want to see things. They limit themselves to what you tell them. If you tell them to put something there, they do it, but if there's anything else along the way that needs to be done or cleaned, they just leave it. In other words, they only do what you tell them to do so they don’t have to listen to you tell them off"(G 2, p. 2).
Woman: "Sometimes it seems like they don't have eyes in their heads. They only do exactly what you tell them to do and the rest, anything else along the way, they don’t do it. My husband is like
that. It's not that he refuses to do it, but anything he sees along the way, if I don't tell him it's included in the deal, he just ignores it" (G 2, p. 10).

The men who are most closely involved in their respective families criticise the fact, as mentioned above, that the women refuse to recognise the extent of their collaboration and always want to keep the responsibility for themselves, so that when the man does things on his own, his involvement is interpreted in the best case scenario as collaboration or perhaps as “help” but never as responsibility assumed by the man. The reason for this lack of recognition is attributed to the fact that "the home is always the woman's and always will be the woman's domain (man, group 1, p. 13) in the sense that the woman generally perceives the home as something that belongs to her, a field of personal expression over which she does not want to lose control and therefore cannot allow shared responsibility. Interpreting what the males involved in domestic work were trying to say in the discussion groups, it can be said that what they were complaining about was that their involvement is interpreted by women not as sharing the responsibility but rather in the same terms as the assistance provided by remunerated domestic help (a cleaning women).

Notwithstanding the empirical reality of how the household chores are divided up and the men's and women's different interpretations, logical in any social redefinition process, the discussion groups bear witness to the fact that considerable cultural changes are taking place in the concept of gender roles in the sense that both men and women recognise that men should participate in all kinds of domestic tasks and that this is neither a reason to feel ashamed nor does it have a negative effect on male masculinity. Moreover, in the image which the males wish to transmit to the outside about themselves, not only are they not ashamed of admitting that they collaborate, but rather, and depending on the circumstances, there is a desire to demonstrate that they do participate which gives them a feeling of pride. As we will see below, these characteristics are much more accentuated when it comes to taking care of children. As for the women, although they are generally critical or very critical of the limited scope of their spouses' collaboration, they also appear to be proud of that collaboration. In this regard, one of the most important barrier to the increased involvement of men in family life, i.e., gender identity, has been broken down. However, work still needs to be done to modify the definitions of general roles within the family since, as one of the women herself admitted:

Woman: “Look, if I see (a man) with a dirty or wrinkled shirt, I don’t think to myself ‘That man didn’t wash or iron his shirt’. Instead, I say ‘What a wife he must have. She didn’t even iron his shirt’. So I think that we’re also partly at fault.” (G2, p. 10)
Toward a new paternity model

With regard to child care, however, there is more of a consensus between men and woman on the father's involvement in raising children than there was in the past. And this is seen as very positive not only by the mothers but also by the fathers, who with great pride and satisfaction describe how they have changed diapers, bathed their children when they were young, taken them to the park, to and from school and/or to their extracurricular activities or played with them. In the discussion groups, although there were no cases of fathers who had stayed home to raise their children, there were mothers who had done so (group 1) and there were fathers who had changed jobs in order to be able to spend more time with their families (group 3). A new discourse clearly emerged from the discussion groups about what fatherhood should be in today's society, about what makes a "good father", which coincides with what children expect or desire of their parents. From today's perspective, a "good father" is not only expected to contribute economic resources to the family but also to be actively involved in raising and caring for his children. The principal traits that characterise this new concept of paternity are as follows:

- Spending time with children, i.e., devoting much more individual time during the week than in the past to doing activities with them.

  "Man: Well, I think that a good father is when they see you, they see you as a good father. Now, just what you have to do to achieve that, I don't know. Earn it. It's many things: it's participating, helping them, getting involved, but the question is whether everyone else sees you as a good father" (G2, p. 12).

- Active involvement in caring for and raising children (depending on their ages, bringing them to school and/or picking them up, taking care of them, helping them with their homework, etc.). These tasks are considered an integral part not only of the mother's obligations but also the father's.

  "Man: One who participates fifty percent or more in taking care of the house and the children. That's it. It's just that simple as far as I'm concerned There's nothing more to it" (G2, p. 12).

- Willingness to have good and fluid communications with them, in the sense of creating a climate of confidence in which they are able to express their opinions, experiences, concerns or problems spontaneously. What men should aspire to is to be an important part of their children's private lives and to have a privileged
relationship with them similar to the kind they have with their mothers.

“Man: For example, I have two daughters, one is fifteen and the other one is twenty years old, and I try to talk to them about anything. In other words, they shouldn’t be afraid of me just because I’m their father. If they bring their friends home or if they’ve had forty different boyfriends, I don’t say anything. I talk to them openly about things. Woman: But you couldn’t do that with your father when you were their age, maybe with your mother. Man: But never with my parents” (G3, p. 9).

- Being involved in the children’s play time and free time, either doing fun things with them like riding bikes, playing ball or playing board games, or facilitating their leisure time activities by accompanying them to ballet, swimming, football, etc.

- Considering the time devoted to children and being involved in their care and attention not only as an obligation but also as a source of personal satisfaction and fulfilment.

“Man: Talking about sharing the responsibility for the children, I believe that as part of the generation with young children today, fathers have the obligation on the one hand but also, in my opinion, the privilege of being, as he said, friends, of being listeners, teachers and fathers. It is a privilege which previous generations, for one reason or another didn’t have because different roles didn’t exist, but I think that that we are privileged in that not only is it an obligation but also the joy of raising our children” (G2, p. 7).

In Spanish society today, as in other developed countries, a new model of fatherhood has emerged which does not differ substantially from the motherhood model. The traits that are mentioned when defining a good father include “giving them an education and affection”, “security”, “unconditional support”, “being involved”, “being there for them at all times”, “satisfying all their needs, not their whims”, “they trust you”, “they’re not afraid of you”, “dialogue”. The father, then, is expected to be a provider of economic resources, an educator, caregiver and protector of his children as well as a playmate, just like the mother.

**Strategies for involving men more in family life from a parenting point of view**

The reasons given for the lower level of involvement of men in family and domestic responsibilities are a mixture of structural and cultural reasons which are perceived as difficult if not impossible to
change. In reality, there is no clear idea in any of the discussion groups or in society in general of the strategy that should be used to get men more involved in family life other than educating them on equality.

The main obstacle of a structural nature that is cited, particularly by men and homemaker women, is the structure of the workday in Spain, where the split shift predominates and people tend to get home from work very late. In this regard, it is argued that if people were able to get home sooner, the men would be more involved. While acknowledging that the working hours in Spain are not compatible with family life, the most involved men also argue that not everyone works a split shift and or gets home from work that late, so there are also cultural reasons.

One of the first cultural reasons cited is how men and women understand their roles in the family, each one placing the responsibility on the other. The men are accused of lacking any real interest in being more involved, particularly when it comes to household chores and more specifically as far as cleaning (the house and the clothes) is concerned. This lack of interest is evident not only in the refusal of many men to actually do the housework but also in the lack of initiative discussed above and generally in the different standards of orderliness and cleanliness in the household. While the least collaborative men remain tellingly silent, revealing a lack of interest that reflects their absence of responsibility in this regard, the most closely involved argue that women are more “punctilious” or “perfectionist”, which some of the women themselves also acknowledge. The women, on the other hand, accuse the men of being “messy”, of “not caring” or simply of waiting until the women take the initiative because once they do then the men will not have to do it themselves or will only have to do what they are asked to do.

“Man: ... It's a question of timing. She sees the house as being a little bit messy and a little bit dirty whereas it’s still acceptable to me, so she starts cleaning before me. Woman: Yes, that’s true. Woman: That’s true. Woman: Maybe we have wider or stricter parameters than you because right away we start to say, ‘Gosh, what filthy curtains’ and my husband says to me ‘You’re always going on about the curtains or the windows. They're fine’ Woman: That’s why I say I don't know if they just don’t see things. Woman: Maybe we make more of a big thing about order and cleanliness, maybe we’re more punctilious” (G2, p. 2).... (however)” Let’s not be fooled. As soon as you see that they're going to do it for you, you let them do it and you just withdraw” (G1, p. 12)

In this regard, not only are men accused of a lack of interest, but there are also women who acknowledge that they are partly to blame for the low involvement level of men, either because they place strict demands on the performance of household tasks or because they do not
want to delegate responsibility or because their spouses have not been properly trained or do not have the right mindset.

The strategies proposed to promote greater male involvement in family life focus, on the one hand, on promoting more flexible work schedules which would enable men to leave work earlier and therefore conciliate their work and family life. Based on the new paternity model, it is argued that working conditions that are more favourable to the conciliation of work and family life would make it possible for men to spend more time with their children and assume more responsibility, such as taking them to school or picking them up, being involved in their free time or education (help with homework) or night-time routines. What is seen as being more difficult is that an increased amount of time for the family will translate into greater participation in household tasks. While there is a relationship between the amount of involvement in educating and caring for children and the performance of household chores, all of the studies indicate that fathers are more willing to assume more childcare responsibilities, since it provides them with personal satisfaction and identification, as mentioned above, than to do more housework.

To foster greater involvement by men in all aspects of family life, the focus needs to be on educating both men and women about equality and responsibility, both in school and at home. In this regard, one of the most important aspects of educating children in the home is to ensure that both boys and girls collaborate and assume the responsibility for all kinds of chores, not so much so that they learn how to perform them but rather so that they do not come to be identified with a specific gender and so that doing them is seen as something natural. Despite this emphasis on education, there is widespread scepticism.

“Woman: Educate women, re-educate us. Woman: Yes, in primary school, secondary school, to tell them he’s not setting the table for you, he’s just setting the table, he’s not taking the laundry in for you… Woman: Change their mindset (the men’s). Woman: So that they know that if a woman is staying at home it’s because of the children or because she didn’t have any other options or whatever. Woman: Perhaps not a sexist education, but for the whole society, not just in the home but generally, that’s very difficult, it’s a utopia, I mean, what would that require, education, a non-sexist education but that’s a complete utopia.” (G1, p. 14).

4.2 The distribution of family responsibilities from the adolescents’ point of view

The distribution of housework between parents
This is the part that the adolescents devote the most space and attention to in their compositions, perhaps because it is the first subject they are asked to address and an easy one in that they are asked to describe their daily life. The degree of detail with which they do so, however, varies widely, bearing witness to the fact that they have a very limited awareness of the workload involved and the variety of domestic tasks that must be performed to keep a household running.

The most succinct descriptions include examples such as “My mother does everything” (Se5:mj12o), “My father and my mother split the work” (Me13:mj13o) or “My father doesn’t do much because he works; my mother takes care of the house” (Me 50:v15o) or “We all do things, but mostly my mother and I (Z26:mj15d), “In my family we all collaborate, except for my brother who is studying” (Ma30:mj16d). The most detailed descriptions list the tasks performed by each member of the family, but only referring to some of them, as we will see below.

The adolescents’ descriptions cannot always be taken as a neutral analysis of how the housework is divided up between the parents and there are several reasons for this. First of all, one must consider the selective vision which social actors hold of the social reality in which they live and which also affect adolescents of both sexes. But above and beyond this general epistemological limitation, and as seen above, most of the adolescents are not fully aware of the multiple tasks involved in running a household and therefore when describing how the tasks are divided up they do not address all of the tasks involved, which in turn makes it difficult to accurately ascertain how the workload is divided in these adolescents’ homes. This selective observation of reality is also very much conditioned, as it is in the case of the adults as well, by the adolescents’ sex. Generally speaking, the girls tend to provide more exhaustive and precise descriptions than the boys, which is but one more reflection of the sexual division of housework which enables the women to perceive more clearly those dimensions that affect them most or which could affect them in the future. On the other hand, adolescents of both sexes tend to underscore that the housework is “divided” among all family members. This “division” however is understood very differently from one person to the next, ranging from a very traditional division of the housework with occasional help from the father to much more egalitarian schemes, as we will see below. In this regard, most of the adolescents seem to have internalised the norm that all members of the household should collaborate with household chores, which is why they tend to underscore what they and their fathers do around the house, regardless of the frequency with which they do it. In the vast majority of cases, the adolescents emphasise the division of chores and collaboration without evaluating whether the work is divided equally or equitably and therefore from a very non-critical perspective.

Despite this, the compositions illustrate how things are slowly changing as far as how the workload is distributed among parents and
how the male children are starting to collaborate on some tasks, although in many cases this collaboration is limited to little more than making their beds or setting the table. Given the characteristics of the study and the limitations discussed above, it is not possible to undertake a quantitative study of the scope of this division from the children’s point of view or to classify the families according to how the housework is divided. Nonetheless, the compositions show that although the traditional model still dominates, in many families of all social classes the fathers have begun to be actively involved in areas which in the traditional model of housework distribution were reserved exclusively for women. There were even some cases in which the girls specifically noted that their fathers did more housework than their mothers.

When the father is practically not involved at all, often adolescents feel the need to justify the absence of such involvement. One of the justifications has to do with the traditional assignment of roles, i.e., the father “works” and the mother is a “housewife” or “works at home”. They go on to note, however, that the father helps when he can or on weekends. Some examples of how this is described by the adolescents are as follows:

“(the way it works is that) my mother does the housework and my father goes to work” (L15: v12o);
“I think that the way my parents divide the work between them is even ... since my mother doesn’t work, she cooks, cleans, does the laundry, etc. ..... My father works in the morning and in the afternoon he helps my mother with the housework (GM, washes the dishes)” (A49:v12o).
“Women are still the ones who work at home and the men go out to work. Women have more free time” (S13: v12o)

The girls’ description is not much different than the boys:

“Since my mother doesn’t work and she stays at home, she does most of the housework ...” (I19: mj13o)
“My mother takes care of the house and my father works hard to pay for my ballet classes” (Ma17: mj13o)
“My mother doesn’t work; she’s a housewife.... My mother usually does the housework because I go to high school, my sister goes to primary school and my father works” (L5: mj12o);
“My mother does the housework because my father works, although he doesn't help much” (Me21: mj13o);
“My mother takes care of the house and my father helps her whenever he can since he works all day” (Z13: mj13o);
“In my house, my mother takes care of the housework and my father works, although he helps my mother with the chores. My brothers and I also help her” (z10: mj13o)
Another reason frequently given to justify the lack of involvement is the amount of time that the father works or that he gets home late from work. Furthermore, this type of justification is usually given not only in those cases where only the father works outside the home but also in those cases where both parents work. Some examples of cases where only the father works outside of the home are as follows:

“The way the work is divided in my house is that my mother takes care of the house and my father works until night time, but if she needs help when he gets home, he helps her” (C25:v15o);
“My mother does almost all the work because my father leaves for work very early and gets home very late” (Me54:v14 o);
“In my family, the one who is usually at home is my mother since my father works until six forty-five.... but my father always helps out when he gets home” (Ma, 33:mj12o),
“My father doesn’t help out around the house but he works hard” (Ma: mj15o)
“My mother does all the housework because she has free time. I help her out quite a bit but my father not so much because he works” (S4: v12o)

And examples of this happening when both parents work outside of the home are as follows:

“He doesn’t help out much,... (but) it’s understandable. He gets up at 6:30 and usually gets home around 9:00. He’s comes home exhausted, takes a bath, has dinner and goes straight to the sofa. On Saturdays he only has the afternoon off” (L20:v13d);
“My father doesn’t do much (at home) during the week because he’s a lorry driver and he can’t. But on the weekend he does” (C13:v13d)

The fathers’ “help” varies greatly, but the compositions illustrate that it goes beyond the traditional male “assistance” with yard work or do-it-yourself jobs. The fathers' involvement ranges from doing dishes to ironing and includes cooking, cleaning and bringing the children to school and/or extracurricular activities and/or picking them up, although it cannot be deduced that the family responsibilities are divided equally between the parents. This “help” occurs in families from all social classes and all types of professional activities (builders, policemen, lorry drivers, farmers, office workers, teachers, highly skilled professionals, etc.) and in both rural and urban families. However, the “help” is more likely to occur in those families in which both parents work outside of the home, as broadly demonstrated by the quantitative studies on the subject (Meil, 2005), although changes are also being seen in this regard in families where
only one parent works outside of the home. Below we will look at some descriptions, starting with those of adolescents whose parents both work outside of the home:

“My mother does the shopping and cooking and my father occasionally cooks and cleans every night of the year” (S14: v12d; father is a builder);
“My mother... does all the housework.... My father (GM, starts work at 10) wakes us up, gets our breakfast and tidies up the house” (M1: v13d; father is a computer specialist);
“The way the housework is divided: my mother cleans the house, my father cooks. My brother cleans his room and sets the table and I set the table and clean my room” (Z44: v13d; father is a veterinarian);
“My father cleans, my mother cooks” (Z45: v13; father is a security guard);
“In my family, my father cleans the floors and the furniture, I pick up my room and my mother makes the beds” (Me38: v12 d; father is a teacher);
“When my mother works, my father does the cooking.... I usually do my homework and study with my father” (A43: v12d; father is a civil guard);
“My father is the one who usually does the “heavy” work although he often cooks and cleans also. My mother cooks, irons and cleans and helps my sister and me with our homework” (C30: mj15d; father is an office worker);
“My father cooks the meals every day, takes care of the patio and fixes anything that gets broken and my mother cleans the house” (Me 18: mj 13d; parents have a shop);
“My father usually makes the bed, sometimes cooks and irons. My mother does everything else.” (Me27: mj13d; warehouse manager);
“We have dinner together and then my father sweeps and dusts and my brother helps him. While they’re cleaning, my mother and I make the lunch and dinner for the next day.” (A3: mj 12d; father is a farmer)
“My father makes the lunch, feeds the dogs and makes his bed. My mother cleans, prepares the food, hangs the laundry, picks up the clothes and cleans the windows” (A19: mj12d; father is a builder).
“My father sweeps and mops and my mother works and also does some things around the house like wash and hang the laundry, iron, etc.”(Se31:mj13d)
“The division of family chores: My father cooks and does the laundry. My mother sweeps and mops the first floor. My sister sweeps the second floor and feeds the animals. I clean my room and feed my iguana” (l5:v15d)
In families in which only the father works outside of the home, the scope of the collaboration is much more limited and involves tasks of a lesser scope that require less effort, although from the adolescents’ point of view it serves to demonstrate that the housework is shared in their families. In any event, it also serves to illustrate how in many families with a traditional gender-based assignment of roles, a change is starting to take place in which the collaboration in household chores goes beyond setting the table. It is noteworthy that the boys are the ones most likely to underscore this aspect or to give specific examples of “help”, in keeping with the logic that appears to demonstrate the need to illustrate that the men also collaborate at home:

“My father drives me to school and helps my mother with the cooking at night. My brother and I hang the laundry and my sister and my mother do most of the housework” (Ma49: v16o; father is a builder)

“Juan explained to him that on earth everyone has a job to do at home. Juan said that in his house he dusted and made his bed, his mother made her bed and cleaned and his father swept and hung the laundry” (Me41: v13o; father is a lorry driver)

“My father: mops the floors and hangs the laundry” (Me56: v14o; father is a worker)

“My father helps a lot around the house: he irons, sews (and sometimes pricks himself), does the laundry, hangs the laundry out in the summer and puts it in the dryer in the winter, folds the clothes and … all the housework” (T19: mj11o; father is a worker)

“I think that my mother works a little more than my father … When my father has time off, they split the work. My father irons and prepares the meals and my mother cleans and sets the table” (A56: v12o; father is a police officer)

“My father is a farmer, but he also does things around the house like making dinner, shopping, cleaning, tidying” (S5: v12o; father is a farmer)

“My father…. when he’s finished (eating), he picks up the table and does the dishes so my mother can relax after an exhausting day. In the afternoon my father takes me to private classes” (A68: v12o; father is an office worker)

“In my house, we all collaborate. My mother cleans and cooks, my sister and I set the table and clear the table, my father irons and takes care of the clothes” (L6: mj12o; father is a doctor)

“At home, we all do the housework. I make my bed and I set and clear the table, my mother cooks and leans, my father takes us to the doctor, takes my brother to school, fixes things and helps my mother with some things” (C3: mj13o; father is a police officer)

“at the end of the afternoon... the father prepares the meal while the children play around and make a nuisance of themselves in the
kitchen and set the table. They all eat together and then clear the table, as usual” (A22: mj12o; father is a worker)

There are not many cases in which the argument that the work is divided equally between the parents is convincing. The first reason for this lies in the limited scope of the egalitarian distribution of housework, but it is also influenced by the adolescents’ lack of precision when describing and analysing the family reality in which they live and a generalised desire to portray an egalitarian and collaborative image of their families. The most detailed description we received was the following:

“Every morning, my father and mother make their bed together; I make my and my brother makes his. That means tidying up your room.
My mother normally prepares the lunch the night before. If it has to be fried, my father does it; if it’s a soup or stew, he heats it up and when we all get home from work or from school, my brother and I set the table while my father gets the food ready. For dinner, we usually all prepare our own unless there is something special for everyone, like vegetables, etc.
My parents do the shopping together and I help with the bags and putting the food away in the pantry.
My parents both work so we all have chores to do. My father does the laundry and vacuums once a week and my brother and I alternate between the first floor and second floor, sweeping, mopping and dusting. We all do the dishes every day, my father, mother, brother and I, unless we run the dishwasher.
My brother usually does the dusting because my mother and I are allergic to dust............................... I think that (my father) could do more because sometimes he tries to get out of some responsibilities like helping us with our homework or taking us to the doctor” (L2: mj13d; father is a driver and mother is a teacher).

However, the cases in which in the adolescents’ opinion the work is split evenly among the parents, while not the norm, are also not absent altogether. Some additional examples cited by daughters, who tend to be more critical than the boys, are as follows:

“(In my house) only my father and mother do the cleaning....my father cooks because he enjoys cooking and he’s very good at it. My mother cleans and my father helps her.” (Me9: mj12d ; father is a lorry driver)
“the chores should be divided among all members of the family. There should not be any difference between the father and the mother; both of them can do the same things... In my house, my
parents divide the work up equally... for me, it is a good example of equality between them” (A10: mj12 d; father is a doctor).

“In my house, they help one another. My father sews, cooks, cleans, hangs the laundry ... both parents can do that. If it were only like that in all families, everyone would be happier” Ma4: mj13d; father is a teacher)

“The housework is divided between my father, my mother, my cleaner and me. My father does the dishes and helps my mother with the cooking and fixes anything technology-related. My mother does some of the laundry, the shopping (although sometimes my father does it). Actually, she cooks a little bit more. My cleaner cleans and straightens everything. And I help with the cooking and straightening” (Ma10: mj12d; university professor)

“Both of my parents do the cooking and we all clean, my sister, my parents and me... We all help one another” (Ma15: mj13d, father is an office worker)

“...the work is split up so that everyone has to do something. For example: the mother hangs the laundry, cooks and mops the floors. The father makes the bed, does the laundry and mops the floors. The brother cleans the furniture and straightens up. I fold the clothes and help the others.” “In my house, we all collaborate, it doesn’t matter what sex you are” (I6: mj13d)

There are even cases in which, due to the particular circumstances, the children explicitly indicate that their fathers do more of the household chores than the mother. The cases we found were as follows:

“(In my house) the chores are divided up depending on what each one does best or likes to do, trying to divide the time evenly... although my mother tries to get out of it. An example of how the chores are divided would be: since my father doesn’t have a driver’s licence, my mother does all of the activities that require a car. Since she’s not a homebody, she handles all of the more social activities (like taking us to the doctor, going to meetings at school, shopping for clothes). My father is more of a homebody, i.e., he likes to do things at home like cooking and he likes things neat and clean so he tries to keep everything in order.” (M4: mj14d; father is a middle manager)

“My father does most of the housework because he doesn't work. He does the cooking and cleaning and makes the beds... My mother helps out at home when she’s not working” (L12: mj13; father retired, mother works)

“Since I’m the oldest, (my father) put me in charge of the dishwasher, but when he’s working and he’s going to get home late, I have to take care of my brothers and make their dinner. My brother, XXX, who’s in the middle, is supposed to sweep, but he
doesn’t do it so I end up doing that too, and I don’t think that’s fair.... My father does everything else, like the laundry and ironing. My sister and I help him with the cleaning and laundry....” (Ma19: mj13d; father is a technician; the mother works in another city and comes home on weekends)

The father’s involvement is seen as something natural by the children, both male and female. There is no criticism in this sense that such involvement questions the father’s masculinity; if anything, they are criticised for not being involved enough. In this regard, as mentioned above, there is widespread belief that men should be involved in household tasks and that they should share the workload, although this does not mean that the children identify with a model in which the housework is divided equitably. The children, particularly the males, view the way their parents organise the workload as something “natural” or “normal” regardless of just how the work is divided up. One does not get the feeling that they question the way in which the housework is organised, even in families where both parents work and the housework is not evenly distributed. On the contrary, as indicated above, the children tend to underscore the fact that everyone “helps”, the way in which they do so revealing a certain sense of pride.

There are, however, exceptions in which the children do emphasise the fact that the family responsibilities are divided unfairly or unevenly, either because of insufficient participation on the part of the father or the children themselves. While such criticism is more likely to come from the girls, who are much more aware of gender inequality than the boys, there are some cases in which it is also mentioned by the boys. In general, such criticism condemns the unfair or discriminatory nature of the division of the workload and hence the heavier burden borne by the mother, but there are also some cases in which the adolescents note that a more equitable distribution would result in all members of the family being happier or more satisfied, as can be seen from one of the excerpts transcribed above. Some examples are given below:

“This division (of household responsibilities) should be more equitable, organising shifts, if necessary, to do the work around the house so that if all members of the family collaborate everyone will have a lot more free time to themselves” (Z42: v13d)

“The father is usually lazier than the mother because there are some people who don’t want to do housework” (A79: v12d)

“I don’t understand why people think that only the mother has to take care of house and the children. Why is that? We’re all equal and we can all do the same things and there shouldn’t be any discrimination” (L5: mj12)

“There’s a difference... and we have to do away with it and that is that women are responsible for doing the housework” (L14: mj13)
“either one can do any of the (house) work, not just the women like many people think it should be” (Al, 34:mj14)

“The only ones who do anything around the house are my mother, my two sisters and me. My father sits on the sofa when he gets home from work (and) doesn’t help at all... I'm going to get married and I want to have 5 children, a good husband who helps out around the house and is clean” (Ma27: mj16o)

“The only thing my mother doesn’t do is take out the garbage because my father takes it out.... I don't think that women should be cleaning all the time or that men should not be doing anything” (C15: mj14o)

“The housework should be divided evenly and both people should know how to do everything so that they can help each other out and both being doing things at the same time... If men would help women and if they only understood that being a HOUSEWIFE is a job but one that you don’t get paid for, we wouldn't have all this abuse (domestic) and that’s what we get for having such a chauvinistic society. My opinion is that when the man is on holidays he should help the woman so that she gets finished sooner and has a Sunday off once in a while to relax and enjoy herself.” (B41: v13o)

“When both parents work outside of the home, the housework should be divided up rather than putting it all on the mother, as though she were the only one who knew how to do it... We used to have a chauvinistic society... But, thank God everything has changed and now both the women and the men do the housework.” (I10:v)

“As far as the family situation goes, I think that in most cases the housework should be divided more evenly since we live in a society in which in the vast majority of marriages both spouses work and it shouldn’t be up to the women to do all the housework. After working the same number of hours as a man, she shouldn’t be expected to come home and do everything herself. But this is the situation that almost everyone is accustomed to and there are still many women who just refuse to open their eyes, despite the numerous feminist currents out there ....... .In my opinion, mothers should take the initiative and “oblige” their husbands to collaborate at home much more than they do because women have just as much right to rest as men do” (O5: mj15o)

As can be seen from all of the excerpts transcribed above, in the vast majority of cases housework is not perceived as work but rather it is described in terms that elude the word work. Hence, housework may be referred to as "chores" or “housekeeping”, or the mother’s occupational activity is referred to as “my mother is a housewife” or “my mother doesn't work; she’s a housewife” (L5: mj12o). The occasions when the mother’s
profession is described by saying “My mother works at home, my father is a (carpenter, manager, etc.)” (Me 50: v15o; Me 51: v13o; A4: mj12o) or those who explicitly refer to housework as work (“My mother is the one who works the most at home....” (Me52: v14o)) are much less frequent. While the message of gender-based discrimination in the workplace has been assimilated by most of the girls as well as the boys, as we have seen before, the perception that doing housework and caring for the members of the family constitute a job, albeit a non-paying one, is not very common.

The fact that the adolescents view the uneven distribution of housework as a natural occurrence and the lack of awareness that housework is actually a job require awareness-raising efforts and the fostering of a critical spirit among the younger generations.

The children’s participation in housework

In view of the general sentiment that all members of the family should collaborate around the house, the adolescents’ compositions tend to underscore their contribution, no matter how minimal. A critical attitude toward the scope of this participation is observed in very few cases. The clearest example of this is as follows:

“The truth is that we have to admit that we are very lazy and that we like having everything done for us. We can barely make our own beds and pick up our dirty clothes, let alone do the cooking or shopping. Although we wouldn’t say this in front of them, we must admit that they do a lot for us. If we put ourselves in their place and consider that they have to do their own work and take care of us, the truth is that we do very little around the house. I don’t know how it must work in families where there are four or five children; I suppose they must help out. My parents usually tell us that it’s their fault that we are so lazy.” (O7: mj15d)

And when they have a guilty conscience for not participating, they usually argue that the children’s job is to “study”, which is why they cannot do more, or their own mothers may use this argument to justify not demanding that they collaborate more. While this type of justification is more common in girls than in boys and also in families where only the father works outside of the home, no chauvinistic arguments were observed in the compositions, such as “boys/men don’t do that kind of thing” or “boys don’t help out at home” or similar reasons. Neither did we observe arguments of a generational nature or related to the distribution of responsibilities among generations such as “Children don’t have to help out at home” or “It’s the parents’ job to take care of the house” or the like. As indicated above, there is an awareness that all members of the
family should collaborate. Some examples of excuses for not collaborating more are given below:

“My sister and I go to school, which is why we collaborate less around the house, although we do pick up our room, put our clothes away and set the table. My sister usually does less of these household activities because, due to her age, she is more concerned with playing” (L4: mj12o)

“My mother usually does the housework because I go to high school, my sister goes to primary school and my father works. But we do help out on the weekends.” (L5: mj12o)

The types of tasks on which the children collaborate most frequently are the simplest tasks which focus on the adolescents’ bedrooms, primarily making their beds, picking up their rooms and in some very particular cases, and more frequently among the girls, picking up their clothes. In addition to these tasks, the collaboration may also extend to setting and clearing the table and walking the dog if the family has one. The collaboration on anything other than these tasks is more infrequent, although it may include minor tasks such as sweeping, emptying the dishwasher, hanging the clothes or vacuuming, although these kinds of tasks tend to be done more frequently when both parents work outside of the home than when just one parent has a paying job. While the performance of these types of chores is cited more frequently by the girls than by the boys, it is not unusual that they boys may mention doing more than just making their beds and picking up their rooms. Below are some examples of how this collaboration is described:

“My mother does almost everything around the house but my father and I help out when we can. Everyone makes their own bed…. I set the table and sometimes sweep and mop” (B29: vXo)

“I set the table and my brothers clear it. I make my bed. My brothers do the shopping. My mother cooks. My mother takes care of the house” (Se2:v12o)

“In my house, the chores are split up between my father and me… I make my bed and when I get home early from school, I set the table. My parents cook, clean, sweep, mop, make their bed and my sister’s, do the shopping, etc. (L19: v12d)

“My parents are the ones who do most of the housework but we help them out in small but important ways, like taking out the garbage, tidying our rooms, making our beds, emptying the dishwasher, setting and clearing the table… (L22: v12d)

“There are three people in my family. My mother cleans, sweeps, irons, cooks, etc. My father sometimes makes the bed and loads the dishwasher. I tidy my room, make my bed, vacuum and load the dishwasher.” (Me53: v14d)
“My mother irons and sews, does the laundry and cleans the house during the week (on weekends she only cleans her part) and cooks almost every day. My father picks up his part of the house on weekends and also helps with the cleaning on weekends and cooks almost every Friday and some other times when my mother isn’t home. I tidy my room and set the table for dinner (and for lunch on weekends) and sometimes help my parents with things” (Z5: mj13d)

“Mother: lunch, dinner, cleans, makes her bed sometimes; father: breakfast, mop floor, clean; brother: lunch, clean, breakfast, vacuum, bed. Me: set the table, make my bed” (Z11: mj13d)

While there are girls who report discriminatory treatment by their parents in the assignment of household chores compared to their brothers, this is not the dominant discourse among the adolescents as far as their participation in household tasks is concerned. Most of the girls and boys limit themselves to describing the kinds of tasks they perform at home or to explicitly emphasising the fact that they participate in the housework. One cannot necessarily deduce from this an absence of discrimination in the education of the children in this aspect of domestic relations, but to the extent that it is not perceived as conflictive in a context within which the adolescents call for equal treatment, as can be seen below, it can be assumed that gender-based differential socialisation is either not widespread or not perceived as especially intense or discriminatory. Below are some examples of criticism in this regard that emerged:

“My brother has to do less than me. When I’m a mother, everything is going to be divided evenly.” (S11: mj13 d)

“My sister does more than me because I’m a little bit lazy” (S15: v13d)

4.3 The identification models assumed by the roles represented by the parents

In the vast majority of cases, children identify with the socialisation models they receive at home. Only in cases of domestic violence or a traumatic break-up of the parents do the children explicitly and decidedly reject the behaviours which are the cause of their suffering and unease. There are various forces that lead to identification with parental roles.

On the one hand, it must be noted that the family reality in which they live tends to be seen as the “natural” or “normal” thing, so that when they talk about their future behaviour as parents they identify it with that of their own parents. Various adolescents have underscored the socialising role that the family plays in this regard:
“I suppose I’ll behave like my parents since they have raised me a certain way and that will involuntarily be the way that I raise my own children” (C13: v15)

“I suppose it’ll be the same as my parents have done with me because that is what I have been taught all my life” (C6: mj14)

On the other hand, the strong bond of affection that prevails in the immense majority of the family relationships between generation and hence the high value placed on the family of origin, not only by the smallest members but by the oldest ones as well, leads children to identify with the family of origin and thus with the models represented by the parents.

There are aspects, as indicated above, where a more critical attitude of parental models is perceived such as, for example, the liberty granted to adolescents to organise their free time on the one hand and the distribution of housework on the other. When talking about their future conduct as parents, the adolescents who are critical of their parents’ behaviour in this regard note that they will be more tolerant or that they will not allow the work to be distributed unequally. As is well known, this does not necessarily mean that in the future they will actually organise their family life around such criteria. The generalisation of the standard that all members of the family, regardless of sex and social condition, should do their share of the housework lays the groundwork for couples in the future to negotiate a more balanced and fair distribution of family responsibilities. The dissemination of a new parenting model can also contribute decisively to that objective.

4.4 The expectations and outlook of adolescents concerning their future parental roles.

The vast majority of adolescents do not rule out the possibility of having a family in the future. Only in isolated cases do the adolescents explicitly state they do not want to have children and this is usually more frequent among the boys than the girls. This lack of desire to be a parent is usually related either to a very critical attitude toward the family in which they live or to a fear of the responsibility which parenting involves.

“I'm not going to have children. You're much better off not having to take care of anyone!” (B12: mj12d)

“I'll think twice before having children because it's not just something you do and that's it. There's a lot of responsibility involved in having a child” (Z8: mj13d)

“I don't think I'm going to be a father because it's a lot of responsibility” (A39: v13)
“I’m not going to have children. I’d rather live alone with five dogs and be a veterinarian which is my dream (cited above; complained bitterly that his parents don’t listen to him) (Ma43: v13d)

The adolescents’ expectations of how they will perform their roles as parents tend to be very generic, in some cases noting that they would like to be “the best parents in the world” or, on the more modest side, that they will “give them the best possible education”. In other cases, the children assume the models experienced in their own families, indicating that they will raise their children “as well as my parents have raised me” or “like my mother has treated me and taken care of me”. When there are certain aspects of the adolescents’ relationship with their parents that are especially conflictive or problematic, the adolescents tend to note, either explicitly or implicitly, that they will follow their parent’s model but will be more permissive, more comprehensive, nicer or that they won’t hit their children, or highlight that they will not be abusive.

“I hope I’ll be a good mother, more understanding with my children, helping them any way I can and listening to them... teaching them that we are all equal. I’ll teach them not to be so selfish,... more communicative and to talk more” (L9: mj14)

“I think that I’ll be like my parents. I won’t hit my children and I’ll set a good example for them of how people should behave” (Ma10: mj12d)

“When I’m older, I suppose I’ll behave like my parents since they have raised me a certain way and that will involuntarily be the way that I raise my own children. I’ll help out at home as much as I can. What I will do is give my children a little more freedom” (C16: v15)

“I’ll listen to my children. I won’t pressure them. I’ll pay attention to them. I’ll give them everything they need (aspects which the adolescent complains are missing in his family) and I’ll keep them away from drugs” (Ma60: v15d)

The younger generation therefore tends to project into the future their own experiences in their families of origin, taking them as a fundamental reference and placing the emphasis either on the aspects they consider to be especially relevant in intergenerational relations or on aspects of their relations with their parents which they view negatively. The last excerpt clearly demonstrates an awareness of the effects of socialisation in the parents’ household, emphasising a basic continuation of the role models experienced and internalised in the family, but at the same time illustrating that there is room for innovation and change. Affection and a good upbringing in a very unspecific sense are the two key elements that appear repeatedly when the adolescents talk about parental models. Greater involvement of the father in family life, participating actively in raising and caring for his children as a substantial
element of the educational project of his future children and as a
demonstration of his paternal love and affection does not appear as a
dominant element in the compositions, either because they are limited to
very general formulations or because this aspect is only developed in a
few unique cases, such as those cited below:

“The best I can, then I would try to balance things in my family,
with both of us doing the same things” (A65: v13 o)
“When I have children, I want to help raise them and I want my
wife to have the same rights as me and I think that the only thing
that abuse does is make women and children suffer” (S15: v13d)
“When I have children, I will get a good job and I will raise them to be
respectable members of society, but I will raise them with love and
affection. I will help my wife around the house and if she needs help
with her work” (L19: v12d)
“I will be strict but affectionate and I will try to spend as much time as
possible with my children. I will make sure they get good education and
stay healthy. First I will worry about what goes on in my own house and
then if I have time I will worry about friends or others” (A61: v12d)
“I will take a leave of absence to be my child and my wife” (L24: v12)
“If I were a father I would help around the house and I wouldn’t give
my children everything they want because that spoils them and
makes them very capricious” (A88: v12)
“I’m going to be really involved with my child” (Se10: v13d)

If we focus our attention on gender difference, it is very surprising
to find that there is not much difference between the girls’ discourse about
their future role as mothers and those of the boys regarding their future
role as fathers. The aspects mentioned above are common to both boys
and girls, as can be seen from the excerpts shown above to illustrate the
aspects analysed. Of all the compositions, there were only isolated cases
which revealed a more protective concept among the women and more
focused on the “breadwinner” model among the males. Some examples
are given below because of their unique, albeit not representative, nature:

“When I’m a mother, I will help my children with their studies, I’ll
take care of their health and if they don’t understand something I’ll
explain it to them. I’ll try to keep them happy, I’ll encourage them
when something happens to them or they need some kind of help.
I’ll give them advice on the pros and cons of things” (L4: mj12o)
“The first thing I would do is leave my job to be with my children, to
give them the best upbringing possible” (L6: nj12)
“I will try to be a good father. I’ll raise my children and I’ll work hard
to earn money and buy them things” (L23: v12m)
On the other hand, in their discussions of the type of family they would like to have in the future, it is also surprising how infrequently the adolescents make reference to the spouse’s role and the division of family and household responsibilities, particularly since it is an aspect they were asked to reflect on at the beginning of their compositions. This may be due to the fact that the adolescents are asked to describe what kinds of parents they think they will be but were not specifically asked to describe the kind of relationship they would like to have with the other person. However, in the few cases where it is mentioned, they underscore the desire for the obligations to be divided equally which, as mentioned earlier on, does not mean that they actually will. This emphasis on the division of family responsibilities is more likely to be part of the girls' discourse than the boys', but is not part of the specific demands formulated by the adolescents.

“As for the housework... I won’t allow it to be unevenly distributed” (Z8: mj13d)
“I would share the housework; I would cook some days and other days the father” (A7: mj12 d)
“I and my partner will help each other out for the wellbeing of our children” (Ma4: mj13d)
“I don’t intend to allow my husband not to do anything around the house. I’ll get a job and we’ll split up the work and if he refuses, we’ll separate” (Ma12: mj12o)
“I’ll try to work and take care of the house and the family along with my partner/husband...What I’ll try to avoid at least is that I have to stay at home to take care of the house” (Z5: mj13)
“When I have children, I’ll tell my husband and my child to help me around the house because if we do it together we’ll get it done faster” (B10: mjXo)
(very critical of the lack of collaboration on the father’s part) “What I won’t stand for is being the only one that does anything around the house. Everyone needs to help out, that’s what families are for (in my opinion)” (B17: mjXd)
“I think that the two of us will do the housework. And if I have a child we would both take care of him/her” (S14: v12d)
“I will love my partner and my children (if I have any) and I’ll help out as much as I can around the house” (A89: v12d)
“I'd like to have children and be a modern but responsible father” (Se48:v16)
5. OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The traditional vision of the roles played by men and women in the family are undergoing profound changes in Spanish society, particularly among the youngest generations. For the most part, these generations are the bearers of a new vision in which it is obvious that men and women should have the same rights and the same responsibilities in terms of their integration in the different areas of the social reality and therefore in the family and the job market, but also in terms of their participation in other social spheres such as politics or religion. In this regard, the youngest generations of both sexes denounce the gender-based discrimination, which they equate with chauvinism, that continues to exist in today’s society and which takes its most abominable form in the abuse of power exercised by certain men over certain women through gender violence. However, the fact that they have assimilated the message of equality between men and women and that, when asked, may be capable of defending and developing the message, does not mean that all kinds of discrimination does not still occur in the everyday lives of children.

The difficulties of moving the equality discourse to an assessment of the closest reality in which the children actually live can be seen in their description of how family and domestic responsibilities are distributed among the members of the family and their ideas about what their future families will be like. The generalised absence, particularly among males, of a critical view of the unequal distribution of responsibilities in their own families and the absence of explicit statements in this regard in their descriptions of what their own families will be like in the future demonstrates that in many cases the equality discourse has not been assimilated in their daily lives. It is necessary to continue internalising gender equality values, particularly among males, but also among women, so that, as one of the women in the discussion group pointed out “they see that he's not setting the table for you, he's setting the table; he's taking the clothes in for you…”. In other words, until they become co-responsible for the organisation of family life.

The one place where the most significant change was observed in ideas about gender roles was in the fatherhood model most highly valued by adolescents. The idea of what makes one a “good father” has changed drastically. In this new model of fatherhood, the traditional roles assigned to the father, such as “breadwinner”, disciplinarian and transmitter of knowledge have not disappeared, but rather have been enriched with new dimensions. Sons and daughters appreciate the fact that their fathers are not chauvinists or violent and that they are involved in household tasks and chores for the wellbeing of the entire family. The younger generations particularly appreciate the fact that their fathers are involved in their education and upbringing, particularly in their free time, either participating in activities with them or enabling them to do what they like to do (especially sports and other activities). When they feel that the time
spent with them in this regard is insufficient, they either call for more participation or criticise or lament the fact that their fathers do not spend enough time with them. The younger generations, therefore, want and expect the father to be affectionate and to show his affection, to be actively involved in their daily lives, in their worries and problems as well as their happiness and their achievements, in both the major milestones and the smaller successes. They want and expect their fathers to spend time with them, to pay attention to them, to make an effort and to be concerned about them, and they are fully aware of when these demands are met by their fathers. Therefore, the concept of a father in the eyes of the younger generation is not only that of a “breadwinner” but also includes attributes traditionally assigned to the maternal role such as “caregiver”, “protector” and “playmate”. However, when describing the type of family they would like to have and what they think they will be like as parents, none of these dimensions was developed by males or females regarding the kind of father they would like for their children. While this new model of paternity is not exclusive to the younger generations, since it has become a part of Spanish culture at this time and is already applied by their own fathers to a greater or lesser extent, it is necessary to continue raising people’s awareness of the validity and desirability of this new fatherhood model.
METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The report for Spain is based on the information provided by three discussion groups composed of parents residing in the Community of Madrid and the written responses of adolescents from a representative sampling of public schools nation-wide. The discussion groups were composed of an equal number of men and women, unrelated to one another, with children between the ages of 11 and 14. The family situations in which the study group participants live reflect the plural reality of Spanish families at this time, since they included people who were married, separated and remarried; people in households with one or two salaries; and households in which the housework was distributed traditionally and those in which the men collaborated actively. When forming the discussion groups, it was also ensured that they included people with different educational levels.

The following procedure was used to obtain a representative sample of the Spanish adolescents’ written responses about the family:

School selection process

The sample used in the Spanish report is composed of the written responses of students from 17 public secondary schools from all over the country. The field work started during the second half of January 2005, when a shortlist of schools was drawn up based on the following criteria:

Public schools were chosen from all over the country, six of them in three cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants, choosing two schools per city, one in the city and one on the outskirts. In addition, four schools were chosen in medium-sized cities and six in small cities. Other selection criteria included the following:

- The small and medium-sized cities are not near the large cities.
- They are not located in a single region but rather all over the country.
- The schools pertain to diverse cultural and social contexts
- Tourism areas were avoided.
- The sample included industrial and agricultural zones.
- The sample included depressed and developed areas.
- The sample included cities with different employment rates, particularly with regard to the employment rates of women and young people.
- Schools were chosen in cities with different types of economic activities.
- The sample includes areas with different levels of adaptation in relation to socioeconomic change and access to new technologies.
- Cities with different birth-rates were chosen.
- The sample includes areas with the presence and absence of permanent immigrant communities.
- Areas with different levels of civil society development were included.
- Both insular and continental areas were included.

Once the schools were chosen, they were contacted to find out the sex and name of the school headmaster in order to personalise the letters. The first letters were sent at the end of January 2006. The initial rejection rate was quite high at 50% (eight of the sixteen schools initially contacted).

The selection criteria for new schools to participate in the project were the same as those established for the initial selection of the sample, seeking the involvement of public schools nation-wide. In this regard, there are secondary schools from all regions, with the exception of the historical nationalities, none of whom agreed to be involved. The delay tactics used by many of the responsible parties until they finally declined to participate made it difficult to adhere to the initial timetable.

**Difficulties encountered**

The schools that agreed to participate from the start without reticence were few. In many cases, while the predisposition of the headmasters was positive, when the time came to consult with the teachers who would potentially be in charge of overseeing the project (language teachers, tutors or ethics teachers), they expressed reluctance which usually ended up with the school declining to collaborate. One of the most significant obstacles detected, and in many cases more implicitly than explicitly, was the subject matter addressed, particularly with reference to the evaluation of the family lives of the children who would be giving their written responses.

In view of the private and sensitive nature of the subject of the essays, many of the responsible parties chose to make the participation by adolescents voluntary and subject to parental consent. This meant that the adolescents had to write their responses in their own homes, resulting in a very low response rate. In addition, as a result of this procedure, numerous cases were observed in which the parents intervened in or supervised the work of their children. Such intervention was more frequent in cases where one of the parents is a teacher and is obvious, either because the children themselves have admitted it, or because it can be deduced from the spelling and punctuation (e.g., in the responses L3: 12; L7: 12), or because the accents were corrected after being printed (L7: 12) or because of the way in which the argumentation is put forward.
There was even one case in which the response was actually written by the father himself, a philosophy teacher (M3).

Another reason for the high rejection rate was the accumulation of requests by different institutions such as universities or educational authorities for schools to participate in different types of activities. Several schools put forth this type of argument, stating that their collaboration capacity was saturated. In some cases, we got the feeling that the fact that the request for collaboration came "from Madrid" contributed to the rejection in regions with strong nationalist sentiment. In any case, this limitation has no effect on the representativeness of the compositions since regional differences were not observed in any of the dimensions analysed.

About the use of the compositions

The interpretation of the guidelines for the compositions was not the same at all schools or even at the same school by all of the children involved. There are some which answer the questions as though responding to a survey, with very concise and not very informative answers, while others develop the proposed subjects in more detail. There are some responses that describe the family situation, while others take the opportunity to evaluate parental behaviour or the situation of the family in Spain in general. In those cases where the participants used the proposed figure of an alien to explain what a family is, the compositions are truly original in that they narrate all of the vicissitudes of the contacts and relationship with the extraterrestrial, but pay less attention to the proposed themes and the description of the reality of the adolescent’s family life. This is due the fact that the adolescents focus is on highlighting what defines a family and the importance of family to a child's welfare, overlooking other aspects as the compositions become considerably long.

In this regard, there are numerous compositions that constitute a very explicit expression of appreciation for all that the parents have done in raising their children, for all their affection and support. In fact, in some cases these expressions take on the character of a declaration of the child’s love for his/her parents. In other cases, the compositions are used to criticise the parents, particularly by the oldest adolescents for what they consider a lack of freedom or a lack of understanding. Some of the compositions also express the child's relief over the parents' separation following experiences in which one senses there was abuse involved and/or a high degree of conjugal conflict. There are other compositions in which the children denounce alcoholism and abuse by the parents. The adolescents exhibited a high degree of sensitivity toward domestic violence in general and gender violence in particular, so that when invited to describe the father’s behaviour toward the mother, many children noted
the absence of abuse by the father. In all cases, one confirms the centrality and enormous importance of the family on the lives and wellbeing of the adolescents.

**About the composition of the sample**

49% of the responses were written by boys and 51% by girls between the ages of 11 and 16. The social classes represented range from working class to upper middle class, albeit with a predominance of working class, lower middle and middle class, since most children of upper middle class families go to private schools. In this regard, there are children of farmers, builders, plumbers, construction workers, lorry drivers, administrative and commercial personnel, elementary, secondary and university teachers, doctors, architects, lawyers, engineers, company managers, public servants of different ranks, businessmen and independent professionals and self-employed people. Families in which both parents work outside of the home accounted for about 60% of the adolescents who live with both parents, a figure which is very similar to the national average. Immigration and single-parent families, both as a result of the death of one of the parents and particularly as a result of separation or divorce, were also reflected in the compositions.

In addition to the boys and girls who collaborated by responding, we would also like to thank the representatives of the schools involved and specifically the headmasters and teachers who facilitated and coordinated the process.
**List of Participating Schools**

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Gloria Fuertes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucas Martín Espino</td>
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