What About Some More Time For The Family?

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Abstract

In the complex relationship between social policies and family policies and around the time to dedicate to them in life, we want to analyse the problem from a different point of view in more detail: citizenship as the union of civil, politic and social rights aiming towards the admission in a society. Facing the problem in more detail means looking at the people, at their rights, at their protection, and at the wideness of these matters that never are "the same pack of rights equal for everyone".1

This point of view - according to our opinion - has at least two advantages: on one hand, to face the social reality not basing our thoughts on abstract theories, but in function of the concrete needs of those that take part in it, on the other, to be sure that those that take part in it, the same towards who are directed the social policies, may judge and control them. In this way it would be possible for the sociologist to study ways of facing properly the matters concerning his specific duties, and for the administrator, owner of the political responsability, to create ways of controlling and checking the proper strength of these programs.

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1 ZINCONE G. Da sudditi a cittadini, Il Mulino, 1992, 8-9.
1. Relationship concerning State and family and family models.

The relation between family and State is currently discussed because of the various and different cultural structures of the families in the society and because of the different possible State models.

Risking maybe to simplify a bit too much the various types of relations between family and State, we may briefly analyse these phases:

- assistance model: round about in the XVIII and XIX centuries, the State doesn’t still provide assistance for the families and if something is done for them it's thanks to the Church;
- economic model of social security: in the first half of our century we start to have an idea of what a family policy means, but the projects for the families are mainly faced towards the poorer families to be sure to let them have a decent kind of existence;
- welfare state: in the second half of our century the idea of family assistance is more printed in the various governments who start to guarantee to the whole population civil, political and social rights, with the creation of a system able to redistribute the resources among the inhabitants and with the creations of social services.

In this model we may find three different interpretations of State-family relation.

The first one is based on the massive presence of the State in the family and his guilt is to substitute himself to the family, assuming its functions.

The second one is based on the fact that the family is enriched with new duties by the State.

In both of these models the State is the art-director, the family is an actor: The State says what to do and how to do it, programming the sanitary policies, education and all that concerns the family.

But there might be a third model: it is based on a vision of the State as a resource of the family through the creation of ways of helping his growth from every point of view. 3

As the various kinds of families develop, it gets harder for the State to program ways of helping in the best ways the needs of the families and of the single people.

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2 DONATI P.P. Famiglia e politiche sociali, Franco Angeli, 1981, 189 ss.
If we take a look at what ISTAT says we may notice that from 1988 to 1994 there has been a great reduction of the components in the families and, more specifically, of couples with children.

The major causes of such changes are undoubtedly the fall of the births and the increasing number of older people, even tough there are new types of families that start spreading in our country: not married couples and couples that live together before the marriage still are not widely spread, but more frequent are the families resembled after the ending of the former marriage, the not married couples of bachelors and unmarried women.

Moreover, young couples tend to avoid getting married because of the difficulties of finding a job and an house and because of the increased independence of women: anyway, we may say that young people marry less then before and that the average age in which they marry is round about 23-26 for women and 26-29 for men, and that the average age increases the more they have studied and it is different from region to region.

Single people are generally more men that women and their number increases when their age is between 25 and 39 years. They are generally people who have never lived with a partner and that have never married, and are more present in the Centre-North of Italy and more numerous among the more rich-cultured people.

We would like to spend a few words on how women tend to organize their style of life. Two are the main choices: on one hand, the new generation tend to delay their experiences mainly because of the difficulties of finding a job and so they live longer with their parents; on the other, adult women taking part in various "activities", familiar or extra-familiar, or in their jobs, end up with many responsibilities due to their complex style of life and with no help from the State.

The consequences of such changes are that women tend to dislike the role of housewoman-wife-mother. The role of employed-engaged-woman with children is more frequent approximately when they are 35 years old or more. All this means that women in particular prefer studying more, so that their departure from their parents is delayed, and the women's role change (more girls that study compared to those employed or to those who live as housewomen) and consequently the will of being economically independent thanks to a job before leaving their parents delays also the average age of marriage and of the birth of the first child. The housewomen
are always less and the most of them are unhappy of their way of living mainly due to the difficulty of having a job.4

Many economists, psychologists and studios people have searched and argued on the causes of these events: one of the causes of the excessive work of the female sex is due to the bad division of the duties between men and women.5

According to a recent research Italian men are at the second place in the chart of those who work less in the house (9 hours in a week compare to 2,6 of the Japanese).6

This is also one of the cause of the fall of the births and of the weddings, the two main causes of the transformations of the Italian family: women tend to delay their desire of having a child, desire that still exists and that contributes together with the birth of a son to build up the identity of a woman.

3. Social and family policies.

As the welfare state develops it also takes part in organizing the good-functioning of the families. In the past this was a duty of the family and the State didn't take part in it: now, the government interferes with the duties of the families, and he becomes an ally.

This is also a way to show how social policies are thought separately from family policies, but it shows also that by dealing with family policies we get to deal also with social policies.

To summarize what we've said we may end up saying that social and family policies are deeply connected, but we must also say that it is important to have a concept of family policies independent and not influenced by external factors. 7

We may end up with the definition of family policies as those social policies that do not have social means but as those aiming directly to improve the style of life of the families and their social life.

Family policies must be specific and directed towards the family. They may be associated though also to the social policies, but not considered less important. They must help also understanding and analysing the social policies. If we interfere in

5 VALENTINI C. Le donne fanno paura, Il Saggiatore, 1997,80-82.
social policies we interfere also in certain aspects on the family. It is necessary to aim directly at the family with specific programs for it, to avoid certain social policies that tend to be too vague and not so useful for the family, considered as a group of people.

Aiming at family policies help the development of social policies able to resolve the needs of the family, needs that must be satisfied by the society.

This tough is not so simple. Anyway, it is a very important aspect. We must point at specific needs in various areas and at certain people. These areas are determined by precise needs: the economic point of view and all that is linked to it; the social services for the various people; the problems of finding a job and its consequences. Those who have problems and needs in these areas are helped by the State with appropriate programs and policies.

To be sure that family policies will be successful it is necessary to find a general balance with the continuous changes of the family models, that may guarantee a "bridge" between family and society, an equal division of the resources among the various families and their members, to give them the possibility of feeling useful and successful in society.

Another important aspect is the relation between family and services. What we would like to point out is that generally the members of the family have to organize their time to be able to use these services offered by the society. It should be the opposite instead. It is quite strange that the families have to organize themselves around these services and according to their "requests".

In these way these programs will never be able to substitute the family, but what is worse is that they are considered as programs aiming at helping the organization of the family while instead they interfere in their way of organizing their own time.

4. Family's time and life cycles.

Another important aspect is the work in the house, mainly done by women. Even though it is - as we said - important and necessary, in our country especially, for the good functioning of the society, it is not considered as productive because it can't be exchanged and this makes women fell "socially useless".

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9 MASINI M. Per la parità, oltre la parità, Ed. Collana La sfera celeste, 1986, 2.
Women find themselves having two jobs, one in the house, and one outside. This double role is not considered enough and working women are not considered at the same level as men. Undoubtedly though all the things wives with children do in the house is very important and it's a characteristic of a developing society.

Instead of the definition "domestic work", now we tend to use the expression "family works", to consider all the occupations necessary for the daily life of the family and its growth, either in the house or outside. These occupations are badly divided among the family members. This is due to wrong cultural models that provide an unequal distribution of the domestic jobs, mainly done by women. So they find themselves weaker both in the marriage and in the society, especially for what concerns the possibility of finding a job.

Nowadays, working women are increasing, even if they have domestic functions, but men do not contribute more than before in the domestic life. The time dedicated to working activities and the time dedicated to the family are always in contrast with each other, with less time left for the family. There is a sort of work division in the family: men tend to be more occupied at work while women at home. In this way, women can't dedicate themselves as they would in finding a good job because of the time they have to leave for the house, but also men, who can't appreciate fully the family-life being too occupied with their job.

The working activities in the family, mainly done by women, help the social services because they absorb part of their duties. Life cycle is a very important concept because it includes all the activities and time necessary for the good functioning of the family in and outside the house.

An accurate analysis on the time for the family and on the evolution of life, according to our point of view, should include a deeper analysis on the importance of policies for the family and, more in general, of social policies.

Which programs? For which family? For which society?

To answer these questions we must think of how to organize the matter of citizenship in the society.

We must consider the rapid changement of the social pattern in our world and how to deal with it, considering also the various religions, races and cultures nowadays present and mixed together in society.

So the social policies must be flexible. Flexibility is a word that suits perfectly to the concept of time, as a precious resource to use as best as possible.
We must also consider the important matter of the organization of time in function of life in the cities.

We may point out three main aspects:

- the improvement and resettlement of the space considering the needs of the daily life;
- the possibility of using the public services considering them in function of those who use them and their free time;
- the importance of simplifying the administration of these services, making them more accessible for everyone.

These three characteristics are important because they point out how the organization of time can't be considered apart from the organization of the space around us.

4. Time policies: Tuscany.

The region of Tuscany has concentrated its attention on what we have considered as an important union: the organization of space and time.

In 1992 a law was approved (L.R. 62/92) and its purpose was to start to organize the opening hours of the shops, of the public services and of the public offices altogether. The region approved programs to study how to organize in the best way the opening hours connecting them to the needs of the population. After five years a research has pointed out how that was too advanced and too complicated to be organized by the local administrations.\textsuperscript{10}

In July 1998, the Regional Council has approved a new law on the reorganization of time in the cities that considers as equally important the needs of men and women and their rights of choosing how to organize their free time, the importance of children and of the different cultures and religions.

Tuscany also tries to organize the public services and administrations in order to be able to help in the best way those who use them, and it invests money in this effort.

The new element of this law, together with the importance of organizing time and space, is that it has consider the great importance of the concept of citizenship on which to organize the various activities.

\textsuperscript{10} AA.VV. (a cura di) Censimento sull'attuazione della legge della Regione Toscana 62/92., RegioneToscana-Commissione Regionale per le pari opportunità tra uomo e donna, 1997.
5. Conclusions.

It is important to point out how the resettlement of time and services around the citizen to help him live actively and not passively the life of the city, has to continuously take notice of the evolution of the society and its needs. We must not forget the children and their rights and needs and consider them as a part of the family.

They are often forgotten because when we speak of population we generally intend it as the union of adult people and consequently all that is done for it excludes the youngest part of population. We must instead take in account of this important part and study programs including adults and children and organizing the spaces also for them. This in some occasions happens and it represents one of the ways of organizing the life in society.11

We must try to stop considering the State and the public structures as enemies, but instead as structures able to improve the average standard of life.

When this will happen, when families and State will be able to cooperate in the same directions, it will be possible to think of a social State that guarantees the respect of the rights of people of all kinds and gives more importance to the family: this is surely a social state of a modern democracy.

11 NICCHI M. (A cura di) I bambini nelle città. L’ambiente e la qualità della vita nell’area urbana.
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