

How public family policies should be?

A New Relational Approach

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Towards New Family Policies :

- 1. The present paradoxes
- 2. The models of family policies inherited from the 20th century (successes and failures)
- 3. How to redefine family policy
- 4. Prospects of a new subsidiary model
- 5. The four dimensions of family policy
- Conclusions

The present paradoxes of family policies

- **1. The family is considered as a private sphere, but the state intervenes more and more into it (lack of subsidiarity)**
- **2. the more the state intervenes into the family, the more families show anomie and fragmentation (perverse effects)**

The main outcomes of present public policies are:

- 1. the diffusion of an **undifferentiated definition** of the family (the reduction of the family to a generic **caring relationship** between an adult and at least another person)
- 2. ‘pluralization’ of family forms means the diffusion of **anomic** ways of family life (under the umbrella of the so-called ‘autopoietic family’)
- 3. these trends go hand in hand with an **impossible increasing ‘welfarism’** addressed to weak & disrupted families (with less and less resources & more cuts in social expenses)

The main outcomes of present public policies are:

- 4. abandonment of the family as a social institution, with the resort to new arrangements (such as *Pacs*, *Lebenspartnerschaft*, civil partnership, etc.)
- 5. whereas the latter turn out to be a **transition** towards the so called ‘same-sex marriage’ (which is not a family properly)
 - **WHY SO?**

Main Thesis

- **The dis-integration of the (natural) family is an outcome of policies that, paradoxically, are intended to help the family, while in fact they produce the opposite: the loss of their target, the family itself**
- **Why & how can this happen?**

There should be something wrong with present ‘family policies’

My arguments about the causes:

- 1. the spread of postmodern culture, and in terms of politics, the prevalence of **lib/lab policies** (a mix of liberalism & socialism) that **break the link between nature and culture****
- 2. the **refusal of any distinction** (‘all different, all equals’: multiculturalism as an ideology & political doctrine)**
- 3. the **lack of adequate reflexivity** in thinking family relations**
- 4. the adoption of **implicit & indirect policies** (instead of explicit & direct policies) that contribute to the disintegration of the family**

What are now family policies?

in more recent years, what is called **'family policy'** seems to have turned into a policy of **'defamiliarization'** (or **'defamilisation'**), whose aim is to ensure that individual adults can uphold a socially acceptable **standard of living independently of family relationships**

This outcome must be explained by analyzing the prevailing models in family policy

The three ideal-type models of family policies (inherited from the 20th century)

Models of family policies	<i>Fundamental principle or value-orientation</i>	<i>Definition of family</i>	<i>Mode of operation</i> (The fundamental regulatory criterion of family policy)
Lib (liberal)	Freedom and protection of privacy	The family as a contractual institution between individuals	Market (the family is regulated by the laws of market)
Corporate (categorical)	Collective solidarity (according to work categories)	The family as a social institution based on the complementarities between genders and on subsidiarity between generations	Social security systems (designed to sustain the worker's family in respect to his / her status in the labour market)
Lab (socialist)	Equality	The family as a mere ménage (<i>household, cohabitation</i>)	Political command over resources in order to support family responsibilities (burdens) of the individuals (politics over/against markets)

**What have been
the outcomes of these
3 policies models?**

An outline of successes/failures of the three models of family policies			
Models of family policies	Positive aspects (successes)	Negative aspects (failures)	Overall evaluation
Lib (liberal)	Freedom of choice for the family	Individualism and fragmentation of the social fabric	The family becomes an utility/dis-utility for the individuals
Corporate (categorical: policies addressed to employment categories)	Public support to family depending on the labour market	Lack of equity among genders and, for certain aspects, among generations (deficit of equal opportunities)	The family becomes a support to the State (subsidiarity in reverse)
Lab (socialist)	Equity and redistribution for the more disadvantaged conditions	Poverty traps and loss of social bonds (disruption of family social capital)	The family becomes a purely affective aggregate of individuals

These models **lose** the family as a **social subject**:
the family becomes a **residual** entity

let us analyze why & how it happens
and

which new model of family policy
we need in order to give the family
its proper role as a social subject
in a progressive (not regressive) society

Old and new orientations of family policies

Characteristics of the policies adopted up until now:	Characteristics that are needed today:
<p><i>a. Assistential policies:</i> Benefits are granted to individuals in order that they may be relieved from their familial burdens/obligations; this coincides with the <i>publicizing of family functions</i> that results when support to family responsibilities is given by a mere substitution of family roles with external collective services</p>	<p><i>a. Subsidiary policies:</i> benefits are granted so that the people can carry out their assignments in the family and in the surrounding associative nets; in particular, <i>the subsidiarity between State and family</i> means that the former has to operate towards the autonomy and the <i>empowerment</i> of the family & family associations</p>
<p><i>b. Matrifocal policy:</i> centred on the woman and on the mother-child dyad</p>	<p><i>b. Policy adequate to the family 'genoma':</i> centred on the reciprocity between sexes and between generations</p>
<p><i>c. Policy of privatisation of the family:</i> the family is merely considered as a private affair and as the end result of private preferences and tastes</p>	<p><i>c. Policy of valorisation of family relationships as relational goods (social capital):</i> the family is a primary relational good (super-individual level)</p>

Old and new orientations of family policies

Up until now...

needed today...

d. Implicit policies:

centred on the individuals with respect to separate needs throughout the life span of the individual; interventions focused on separate age groups (generational categories), above all minors and the elderly

d. Explicit policies:

centred on the relationships between genders and between generations, for the valorisation of social intermediations implemented by the family; interventions on the inter-generational ties as a problem of relational solidarity

e. Indirect policies:

centred on the generic needs of people daily life (like shelter, job, feeding, health, education, etc.); the family is used as an instrument (means-test) in the fight against poverty, for redistributive purposes and other social problems

e. Direct policies:

centred on the family nucleus as such (for example: the tributary subjectivity of the family, the family-income, the family-insurance, etc.); to increase the strength and the social functions of family relationships

= **the family as a residual entity**

= **the family as a social subject**

**We need a relational and
subsidiarity model**

The subsidiarity model of family policy (relational model)

I. Criteria which distinguish family policy	A policy is defined as <i>family friendly</i> or <i>family responsible</i> if it is oriented to be subsidiary to family relations as distinct from individuals' rights and from other primary relations. In order to make this distinction not ambiguous, the reference to the family must be formulated in terms of its social subjectivity (a relational unit of different sexes and generations); <i>family policies are those which recognise this subjectivity</i>
II. Definition of family	A social relationship of free giving and full reciprocity between the sexes and between the generations
III. Complex citizenship of the family	The family has a its own set of rights-duties in as much as it is a 'relational good' (i.e. a relationship of conjugal and inter-generational solidarity, i.e. a common good)
IV. Principle of complex subsidiarity in social policies	The relationships between the family and other societal sub-systems (State, market and third sector institutions), must be regulated by a principle of mutual support for each actor's specific tasks

The four dimensions of a subsidiary & relational family policy

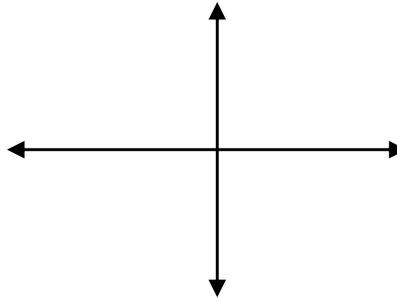
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**Enactment of the complex (state and societal)
citizenship of the family
(set of rights-duties inherent to the family as a unit)**



A

**Instruments which
operate through
the subsidiarity
principle**



I

**Associational rules
of solidarity for the
“plural well-being”
of families**



L

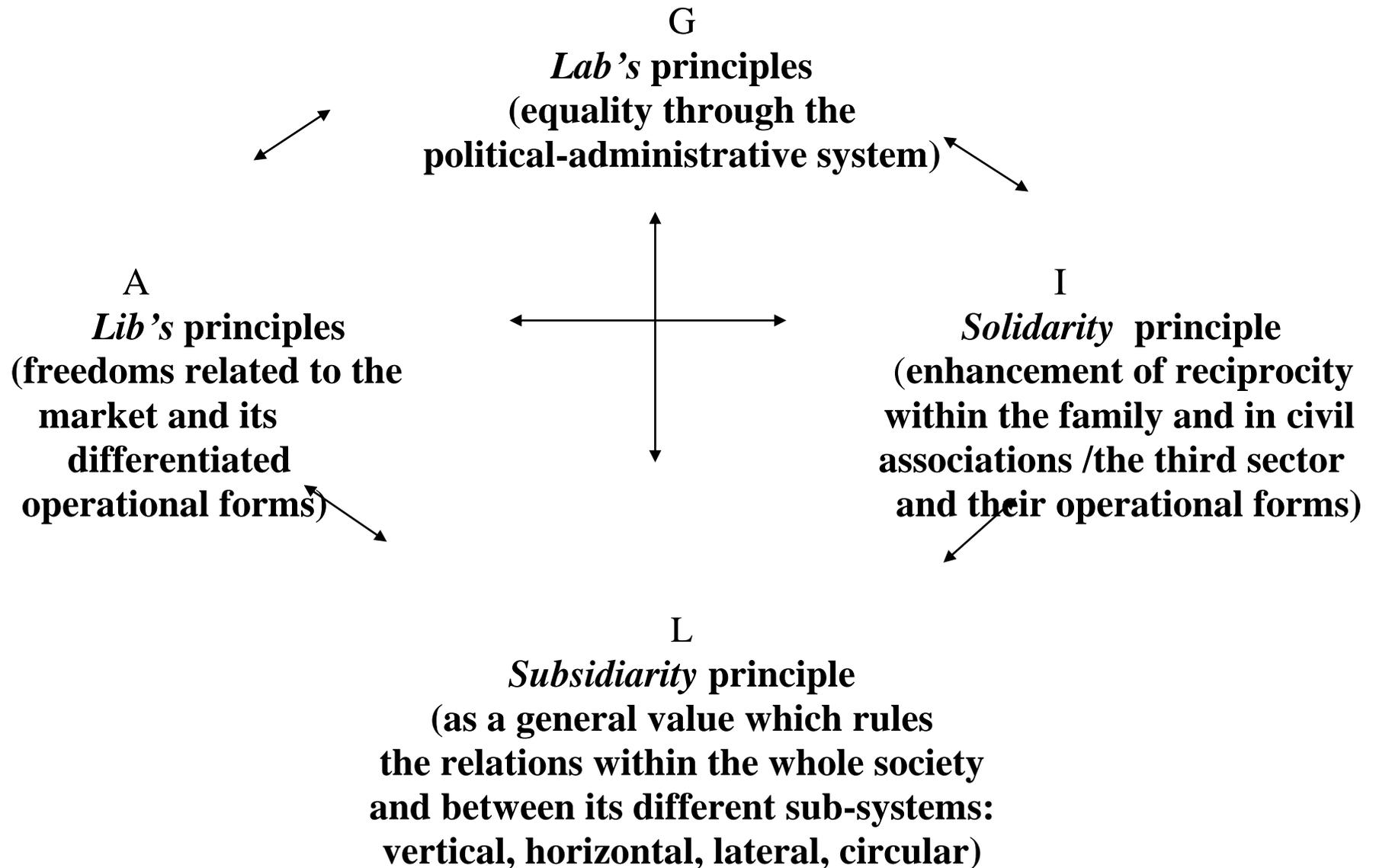
**Family human rights
(the rights each human person
has in relation to the family
as a relational good)**

What does it mean relational policies?

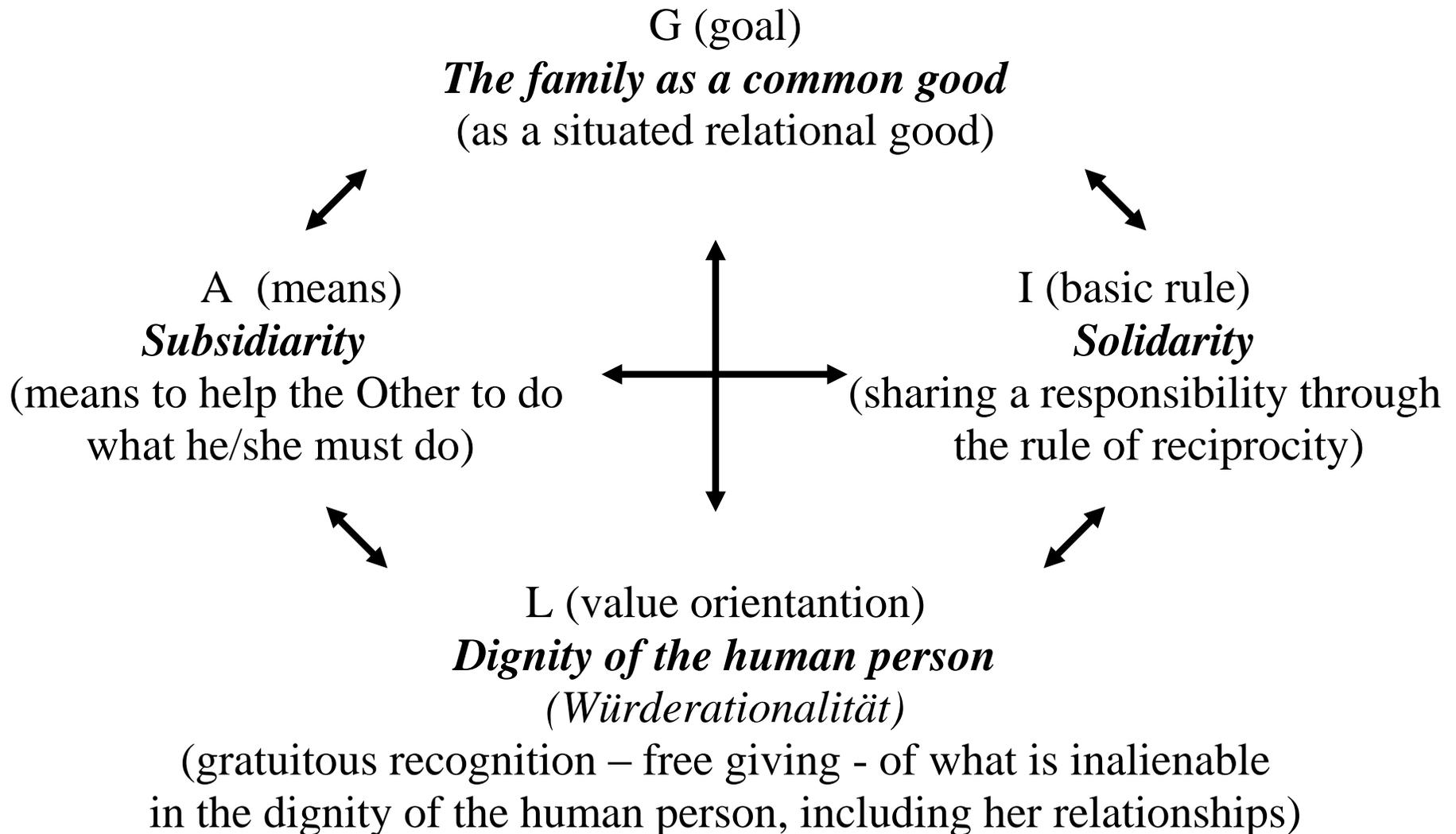
- Relational here means that social policies should operate via the following 4 principles :
- 1) The human person has a basic right to the family as a **RELATIONAL GOOD** (a *sui generis* relation, distinct from other primary relationships)
- 2) **Society must recognize a COMPLEX OF FAMILY CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS** (i.e. rights pertaining to family relations in addition to individual rights)

- **3) The rule self-governing the family is “SOLIDARITY THROUGH FREE GIVING AND RECIPROCITY” between sexes and between generations**
- **4) Resources and entitlements given to the family must operate through the principle of SUBSIDIARITY**

**The subsidiary & relational societal configuration (for the whole society)
alternative to the lib/lab configuration**



**The configuration of a family friendly social policy
which aims at promoting the family **as a relational good****



From the *Gender mainstreaming*

“the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking” (Council of Europe 1998, 15). - More generally, an agenda-setting approach aiming at a transformative process addressing and redressing the genderedness of systems and social policies in terms of equality (uniformity) between genders, leading to a world “beyond” gender.

to a *Family mainstreaming*

whose fundamental idea is that **individual rights should be conceived and managed in a relational way within families and between families and social institutions** in order to generate proper families, instead of socially weak, unstable and anomic forms of ‘living together’ (relational policies within a ‘relational State’).

■ **An example of a national Plan inspired by a more comprehensive family mainstreaming (called ‘Italian Alliance for the Family’, 2012):**

- **1) The social citizenship of the family.**
- **2) Explicit policies focused on the family**
- **3) Direct policies focused on the family.**
- **4) Social equity towards the family.**
- **5) Subsidiarity of public institutions towards the family.**
- **6) Social solidarity within and between families.**
- **7) Empowering and sustainable welfare for families.**
- **8) Role of family associations.**
- **9) Local alliances for the family.**
- **10) Impact assessment of national and regional legislation on the families.**

An example of innovative legislation

Provincia di Trento (Italia),

*Act for an 'Integrated system of structural policies
for the promotion of family wellbeing and natality',
2011*

where

subsidiarity is intended not only to imply protection of the family or to prevent the intrusion of the state into it, but also to push local authorities **to activate the conditions that allow for the active unfolding of families**



- 1. **Structural** (not contingent) family policies run by Local Authorities **in partnership with third sector organizations** (e.g. social cooperatives, family associations, mutual societies, etc.) **& market actors** (e.g. firms, trade unions, etc.)
- 2. **Stable programs and services to support young couples having a family project and large families** with several children (including a stable family fund to guarantee minimum family income, etc.)
- 3. Incentives to corporate family welfare so that families can enjoy stable measures of reconciliation between family and work (audit family & work - close to the German model -, nurseries inside the firm, etc.)
- 4. Regulation of the timetables of public services as a function of family needs (e.g. for children, weak people, etc.)

- 5. The 'Family district' (absolute novelty) (a territorial area where a few municipalities create & share a «local alliance for the family», i.e. a network of multi stakeholders in a local community)
- 6. Empowering Family Associations (first and second level), by giving them resources and real powers in local policies
- 7. Incentives to create new family-oriented services by connecting formal and informal social networks (e.g. *tagemutter* = mother of the day, family card, family time banks, enforcing standards to keep up the quality of family friendly local services run by local authorities and/or private agencies, etc.)

- **Summing up**
- (I) *Family policies should distinguish the proper complex of rights and duties pertaining to the different family forms*
- (II) *Family policies should be thought and managed according to a principle of subsidiarity that fosters a welfare community through ‘relational work’ with families*

**Thank you
for your attention
&
your indulgent
eye**

