Cultural change and familism

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Familism is a recently developed concept used to analyze the change towards family values. Social scientists stress that the social and political change which the more developed western countries are experiencing is of such a span that it is necessary to start talking about a new stage in modern societies. Postmodernism and postmaterialism are terms used to address this transformation. New gender, sexual and generation relations within the family makes it possible to refer to familism as a central element in cultural change. In this paper we will study to which degree a closed conception of the family affects the conception held of the world. The impact of familism on the view of history, knowledge and society is analyzed. These are the cultural dimensions of all belief systems.

Cambio cultural y familismo. El familismo es un concepto desarrollado recientemente para interpretar el cambio hacia los valores familiares. Los científicos sociales señalan que el cambio político y social que viven las sociedades occidentales más desarrolladas es de tal envergadura que es necesario hablar de una nueva etapa en las sociedades modernas. La postmodernidad y el postmaterialismo son términos utilizados para calificar esta transformación. Las nuevas relaciones de género, sexo y generación dentro de la familia hacen que se hable del familismo como un elemento central del cambio cultural. En este trabajo se analiza hasta qué punto una concepción cerrada de la familia afecta a la concepción del mundo. En concreto se analiza el impacto del familismo en la visión de la historia, el conocimiento y la sociedad: la dimensión cultural de todo sistema de creencias.

Different meanings of the term familism: Is the family back?

Familism is a theoretical and empirical concept. Recent social studies have shown a current trend towards stressing family values which were amply criticized during the nineteen sixties. Nevertheless, the term is not void of ambiguities. It implies a renaissance of the importance attached to the family, although at the same time it exemplifies a new conception —individualist— of family relationships. In fact two recent references to familism, Popenoe (1988, 1994) and Gundelach & Riis (1994) are examples of these two contradictory aspects found in recent attitudes towards the family.

In *The family condition of America*, Popenoe (1994) states that family changes in Northamerican society are a part of more extense cultural changes, examples of which are the increasing individualism and the weakening of community associationism which were a feature of Northamerican society. Familism is the term employed to engulf the everyday more widespread belief that family is important, and that because of this, there is a need to promote health and family institution defense programmes (Popenoe, 1988, 1994; Garzón, 1998a, 1998b).

Family support programmes are an academic recipe, and politically speaking, a social therapy to confront the increasing indivi-

dualism in developed western societies (Stacey, 1997). In fact Popenoe and other family science researchers (Stanton, 1997; Shannon, 1989) defend the need to reinforce the interests of the family group, leaving somewhat aside the needs of individual members: a strategy aimed towards increasing community solidarity attitudes in order to counteract the increasing egocentric individualism of the more developed Western societies.

On the other hand, Gundelach & Riis (1994) state that surveys and eurobarometers conducted on family issues reveal an increasing tendency to subordinate the family group to the individual needs of self-fulfillment and expression (Díez & Inglehart, 1994). This assumed renaissance of family values and the increasing importance attached to the family does not imply an undisputed acceptance of traditional family relations. The revitalization of the nuclear family is not synonymous of a re-establishment of community values, and in fact some data confirm the thesis of an individualist reinterpretation of the family, an idea proposed by Gundelach & Riis in their work *The return of familism?*

Popenoe and Gundelach and Riis' theses represent two apparently contradictory aspects concerning new attitudes towards the family which have also been reflected in World Value Surveys: citizens from developed societies continue to accept marriage as a way of regulating affective life and still consider that having children is important, but they do not perceive marriage as the only possible way of having an affective relationship, nor do they consider it a compromise which has to last all their life. They also believe that having children is not a basic factor in a women's self-fulfillment, nor do they require a institutional couple or partner relationship.

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In any case, both definitions refer to the revitalization of family ties. This is a result of cultural change fostered by the response of the postwar generations. The new gender, sexual and generational relationships which take place within the family context give way to a reinterpretation of the traditional family (Gittins, 1985; Staggenborg, 1998).

The articulatory element of these two aspects probably lies outside of an internal analysis of the family. This element has to do with the postmodern conception of personal relationships which has a narcicist individualism component, an individualism which trascends the family context in which Tocqueville (1835) situated modern individualism, and by the need for open, multiple and spontaneous contacts. In this sense familism relates inversely with the concept of *interpersonal trust* mentioned in studies conducted during the nineteen sixties on civic culture by Almond and Verba (1963, 1980), and reconsidered by Inglehart (1971, 1977, 1990) in the more extense context of cultural change in more developed societies.

This is why we may speak of a third meaning for the term familism. A meaning which emerges within the civic culture analysis and in postmodern societies. In this context familism has a more restrictive sense. It refers to an attitude of confidence and moral compromise exclusively with those members of the family group. This definition derives mainly from the concept of amoral familism, a behavioral pattern found in traditional countries with a low developed economy and with a historical experience of domination (Banfield, 1958). This is the reason why familism must be situated in a more extense context of cultural change of western societies.

An empirical concept derived from a psychological scale of postmodernism (Seoane & Garzón, 1996a), which is very close to that of interpersonal trust, is that of *cultural and personal consumerism*. This idea unites a series of basic beliefs related to the way of understanding personal and social relationships (Seoane & Garzón, 1989). It is a series of positive and open attitudes towards life, marked by relationship consumerism, hedonism and expansion, which rejects the traditional sources of knowledge and identity, and which is especially sensitive to all that is external. Interpersonal trust and cultural consumerism tap the same reality: the consolidation of open and expansive relationships. Both ideas are the opposite of the term familism, at least in its more restrictive sense.

Stressing the problem of the complex meaning of familism, and before describing the research conducted on this issue, we will refer to the idea of familism and its impact on the belief system. Theoretical and empirical literature on cultural changes will be reviewed, which most of the developed Western societies are going through at the present time (Allan, 1985; Beeghley, 1996; Flaquer, 1998).

Familism's current situation

One of the most common forms of researching family attitudes is by using classical sociological surveys. Ever since the first European value surveys were conducted, it has been common practice to ask citizens the importance they attach to the family, the social validity, or not, of marriage, the need to have children in order to achieve personal self-fulfillment, obligations between parents and children, the importance of the traditional family, morality, abortion, etc.

Surveys conducted during the nineteen eighties have shown that a series of important changes have affected the conception of family relations. Recent international surveys, such as the first one conducted by the *European Group on Value Studies* (Stoetzel, 1982), Gallup's 1997 *International Survey on Family Values* conducted in 16 countries in four continents, the eurobarometer results mentioned by Gundelach and Riis (1994) in *The return of familism?* or those published by Inglehart (1998) in *Values and Beliefs Political, Religious, Sexual and Economic Norms* in 43 societies, suggest that there are significant differences between countries in relation to the adopted family values.
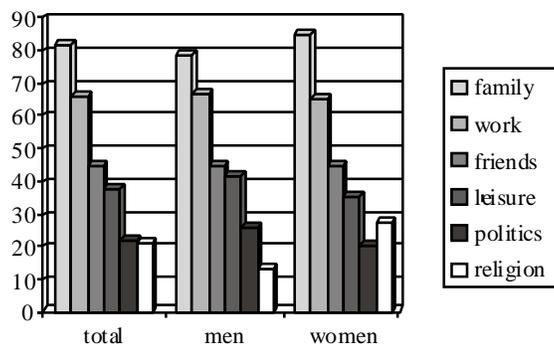
It seems that these differences are related to economic development, democratic stability and cultural tradition. On the basis of these studies on mass opinion regarding family and personal relationships, some basic patterns which appear in different surveys were collected and some interesting results are worth mentioning.

The first noteworthy aspect is that most current surveys reflect the changes that are taking place in the family values system, related more with institutional aspects and forms of family organization than with personal options. People still consider the family, sons and daughters and the relationships between parents and children, or relations with one's partner as important aspects of their personal development. The family is still the most important factor in these people's lives, more than work, friends, politics, religion, leisure and amusement.

In table 1 we have data pertaining to the importance which Spanish people award to the family.

A close look at these results show that 82% of the surveyed population state that the family is the most important aspect in their lives, more than work, friends, but especially more important than politics and religion – factors which had more importance in modern and traditional epoch respectively. This data contradicts the thesis put forward by modernization. The fact that postmaterialists award great importance to the family (80%), bearing in mind that

		Gender			Age			Political affiliation			Values	
	T	M	W	16-29	30-49	50+	L	C	R	Mat.	Mix.	Post.
Family	82	79	**85**	76	**86**	83	81	82	83	**85**	83	80
Work	66	67	65	62	68	66	67	66	63	70	67	64
Friends	45	45	45	53	44	40	48	42	51	43	47	49
Leisure	38	41	35	45	42	28	46	32	34	34	38	49
Politics	22	26	19	21	28	18	36	20	23	16	23	35
Religion	21	13	27	09	16	34	11	20	32	28	19	13

Table 1
How important are the following aspects for you?
(extracted from Inglehart, 1998) (percentage of very important)

Graphic I

in this population segment young people are predominant, makes the recovery of the family thesis plausible. Nevertheless, those groups who award family more importance are women, adults and materialists.

In table 2 we show the levels of satisfaction with life and family. Women, older people, traditional left wing subjects and materialists are those who stress less vital satisfaction, although in all cases we are talking about percentages over 60%. On the other hand, those who stress less family satisfaction are women, younger people and older people, in this case we are talking about percentages over 70%. As we see, there is a general high level of satisfaction, and family satisfaction is always higher than vital or life satisfaction.

The second aspect we would like to mention is that the tendency towards less traditional family options is linked to a society's level of development. There is in general certain link between new forms of family organization and more developed societies. This tendency is shown by means of indexes such as «the relationship between marriage and reproduction», «a family's ideal size», «preference for the children's gender», «women's work», «extra-marital relationships», etc.

Those countries which depart more strongly from the traditional family are precisely those who, in general terms, are more economically developed – most of the Western European countries. On the opposite side, those countries in which the traditional family is more rooted also tend to be those less economically developed, among these we find Asian countries. In a half way position in this family rupture/conservative axis we find the United States whose citizens stress a combination of traditional and innovative attitudes.

The rupture with the traditional form of family is stressed when we related the series of above mentioned indexes.

The opinions held with regard to having children reveal a great convergence of countries and posit the general link between *personal development* and *having children*. The Gallup survey mentions that those countries in which personal self-fulfillment and having children are more strongly associated are Hungary (94% agreement), India (93%), Lithuania (82%), Guatemala (74%), while in the opposite side we find Germany (49% disagree), USA (46% disagree) and England (57% disagree). Spain is located in a middle position (60% of those surveyed agreed).

In relation to the indexes related with the parents' and childrens' obligations, the support for the traditional family and the value attached to marriage, issues related to the degree of agreement with the idea that marriage is an expired institution, that children and parents have mutual obligations and compromises, and finally the number of children, data obtained from the Spanish sample shows that there is a persistence of the nuclear family formed by a married couple with few children, maintaining the moral obligation between parents and children (see table 3).

It is interesting to note that it is women, right wing subjects and materialists who agree less with the idea that matrimony is a bygone institution. While it is young people, left wing subjects and postmaterialists who agree more with this idea. There is a stronger feeling of moral responsability among women in the relations parents-children, in which postmaterialists and young people score the lowest percentage (64 and 63% respectively). Finally, there is a tendency towards a reduced family, especially among men, left-wing people, young people and postmaterialists, whilst women represent the lowest percentage of people who defend the idea of having few children (61%).

| Table 2 In general terms, to what degree are you satisfied with your family life? Percentage of those who state that they are very satisfied at home, and vital, life, satisfaction (10 step scale, 7-10= very satisfied)												
	Gender			Age			Political affiliation			Values		
	T	M	W	16-29	30-49	50+	L	C	R	Mat.	Mix.	Post.
Famil. S	78	81	75	75	83	75	76	78	82	77	80	77
Life S	66	69	64	68	69	62	64	68	74	64	69	66
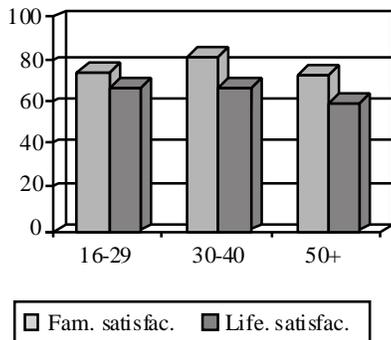
Table 3 (Spanish sample extracted from Inglehart, 1998; % of agreement)												
	Gender			Age			Political affiliation			Values		
	T	M	W	16-29	30-49	50+	L	C	R	Mat.	Mix.	Post.
Old fashioned matrimony	17	20	14	27	20	08	27	14	08	09	17	36
Father-siblings obligations	75	72	78	63	73	86	68	74	84	83	73	64
Ideal number of children (1-2)	65	61	61	75	68	55	71	64	58	63	64	75
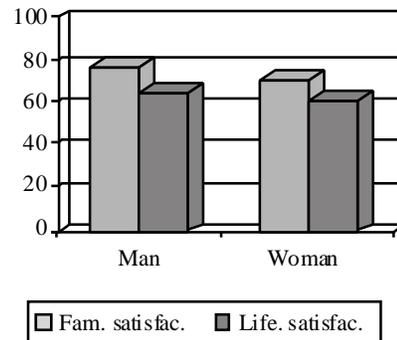
Graphic II

Graphic III

The last feature we would like to stress from these survey patterns is that the above mentioned changes are related at the same time with the country's cultural tradition. In this sense, economic development is not the only important element in the changing conceptions of family relations.

A very important point in order to stress the cultural aspect in institutional changes in family is the convergence of public opinion. The need of children in order to achieve self-fulfillment acquires a new sense when the opinion on the morality or inmorality of people who have children and are not married is analyzed. In the new family values there is an increasing acceptance of the fact that it *is not necessary for someone to be married to have children.* The separation of the binomial *marriage-procreation* ranges from 90% in some Western European countries, to nearly 15% in countries such as India. This is one of the most controversial issues and in which the changes regarding the traditional family are clearly shown. In the Gallup survey there are great differences between countries. The most liberal ones (with more than 90% acceptance) are Germany and France, followed by Canada and England (with 75% acceptance). Those countries with low acceptance are India, Singapore and Taiwan. In the USA public opinion is split, 47% consider that it is morally incorrect to have children without being married, and 50% state that it is not.

Spanish data gathered by Inglehart (1998) from the 1990-1993 eurobarometer stresses the increasing tendency towards more tolerant sexual attitudes if we consider that young people and postmaterialists are those who, in general, justify more liberal sexual behaviors (see table 4).

Table 4
Please tell us with regard to every one of the following statements when do you believe it may be always, never or sometimes justified (% of those who state that it is never justified)

	Total	Men	Women	Mat.	Mix.	Post.
Extra-marital relationship	59	49	68	71	56	40
Legal age sex	69	64	73	78	68	48
Homosexuality	46	44	47	53	42	30
Prostitution	50	44	45	58	46	37
Abortion	33	28	38	40	29	20
Divorce	25	20	28	29	21	11

Another index of institutional change refers to the ideal number of children. The international Gallup survey stresses that there is a great diversity in the ideal size of a family, at least among developed countries. This size is increasingly reaching the minimum number of necessary children needed to guarantee the generational change (according to United Nations statistics this number is 2.1). Preference for a numerous family is quite clear in Guatemala and Taiwan where the average number of children per family is approximately 3. These countries are followed by USA, France and Canada which have slightly lower levels (2.4 and 2.6 children). A third group of countries are those who are under the ideal number of children for substitution (Germany with 2.09 and Spain with 2.06).

In brief, the most rupturist stance with the traditional family models would be that supported by those who do not believe in the need to have children in order to feel fulfiled as a person. They also do not find it morally incorrect to have a child without the parents being married, and prefer fewer children. Rupture takes place especially in developed countries and those within a protestant tradition.

Theoretical relations between cultural change and familism

This brief summary of some available data on family changes is not enough to stress the existing relations between the new forms of family relations and more extense concepts related to global changes which the developed Western societies are going through. This is the reason why when talking about familism it is necessary to outline its relationship with the concept of interpersonal trust and with ulterior studies conducted on the increasing acceptance of the so called postmaterialist values.

Familism and open social relations

Following Almond and Verba (1963), interpersonal trust refers to a favourable and general attitude towards other people, a tendency to perform and choose social activities which implicate other people, and a high valuation of generosity and trust as personality traits. This attitudinal complex is the basis of civic cooperation, and therefore of associationism. It is also a central feature in democratic functioning. Interpersonal trust as an attitudinal complex implies the disappearance of suspicion towards those who do not belong to one's circle of friends and family. It also means to prefer the use of informal groups in social and political activities.

Using the term interpersonal trust as has just been stated, and turning back to the restrictive meaning of familism presented before, we see that both terms may be located in the dimension of open social relations. In one extreme we find interpersonal trust, and in the other familism. This is due to the fact that familism implies establishing loyalty and cooperation ties only with those who belong to one's own family group. If interpersonal trust attitudes lead to association with others and having confidence in them in order to establish goals, familism implies support and reserve in one's own group. If interpersonal trust means opening up towards the outside and depending on this outside, familism implies dependency on the family group and reserve inside this group. Using the terms established by Riesman in his 1950 book *The Lonely Crowd. A Study of the Changing American Culture*, interpersonal trust would reflect the externally oriented individuals and societies. In sum, interpersonal trust is an indispensable condition, although not the only one, in forming secondary associations, a basic requirement in order to trespass the barriers of the primary group and be able to establish ties and obligations with those who are different from one's own group.

Verba in his personal comments on the second edition of *The civic culture revisited*, stresses the importance of the democratization of the family's authoritarian system in order to develop the social and political attitudes which ground civic culture (Verba, 1980, p. 399). This civic culture is reinforced by the democratization of the authority system in the family, school and work. Some data used in civic culture establish relations between high scores in the subjective political competency scale and the level of family participation, although this depends on educational levels. In the same vein Conradt (1980) in his study on the changes in political culture in Germany mentions the relationship between the traditional German family and the formation of hostility, social mistrust and social isolation attitudes.

The thesis of the civic culture, and the interpretation of the interpersonal trust attitudes, dominated the studies on political culture during the nineteen fifties and begining of the nineteen sixties.

During the nineteen seventies there arose the need to substitute the civic culture model for a more extensive cultural position: postmaterialism.

Familism and the new generations: Postmaterialist values

If the civic culture model is an answer to the concerns of the postwar era concerning the stability of the democratic model, postmaterialism is a response to the cultural changes which accompanied the development of the so called postindustrial societies. Inglehart posits that civic culture is an aspect of a more extensive cultural change.

Postmaterialism's thesis, as formulated by Inglehart, stresses the decline of the old concepts of political orientation (ideological positioning and political affiliation), the overcoming of modern hierarchical structures, the emergence of new values which stress the appearance of new life styles in which hedonism and self-fulfillment are important aspects. Postmaterialist values are more accepted everyday among the postwar generations, who live their infancy in societies far from economic and political insecurity (the hypothesis of scarceness and socialization). Postmaterialism is imposing itself as one generation leads to another.

The economic and political security which certain societies have lived in during the second part of the XXth century makes the new generations, those born after the Second World War, not need to support themselves in family and religious cultural norms in order to obtain security and confidence. They have their basic needs of survival and security satisfied, therefore their aims transcend material well-being and are oriented towards other types of values. The new values of the postwar generations are related with the meaning of life, personal self-fulfillment and the need to express themselves. Their worries are not the old political contents and they are especially sensible to social themes (abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, divorce, tolerance and solidarity, etc.).

If the growing economic development leads them to postmaterialist goals, the higher level of education and years of formation allow them to develop abilities and social skills which free them from the structures of authority (family, political, educational). Two elements mark their demands: less institutional and formal organizations which will allow them to develop their own individuality, and less hierarchical structures. This rejection of the institution and all principle of authority guides their attitudes and social relations, and therefore, changes the traditional family values.

In sum, in Inglehart's model interpersonal trust is linked to structural changes which facilitate the opening and contact with others, without the need for a mediating intervention by the classical identification groups – family, political or religious. These structures and organizations are modified by the new values and abilities of the postwar generations. The family in this era depends more and more on its members, who develop their expectations and vital projects in contact and oriented by the ways and fashions of the outside. The incorporation of women to public life mainly originates in these generations and due to the new needs for expression and fulfillment, coupled with the autonomy which formation and years of study gives to women. Moreover, their incorporation to public life implies the opening of the family nucleus to the social mileu. The new values are incorporated into the family socialization model, and the children need more contact with their piers in order for them to develop psychologically and socially (Flaquer, 1998, 1999; Cooper, 1971).

This opening up of the family, coherent with the autonomy and independence of its members, slowly changes its modern structure, reduces its control, authority and the differentiated distribution of domestic roles, while at the same time breaks the barrier which established mistrust towards those alien. It is the externally oriented family.

Inglehart has extended his original thesis of the *silent revolution* (1977) trying to postulate his hypothesis of scarceness and socialization within a more extensive cultural change frame. Initially related it to civic culture (Inglehart, 1990), later on with the non fulfiled prophecies of modernity theories (Díez & Inglehart, 1994), and recently with the frame of postmodern ideas (Inglehart, 1997). Nevertheless, he still maintains an important difference with postmodern authors which brings him closer to Almond and Verba's assumptions. He has not been able to break with the belief in progress, continuity and coherence of the institutional and individual changes. It is precisely the postmodern theories which best gather the diverse, fragmented and sometimes contradictory reality of postmodern societies. A diversity seen when analyzing the impact of familism in the democratic forms of life (Garzón, 1998b) and which is also repeated in this current research.

Impact of familistic attitudes in cultural beliefs

The empirical study described later on tries to analyze the repercussions that a strong or weak family orientation may have in the configuration of the person's belief systems. Specifically, we will try to see if it affects – and if it does in which direction – the conception of knowledge and history. In sum, establish if familism and postmodernity have different paths, or if, as postmodern theses postulate, familism is a return to the family, but from within the individualistic frame of self-fulfillment.

The empirical references which will be presented will allow us to observe that there is a general tendency towards analyzing family attitudes on the basis of surveys, in which subjects are directly asked to stress their valuation of the family, their obligations with family members, the importance of children, etc. Without minimizing the validity of surveys, we believe that a less direct measure regarding specific aspects of family life will allow us to obtain more basic data concerning the new family attitudes.

Since the position on familism is located within the context of new values, we will include this research within the frame of the postmodern belief system. We will try and see if this supposed renaissance of the family is, as postmodern theories state, something new, a reinterpretation of family life which helps in the opening and globalization attempts of Western societies, a reinterpretation which implies the overcoming of traditional family ties. Or if this familism is really a return to old community values, such as Popenoe seeks and desires, and turns into an antidote for the excesses of general opening and trust. In any case, and whatever the results from this study, it will be necessary to complete a follow up of future generations, because it will be them who in the end will state explicitly this new familism in one sense or another.

We will see familism's influence in a specific aspect of the group of beliefs and values which form the postmodern view of the world, specifically there will be an empirical analysis of the impact of familism on the beliefs related to the conception of history, knowledge and society. In a previous study its impact on the democratic forms of life was assessed (postmodern view of politics, Garzón, 1998b).

Empirical concepts used in the study of familism

To achieve this study's aims, two forms of operational empirical concepts have been used. The first one – the already mentioned *cultural and personal consumerism* concept – allows us to measure familism. The second one – *technical control of the present* – indicates the level of acceptance the sample has of the postmodern conception of culture.

Cultural and personal consumerism

This is both a theoretical and empirical concept. It is part of the postmodern concept of contemporary culture. It is one of the three elements or components of a model of analysis of the system of postmodern beliefs. For a more detailed explanation of the model see Garzón & Seoane, 1991; Seoane & Garzón, 1996a.

Cultural and personal consumerism gathers one of the features which postmodern authors attribute to contemporary social beliefs. This attitudinal complex stresses the expansive, hedonistic and open nature of the postmodern concept of culture. A culture guided by consumerism and not production, amusement and leisure not work and effort, communication and generalized social contact and not encounters limited by group identity, by the mixing of all spheres of life and not the discontinuities of the modern world (Featherstone, 1991).

Cultural and personal consumerism reflect above all a positive, open and spontaneous attitude towards life. It presents common elements with the concept of interpersonal trust developed within the frame of the abovementioned sociological theories, and both are the opposite of familism in the open social relations dimension. As has been presented in other studies (Garzón, 1998a, 1998b) this consumerism expressed mainly in caring for one's body, consuming leisure and culture and, rejecting effort. It is only viable within the context of open social relations in which people relate to one another and connect without the frame of their group identities, overcoming old loyalties, whether these are political, social or family. In other words, they relate as isolated and independent individuals, although equal. In sum, familism presupposes low cultural and personal consumerism.

Technical control of the present

Since the begining of this decade, the studies conducted by Garzón (Seoane & Garzón, 1989; Garzón & Seoane, 1991; Seoane & Garzón, 1996b) have shown that the postmodern conception of culture is defined as a Technical Control of the Present (TCP). It summarizes the citizens' preferences for a presentist and instrumental conception of knowledge, an ahistorical conception of time and an atomist view of society. The technical control of the present stresses the importance of technical control and problem solving by means of technological advances in comparison to men's actions. It encompasses three more specific attitudinal collections:

a) Technification of Knowledge (TK). This set of attitudes encompasses the postmodern conception of knowledge. The belief in knowledge as a product able to be sold, used and consumed. Something done by experts who have access to the information, and which is applied to the solution of practical and urgent problems.

b) Ahistorical Individualism (AI). Refers to the conception of society as a set of independent subjects who show solidarity only with their present experiences. As we said, it surpasses Tocquevi-

lle's concept of modern individualism. Postmodern individualism is more radical. It is a sense of independence from the rest, from one's ancestors and descendents, from the rest of society. It reduces the temporal perspective to exclusively authobiographical limits.

c) Historical and Personal Fatalism (HPF). Autonomy and independence develops parallel to the sense of weakness and the lack of personal control. People are seen as if they could do nothing about themselves or what surrounds them. It is related to an attitude of rejection of radical changes which sociologists see as a factor of democratic stability.

Empirical design in the relation between familism and cultural beliefs

Once we have briefly mentioned the two basic concepts of this study, we will now describe the empirical structure of the research designed to establish the relations between familism and the postmodern conception of culture. We have used the questionnaire on Contemporary Social Beliefs (for more details see Seoane & Garzón, 1989; Garzón & Seoane, 1991, 1996) and worked with those factors related with the two concepts mentioned. In order to analyze the relationship between familism and postmodern beliefs on culture the necessary statistical analyses were conducted (analysis of variance and Duncan Ranges).

Before starting to comment the results, we will describe the characteristics of the sample and the different levels of cultural and personal consumerism in which they were classified. Let us recall that cultural consumerism is the way of measuring the level of familism.

Levels of familism in the sample

The sample was composed of 550 university students. 123 of them (22.4%) were men and 427 women (77.6%). The mean age was 22 years with a standard deviation of 6.40. Minimum age was 17 years and maximum 53. The distribution in age groups was as follows: between 17 and 19 years old, 301 subjects (54.7%), 20-29 years, 188 subjects (34.2%), and 30-53, 61 people (11.1%).

Subjects answered, using a five point scale in which 1= totally disagree, and 5= totally agree, the Contemporary Social Belief (CSB) questionnaire which comprised the factor of cultural and personal consumerism (see table 5). The mean score in cultural and personal consumerism was 2.97 with a standard deviation of .60.

The acceptance of cultural and personal consumerism stated by our sample is based mainly on the results obtained from two kind of items: the items which refer to the more hedonistic and expansive concepts (V1, V3 and V4) and, to a lower extent, the items related to the conception of history and culture (V2 and V5). In sum we find an average acceptance of cultural consumerism due to its hedonistic and expansive attitude, but not because of its ahistorical and atomist view of relationships and society.

Table 5 Items of cultural and personal consumerism	
Items of cultural and personal consumerism	**Total**
V1. Desire and fun, more than effort, are the source of any learning	2.99
V2. We must consume more than maintain or conserve the existing cultures	2.34
V3. I feel, then I exist	4.30
V4. The longer people live the more afraid they are of getting old	3.00
V5. We live for ourselves, without traditions or postery	2.24

Once subjects answered these items they were classified in 4 levels of familism: low, medium, high and very high levels of cultural and personal consumerism:

1CPC: Subgroup with very high familism. It is composed of those subjects who score between 1 and 2 in their answers to cultural and personal consumerism.

2CPC: Subgroup with high familism. It is those who score between 2 and 3 in their answers to the questions relating to cultural and personal consumerism.

3CPC: Subgroup with a medium type familism. Scores between 3 and 4 on cultural and personal consumerism.

4CPC: Low familism subgroup. Scores between 4 and 5.

Postmodern culture beliefs and familist orientation

Once the sample was grouped into different levels of familism, an analysis of their respective forms of understanding history and knowledge was conducted.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
TK				8,175	.000
Inter-groups	8,199	3	2,733		
Intra-groups	182,532	546	.334		
Total	190,731	549			
AI	11,959			14.269	.000
Inter-groups	152,540	3	3.986		
Intra-groups		546	.279		
Total	164,499	549			
HPF				2.3338	.073
Inter-groups	5,943	3	1.981		
Intra-groups	462,524	546	.847		
Total	468,466	549			
TPC				12.918	.000
Inter-groups	8,284	3	2.761		
Intra-groups	116.707	546	.214		
Total	124.991	549			

Table 6
ANOVA. Components of the Postmodern Cultural Beliefs

* Each group's means will be shown when specifically analyzing each component

☐ TK

Level of familism
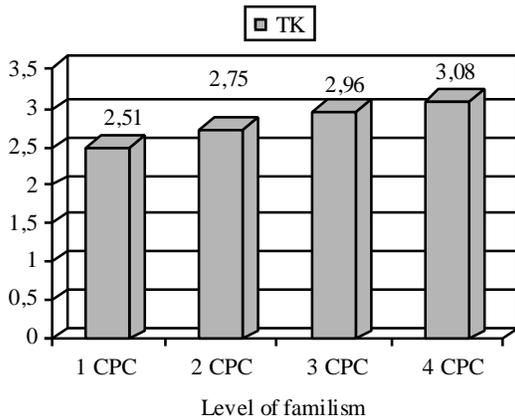
Graphic IV

We analyzed the repercussion which family orientation has in the cultural sphere of the postmodern belief system. The variance analysis conducted with the four familism groups (measured on the basis of cultural and personal consumerism) and the components of the cultural dimension are shown in the following table

The variance analysis performed to test if the familism variable affected the way in which space, time, knowledge and history were conceived, reveal that there are significant differences in all of the components of the cultural conception. Only in the historical and personal fatalism factor is the level of significance of the F higher than .05. Nevertheless, since it is close to significant (.07), it is both interesting to study and makes theoretical sense.

The *technification of knowledge* is the first component of the postmodern conception of culture. It is a central aspect in the change of social beliefs. The technification of knowledge as a belief is a result of the explosion that has taken place within information and knowledge technology. Derived in part from the development of research (production of knowledge) and of the technological advances that have allowed its rapid installation, both in machines with automate and direct information (application), and in its transmission to people (education). It is this explosion of knowledge production, but also above all its immediate application, which leads to a limitless trust in the most visible aspect of knowledge: technique. Due to this, the human element is stumped (knowledge must be sold and used) and is not perceived as indispensable, either in production or in transmission (education).

It is this excessive faith in technique, in the expert, and this orientation towards the technical solution of the present which leads to a rupture with the human element and with the figure of authority in the establishment of truth: neither teachers or parents can surpass the accumulated knowledge of the machine. This facet of the technification of knowledge is the one which logically opposes the family orientation. Another aspect refers to its consumerism by means of leisure, journeys, exchanges and contacts. In other words, cultural and personal consumerism is related to the technified conception of knowledge.

The distribution of the four groups' mean scores shows that the stronger the family orientation, the less acceptance there is of instrumental knowledge, and knowledge as learning and not as technique, is more important. In the graphic showing the mean scores of the four groups in CPC we see that the groups with less cultural and personal consumerism are those which accept less this component of postmodern culture.

The variance analysis between the different familism groups (CPC) and their level of acceptance of this type of knowledge revealed significant differences. We obtained an F of 8.175 and a level of significance of .000 (in table 6 of the ANOVA).

The mean comparison using Duncan's test shows that there are significant differences between the groups with very high familism (mean 2.51) and those with medium or low familism (groups 3 and 4, means of 2.96 and 3.08 respectively). There is also a significant difference between the high familism group (mean 2.75) and the

Table 7
Duncan's Ranges for TK (level of significance .05), depending on level of familism

Duncan ranges for TK (at .05), depending on level of familism				
Familism groups (CPC)	1	2	3	4
Means	2.51	2.75	2.96	3.08

group with lowest scores in familism (group 4 with a 3.08 mean). In other words, it is not necessary to have an extremely family orientation (as could be the case of a traditional family) to stress differences regarding the conception of knowledge (in table 7).

The possible explanation is found in the role of parental authority in knowledge and family history, and its extension to a society's cultural life. If knowledge is not reduced to its technical aspect, then the human element is more necessary for its transmission. Moreover, the authority of knowledge is essential. The transmission of knowledge and the vicissitudes of the family group rest on parental figures. Nowadays, a family's history moves away from a computerized transmission. Parental authorities are needed to tell and transmit it to their children. These feel that their parents are essential for the family's knowledge and their extended ties. The location of the extensive family network is known by means of authority. It is this vital experience which may transmit the conception of social knowledge and that an authority is also necessary to reveal the interpretation of reality, and is more than its technical shunts.

Ahistorical individualism is the second subgroup of beliefs which form the postmodern cultural conception. It refers to the atomist conception of society in comparison to collective views held in other epochs. It is another step in the process of increasing individualization that started with modernity. Tocqueville (1835) described it well when he stated that democracies lead people to refold into their private sphere and abandon collective life. Nevertheless, current individualism is a more radical individualism that breaks the ties with previous and future generations. It is ahistorical because it only takes into account the individual and his/her present. S/he is separated and not tied to ancestors and descendants.

The position adopted by our sample's subjects in relation to this atomist conception of society as a *collection of isolated and independent individuals* differs on the basis of their familism level. In table 6 of the ANOVA we see that this difference is statistically significant. The mean comparisons from the four familism groups (CPC) result in an F of 14.269, and a significance of .00. The direction of this significant difference is shown in their mean scores (see graphic V).
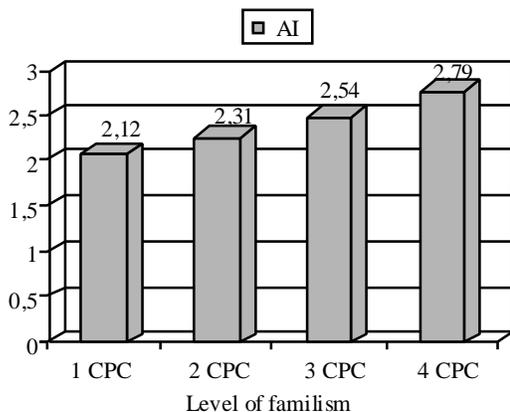
Graphic V

Duncan ranges for AI, on the basis of familism level (at .05)				
Familism groups (CPC)	1	2	3	4
Means	2.12	2.31	2.54	2.79

It seems that very high familism (group 1CPC) leads to a less ahistorical and individualist view of society. The life of the family group, its own historical cycle, and the ties and moral obligations furnishs it with a more collective view of society. In other words, the habit and community feelings, learned in family life, seem to extend to the global society.

Now we must see if this influence is minimal, or if it really has an important effect on the conception of society. Duncan's Range analysis shows that AI is very sensible to family orientation. Is a repetition of the profile found in the analysis of the *technification of knowledge*.

Also in this variable the comparison of means stresses a pattern very sensible to familism. With slight differences in familism we observe a differential effect in ahistorical individualism: level 1 of familism is differentiated from levels 3 and 4; level 2 is different from level 4. Although there are no internal differences between groups 1 and 2; 2 and 3; or 3 and 4.

Historical and personal fatalism (HPF) is the last basic component of the cultural conception of the belief system. It is the only one of the group of postmodern cultural beliefs in which the analysis of variance does not reflect significant differences, at least with a level of significance of .05. In any case we believe it is important to interpret the absence of significant differences in this variable.

The F of the variance analysis (see ANOVA table 6) was 2.338 with a level of significance higher than, although close to, .05 (level of significance .073).

Historical and personal fatalism is the feeling which people have of not being able to control their personal lives or social events. It is a characteristic feeling of current times. It rests on a postmodern conception of time and history, which are not lineal or circular, as in previous conceptions, but fluctuating with its movements of flux and reflux (Campillo, 1985), and in the feeling of individual weakness which accompanies democratic life. Since all people are equal and independent, weakness takes a hold on everybody and nobody has a significant influence on others. It is a feeling that control over things escapes the actions of people and that personal and social events are subject to factors which are beyond the will and control of a human being. This historical and personal fatalism stresses that people do not view themselves as the main characters in what happens to them.

This postmodern conception of personal and historical time does not seem to change on the basis of adopting one or another family orientation, at least not so clearly as to obtain statistically significant differences among the different familism positions. Notwithstanding this lack of statistical significance, we will now make some remarks concerning this empirical data.

The result is coherent with a central tenet of the transition from a traditional to a modern family: the loss of protagonism of the family, both concerning the life of its members and in the way in which society goes. Many authors have stressed, from different perspectives, that the family has slowly been leaving its spheres of influence in the hands of other institutions. If during the transition to modernity it delegated its social and political protagonism, in the postmodern era, especially with the interventionist state, it is reivindicating external intervention in the development of its life as a family.

The claims for social support policies means to a great extent the waiving of the family in order to direct and control its internal history. In this context, the family's history depends on external forces (support politics, social services, economic grants, help for

children and elders who depend on the family group), and so agrees in this aspect with the current fatalist feeling when facing one's personal and social history. Moreover, the nuclear family introduced in its private sphere values from the public sphere. Autonomy, independence and individualism as values in child socialization laid the foundations for their members not to perceive the group as the engine running their lives. This is the reason why it is not strange to see that higher or lower familism does not affect the fatalist conception so much. Current families do not view themselves as main actors in what affects their members.

Notwithstanding, the data from our sample gives us more interesting information, although statistically it may not be relevant. As we can see from the graphic representation of the mean scores *in historical and personal fatalism*, on the basis of family orientation, we again find that this historical fatalism is stronger when the family orientation is weaker. In other words, although the family has lost protagonism in its own history, and in the external social events, it fosters the feeling of control and the sense that events are guided by the people's will.

If we compare the position in historical and personal fatalism between the first and fourth groups in familism (low and high consumerism), we see that the more solid the postmodern conception of time and history is, the less the family orientation seems to be present. Currently this difference is low because, among other reasons, the proper family has impregnated itself of the feeling of defeat and of going adrift (failure in dominating its private and social context). This is coherent with the decrease in the importance of children in the family, and consequently, with low natality rates. Both are symptoms of the loss of the subjective feeling of growth and vital impulse (Toynbee, 1946).

To finish off this research, the differences in another component of the postmodern beliefs of culture, *technical control of the present*, which integrates the three attitudinal factors mentioned, were analyzed.

The variance analysis showed significant differences in this dimension on the basis of level of consumerism. In table 6 of the ANOVA we find these results (an F of 12.918, with a level of significance of .00).

The means of the four familism groups already show us that the profile is similar to that found in previous components of the postmodern cultural conception.

First of all, more familism brings about less acceptance of the postmodern conception of culture. The group with lowest scores in

familism (4CPC) is the one which obtains the highest mean of the four groups in *technical control of the present* (mean 2.98), whilst the highest level of familism (1CPC) has a score of 2.42 in TCP.

Secondly, the same as in the three previous attitudinal factors, the general acceptance of the presentist and technical conception of culture is low. In none of the groups does this score reach 3. In the graphic showing the means of the four groups we can easily notice these two aspects.

Thirdly, we also find that familism has a strong repercussion in this attitudinal construct. The analysis of Duncan Ranges shows a pattern of differences which defines each component in the cultural dimension of belief systems.

Duncan's test reveals that there are no significant differences in familism between groups 1 and 2; 2 and 3, and 3 and 4. The group with very high scores in familism (1CPC) shows significant differences in TCP with the groups with medium and low familism (3 and 4 CPC). And the group with high familism (2CPC) shows a significant difference with the group with low familism (4CPC) (see table 8).

Table 8 Duncan's Ranges for TCP (level of significance .05), in relation to level of familism			
Duncan ranges for TCP (at .05), in relation to familism level			
Familism groups (CPC)	1	2	3	4
Means	2.42	2.65	2.86	2.98

Technical control of the present reflects the postmodern feeling of a person's displacement. In other times it was nature which was displaced. Both of them were main actors in life. In modern times the human being displaced nature, and in postmodern times technology displaces human beings. If traditional societies were oriented towards the past, and modern ones projected themselves into the future, the exaltation of hedonist individualism limits time to the present. It is the here and now which is important. This presentism and exaltation of technology may be interpreted in psychological terms as an *external locus of control*: it is technology which produces changes and growth, not the ideas or human beings. Problems and social urgencies are solved using technical resources.

It is quite logical for us to find significant differences in the technical control of the present on the basis of the existence of a strong family orientation. Sense of control and the temporal pers-
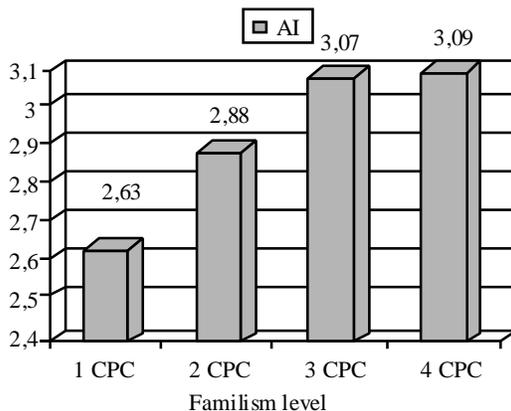
Graphic VI
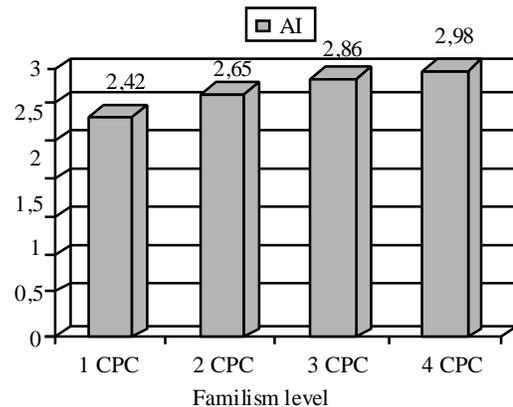
Graphic VII

pective of family life are transfered to the context of global society. This is why those with a strong family orientation participate less of the postmodern conception of culture. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that this displacement of the human being in the transformation of reality will in the end also invade the family sphere. Domestic or home work being more automated, the emergence of new ties (not blood ties) and types of family (affinities that go beyond heterosexuality) and the reconstructions of broken and formed again families (the second family) are all indexes which show that the technical control of the present can invade the family sphere.

Conclusions

Technical control of the present is the cultural dimension of the contemporary belief system. It is expressed in a peculiar way of thinking about knowledge, society, the individual and his historical time, characterized by a presentist, technical, ahistorical perspective of society and nature. Knowledge is conceived of as technical action on current problems. This view of knowledge lacks historical perspective, it has no future or past. It is instrumental knowledge directed towards the present (Seoane, 1993; Seoane & Garzón, 1996a).

This study has revealed that this view of history and knowledge is especially sensible to the adoption or not of a strong familist orientation. Results show that familism is opposed to a postmodern conception of history. In such a way that a strong familist orientation turns into a kind a vaccine for an ahistorical, technical and presentist view of society.

This result comes as no surprise if we bear in mind that interpersonal trust and cultural and personal consumerism —current versions of a weak familist orientation— grow on technological development. It is this development which has allowed the transportation and sharing of ideas (mass media, the internet) while also allowing for people's mobility and in such way for their multiple contacts. Technology is the main resource for confusion and the mixing of people. This is why it has been so heightened. The family is exactly the opposite. The family's vital circle constantly remembers its members both of the past and the future, and in such way avoids the presentism bias of current times. Changes within the family, the increase of its members with every newborn, changes in the roles of parental figures as they advance in their historical cycle, and the events which take place in their more extense family network lead towards a non presentist and technical view of life. In family lives, technology has still not been able to displace its protagonists. Although some of the roles and domestic labour begins to automate itself, producing important changes in the family, there is a non changeable element: the formation and growth of its members still depends on family will and develops during the course of time.

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There are more than 200 countries in the world and even more nations. The world is open now and at your work, during your business trips and studies or just through the Internet you can be involves in the multicultural communication. Someone thinks that for efficient conversation good communicational skills and language proficiency (usually, in English) are enough. However, it's not is easy. Knowi. Familism Source for information on Familism: International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family dictionary.Â From a psychological point of view, familism is a cluster of attitudes that emphasizes the relevance of the family for personal and social life, the development of a feeling of duty among the members of the family group, and the belief that to have children is a requirement for personal and social realization (Popenoe 1988; Gundelach and Riis 1994). Importance of Cultural Change: Culture is automatically changing in the society, however, the changing of the culture, values and beliefs with the passage of time, is important in the society, because in this way the environment can be shaped in the better way, people can get the understanding about the modernization. Moreover, other countries and societies will do efforts to bring the change; cultural change based on the society values and the norms. Example, if in the culture people have the thinking to earn money or to get the education, then automatically people will learn from each other' In order to study psychological phenomena cross-culturally, it is necessary to understand the different types of family in cultures throughout the world and also how family types are related to cultural features of societies. This article discusses: The definitions and the structure and functions of family; the different family types and relationships with kin; the ecocultural determinants of variations of family types, e.g, ecological features, means of subsistence, political and legal system, education and religion; changes in family in different cultures; the influence of modernization and