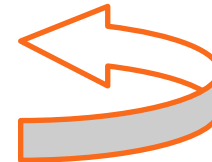


# Welfare citizenship in the shadow of the Recession in Spain: The case of households in hardship



RESILIENT HOUSEHOLDS AND WELFARE STATE  
INSTITUTIONS (WP9)



## Patterns of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among Households in Europe

# **Welfare citizenship in the shadow of the Recession in Spain: The case of households in hardship**

María Paz Martín Martín (UCM)

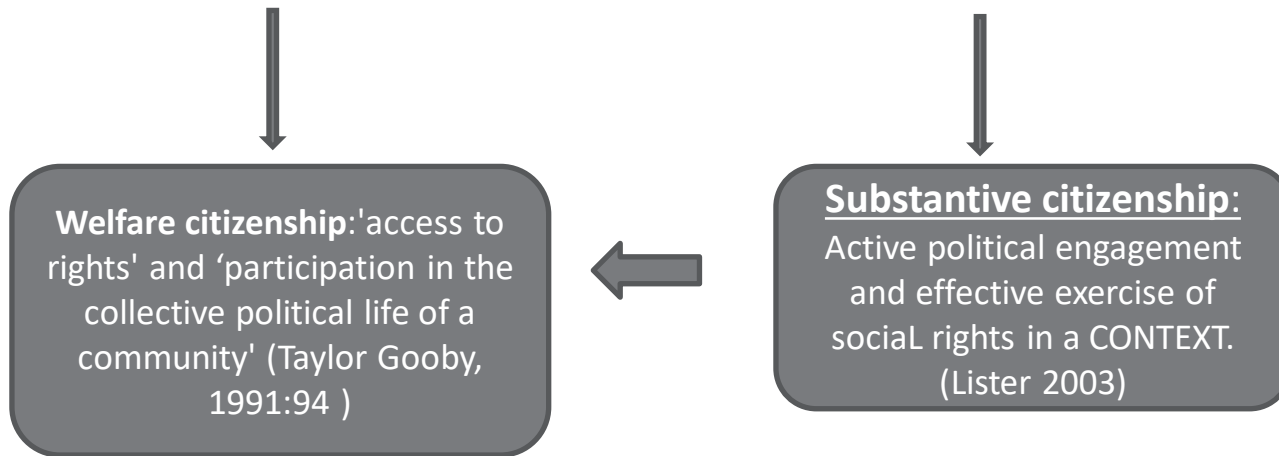
Carlos de Castro Pericacho (UAM)

Daniel Calderón Gómez (UCM)

Juan Carlos Revilla (UCM)

# Welfare citizenship...

- Discourses about welfare and the crisis making citizenship in Spain



**Referential frameworks** (Muller,2005:158) for the **civic bond** between the WfS and the subject.

- Symbolic experience of WfS.
- Semantic places and ways of understanding citizenship  
Legitimacy; indifference; delegitimation

# ...in the shadow of the Recession..

In Western democracies, previous legitimacy and disaffection crisis, it is also a crisis of social cohesion and solidarity.

In Mediterranean Welfare States, social policies are *most particularly* needed at the very moment they have been *most particularly* curtailed  
(unemployment rate: 26% in 2013, EUROSTAT; 14.8% of poor workers in Spain, FOESSA Report 2016; relative poverty tax: 22% in 2007, 28,6% in 2016, Living conditions survey, INE)

Other works...

Serrano et al. 2013;  
Zurdo y López 2013;  
Alonso et al. 2016/2011;  
Martín Pérez et al. 2009;  
Morán y Benedicto 2016



Disciplining effect of institutional austerity discourse on population.  
Depoliticized, self-punitive and adaptive attitudes to the socio-political circumstances

# ..in Spain...

Social and democratic **citizenship** (Morán y Benedicto 2015; Benedicto 2006):

- Conditioned by moderation and stability as the guidelines for social democracy
- Associated with the access to social rights rather than with the political engagement in public or community issues.



- **State, paternalistic reference point for wellbeing.**
- **Indifference, antipoliticism, passive public culture**



+ Pre-recession economic boom effect: “popular capitalism” (Rendueles and Sola, 2015)

+ Austerity

+ Corruption

Discontent and indignation

Adhesion and identification,

**PERSONAL DIMENSION (need/experience)** with a leading role in the political engagement or the lack of it (instead of ideological aspects) (Morán y Benedicto 2016; Vallespín 2015; Tejerina y Martínez, 2015)


# ...The case of households in hardship

- Participatory observation
- 9 interviews with key informants: 4 urban area; 5 rural area
- 24 in-depth biographically-oriented interviews with representatives of households

Experiencing socio-economic vulnerability : 12 rural (R) y 12 urbana (U).

- Balance as regards gender, generational diversity, the composition of the households and socioeconomic situation → structural representativeness.

- Semantic and ideological discourse analysis  
(Dijk 2006; Wodak and Meyer 2002)



- Low educated  
- Benefits and/or  
irregular income

# Referential frameworks of welfare citizenship

- ❖ Disciplining f. → re-/continued legitimation, indifference
- ❖ Mistrust f. → legitimation/delegitimation
- ❖ Justice f. → Delegitimation

- Frameworks: Delimit the edges of the exercise of welfare citizenship in the context of the recession
- Not exclusive/selective

# DISCIPLINING F.

- Civic bond: submission. 'Civic' duties; bureaucratic distancing



Control(conditionality) and social reproduction (moral indoctrination/production of subjects) → Austerity



Disaffection/indifference. WfS: machine for generating /restricting benefits

...more people working, to be able to get support, for example, to be able to get the dole, if people, it's what happens with people, "I need two months [work, to qualify for unemployment benefits], **I have to find** something, **I'll work** anywhere to qualify", and that's how they get by.' (R7)

Obstacle course



'Well I don't know, **we've gotten soft**, because we all want a nice house (...) Well to have all that **you have to make sacrifices**. (...) **You have to work, right?**' (R9)

'I know both types. People who have never worked and well, they get by, it's a different way of doing things, but well... And then people who have always worked, but **who never thought about the future; we liked going out, enjoying ourselves, doing this and that**. Thanks be to God I didn't buy a flat, that I didn't sell it to buy a house...' (U12)

Sacrifice/  
Austerity

'I mean, it's economic because **we've all taken a chunk**, but they've taken most of it, because they're the ones with more access. I've always wondered, **if I were in their shoes, would I have done the same? Am I really better off being an honourable person** and being able to...?' (R9)

Identification  
with/naturalization  
political  
irresponsibility

Problems in terms of  
moral and individual  
responsibility: «think  
about the future»,  
«**being an  
honourable person** »

Citizens are the subjects  
of “have to” phrases:  
«I have to find»,  
«**you have to make sacrifices**»

## F. OF MISTRUST

- **Institutions:** «the politicians»
- Weak civic bond: reproach, neglect, hostility, abandonment → rage, frustration

'Of course, you're there [talking to social services] and you say, "ok, I'm asking you for help, **you're asking me for a load of paperwork**, I go to one place, I go to another, I get you all the papers, then you tell me I should have something within eighteen months. So, what are you waiting for? **Until I have nothing**? Then I wait for eighteen months and I get the dole, *if* you give it to me?"' (U2)

'And now, **you realise what's gone on** and Jesus! It's... I'm not talking about the right or the left, I don't care which, it's these **shitty politicians**, they've really dumped us in the worst situation of our lives. **They sold us the welfare state, they sold it to us** (...) when that's over, to hell with the welfare state.' (U5)

Abandonment  
/betrayal

'At the moment we can't get by, we can't get by in Spain. There are things, things that **I've had to adapt to. Well, the politicians should adapt too.** Why should they have such high salaries when I have to live on five or six hundred euros? They should adapt too! And they think that I can get by but that they couldn't. **I'd like to see more than one of them in my situation, you know?'** (R7)

'And if not, then they should try it, **they should try it.** They'd have four hundred and twenty six [euros] to pay for the flat, and to last the month. **Let's see if they can do it too.** And they'd have to do without many things, just like we have to do without. Well that's the way I see it, right? Things are going from bad to worse and I don't know where we're going to end up.' (U2)

Personalization of  
conflict /moralization  
of diagnosis

Problems in terms of moral  
and individual responsibility:  
politicians are bad people;  
"personal revenge"

The tension they/we-I

Dispossessed delegitimation /resigned legitimacy -----> empowered/subversive  
delegitimation

## F. OF JUSTICE

- What the WFS should have been/done.
- Civic bond: criticism and demands of justice → more political, although paternalistic approach
- Personal experience of problems

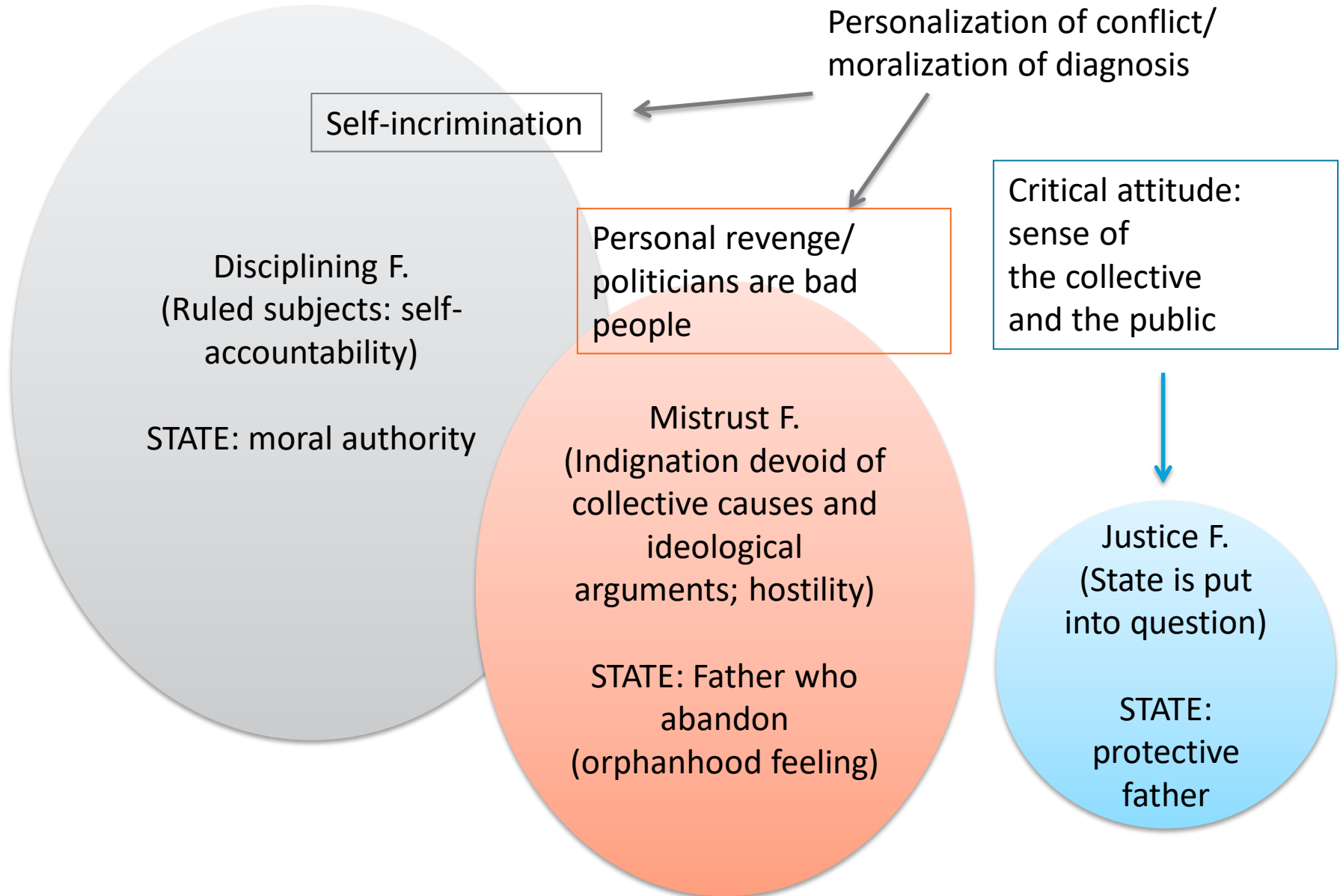
'Just like with Cristina, right? She's a woman, she doesn't work, she has two kids that she can't leave with anybody and that's her situation. **Why doesn't she get some sort of help? Why** does she have to take her two kids to a childminder's and she's at the bottom of the waiting list? **Why** does she have to leave her house at nine in the morning, she doesn't have a vehicle, she doesn't have a car, they don't have anything, and go up that hill in the snow to get to the school? A woman who's been physically abused! Sometimes, I think and I say, **"The government treats you worse than your husband did".**' (U7)

Problems in terms of public/collective responsibility and social sense

State/government is put into question

Abandonment,  
demand of  
justice

# Conclusiones



# Conclusions, intuitions and future research lines

- The regulatory power of the austerity rhetoric → ¿Do they rule not only **re-legitimation** but also **indifference** and **mistrust**?
- Poverty, vulnerability and precariousness hinder political engagement (**meagreness of the political lexicon**), ¿know more?
- Presence of **historic factor**, the way citizenship has been constructed in Spain, in the conformation of citizenship during the crisis
  - State as severe father/moral authority (disciplining f.)
  - State as father who abandon (mistrust f.)
  - State as a protective father (justice f.)
- **Influence of personal dimension as an activator of political judgements**

# Thank you very much

[mpaz.mart.mart@gmail.com](mailto:mpaz.mart.mart@gmail.com)