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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the history, the human beings have always tried to innovate and introduce some variations that allow them to do different tasks improving the efficiency and the productivity. In this sense, we have to take into account the primitive devices to work on the fields that we found some centuries ago, the Industrial Revolution that brought the introduction of new machines and the last decades that have implied the introduction of new technologies in the world of work.

Nowadays, within the labour market, there is a a great variety of advanced installations and effective productive processes that allow companies to produce good and to offer services to the customers in an easier way and with a better quality. However, we can find a question that is especially a topic of study and debate in the last several years within our society. That is the suitability of the work timetables.

The question previously mentioned directly affects both the labour market and the social field and the family background since, especially in Spain, it is still a strong tradition to be long hours at work. We use the verb “to be” because not all the hours the employee is in his/her workplace are profitable for companies. During these hours, the employees are only being present in the company due to the fact that they want show the great level of commitment they have with the company. Therefore, they work during these hours because they want to be promoted, they want to increase their incomings or they want to avoid being fired by the company.

This great number of hours that millions of people in our country usually work (from eight to ten hours per day) implies that they do not have too much time to devote to their family or their free time.

All these facts affect the productivity of the employee due to the fact that a tired employee working long hours is less creative and less productive since he/she does not work in the best conditions. In addition, it has harmful effects for people health due to the stress and the great quantity dead time that long working days suppose.

Another feature of the working hours is the major use of the part-time work instead of non-stop work that the most developed European countries normally use. This feature also implies that the working day is longer. All these features and others that I have considered important and influential related working timetables are going to be analysed in detail throughout the development of the current project.



### **1.1 Objectives and purposes of the final degree project.**

The main aim of this final project is the study and the analysis of the different questions that affect and are affected by the working hours in Spain and their comparison with the other European countries. In order to do so, the importance of the rationalisation of the working timetables to conciliate the working and the family life will be analysed. After that, a comparison between the working timetables in Spain and the European ones taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of the non-stop timetable will be made. Then, I will review a particular case: the distribution sector.

His functioning, the working timetables and finally, I will do a study of the selected company, in this case, Mercadona.

All these reasons are analysed to provide potential changes and improvements in the working timetables of Mercadona to achieve a better conciliation among professional and personal life. The purpose is to have happier and motivated employees and this fact gets a higher productivity.



## 2. The importance of rationalizing to reconcile family and professional life.

When people talk about the problem of setting correct working timetables adapted to the new times, which provides an improvement of the productivity in the companies and the quality of the employees' life, this can be considered as a very interesting challenge, which is the importance to establish a rational working timetables in order to reconcile, in the best possible way, the professional and personal life of the employees. Reconciling means to combine the laboral, personal and family times in a balanced way. In the Spanish case, the rigidity of the timetables and the long hours spent at the workplace often preclude the conciliation. Working more than 40 hours per week (41,5 weekly hours according to the study of the Radiografía Sage from the Pyme) implies to having less free time during the day to dedicate to our families or leisure times. Many studies state that working more than 8 hours per day causes a low performance.

A rule that would allow to reconcile in good conditions the laboral, and family lives would be the "Rule of 8-8-8", sharing equally the 24 hours of the day concerning three aspects: laboral, personal and family. As shown in the graphic below:

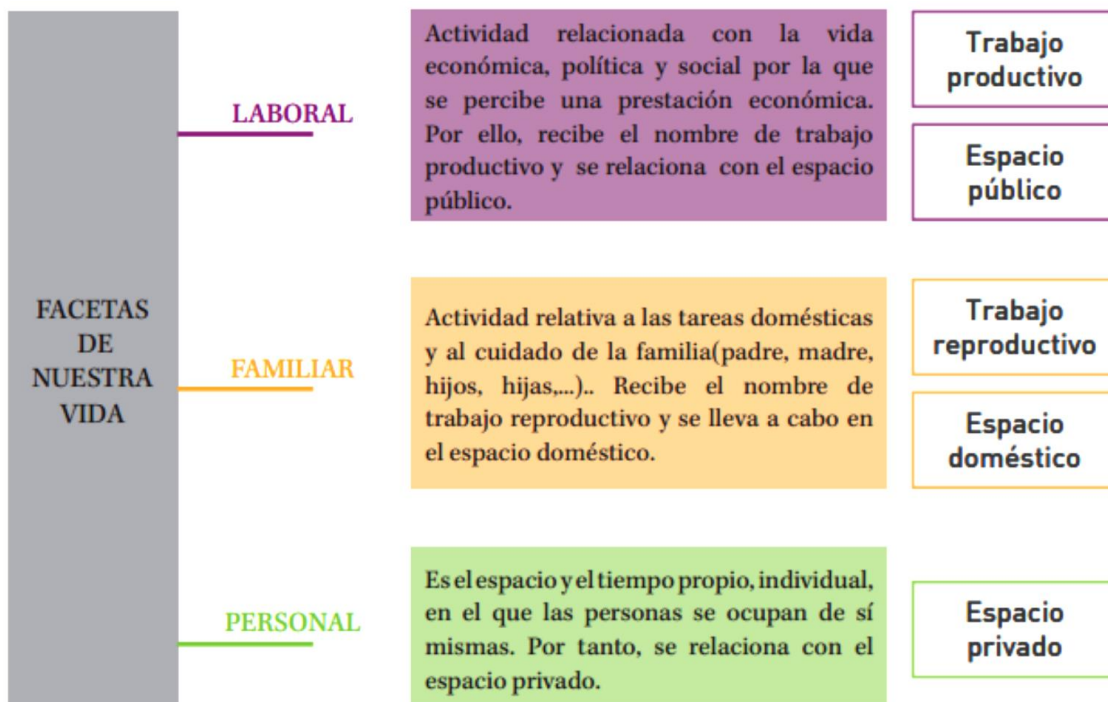


Table taken from "Guía sobre conciliación de la vida laboral, familiar y personal del Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer"

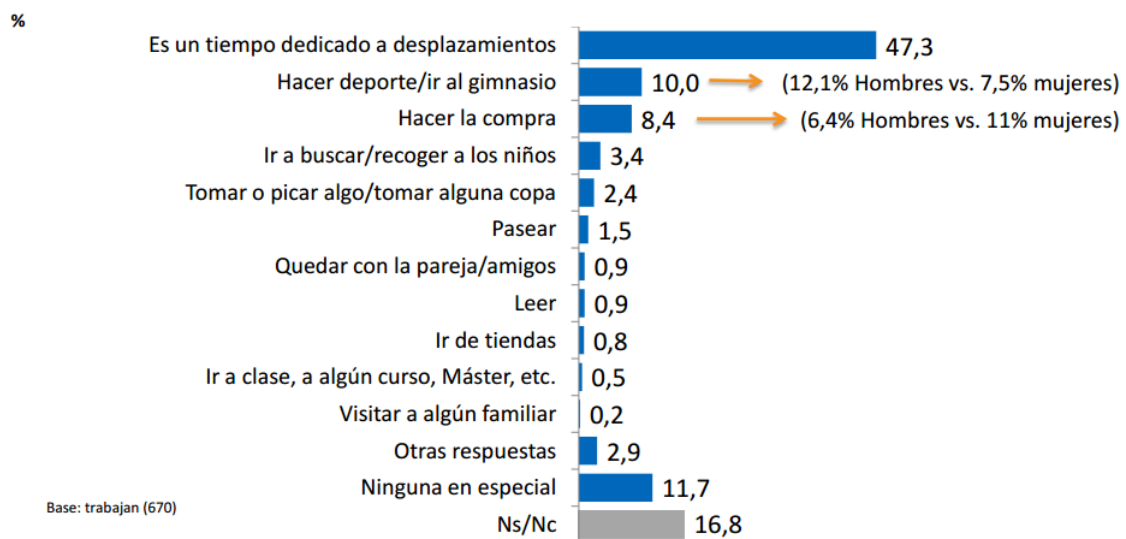
The topic of the conciliation of laboral and personal lives is becoming stronger in the last times. Thus, the Ministry of Equality state in a summary that "the conciliation of the family, personal and laboral lives is a basic tool of human resources managements,



since it allows to take advantage of all the potentialities of the staff, men and women". In addition, the Spanish society is becoming aware of the conciliation topic and according to the Observatorio Sage in 2015, around 80% of the population consider this as a very important question.

Regarding the different activities that people after the working day do, the fact that mostly attracts our attention is that the main task is the time we waste going to the workplace. This fact also implies the appearance of teleworking, that is to say, the possibility that the employees can do their tasks from home. Then we can see a list of the most performed activities that the employees do when they end their working day:

## Actividades después de acabar la jornada laboral



\* En un día normal, entre la hora a la que Ud. acaba su jornada de trabajo hasta el momento en el que llega a casa, ¿qué actividad/es suele hacer?



Table 1 from "Fundación Pfizer"



### **Good practices to the conciliation**

There are different key factors or practices that allow that laboral conciliation can successfully work. These factors include:

- Policies of permits/leave: this section includes all the practices that aim at providing facilities to the employees that have to leave temporarily their workplace to attend dependent family members. These practices suppose major economic and organizational costs, due to the fact that they are more widespread in the companies where working conditions are relatively good and the stability in the work is high. Examples of these would be higher permits of maternity and paternity than those established by the law. For instance, a major permit of lactation, facilities to taking leave to take care of dependent family members, maintenance of the labor advantages after a permit of large leave, and so on.
- Flexibility in working times: it allows that people can do their laboral tasks with a high degree of flexibility in the working timetables, so that they are provided with more range to organize the times that they assign to laboral and personal life. Among the practices of working timetables' flexibility, we could emphasize the flexibility to enter and leave the workplace; employees can leave the workplace to attend a family emergency or the possibility to part-time work. An important item to enable the flexibility would be that the fact that company is based on the compliance of the objectives rather than in the physical presence of employees.
- Telework: This implementation allows the employees to work from anywhere, in such a way is easier to compatibilize the personal life with the work. An interesting fact about this point emphasizes that the "Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)" states that 44% of companies that register telework measures consider that 10% of time that workers employed moving from the workplace before, now they use this time to work. According to this institute in 2014 only a 27% of companies have already implemented, in spite of that fact increase the productivity between 5%-25% and reduce the work absenteeism.
- Supports to encourage the conciliation: this section includes all the practices by which the companies offer supporting services to the employees with family responsibilities. As well as with the policies of permits, these supports suppose a major expense for the companies and they are also given in companies with good working conditions and a great stability. Some of these characteristics are



the supports for children births, payments to people that care family dependents, nursery tickets, numerous family, and so on.

**✚ Problems that affect the conciliation**

There are a lot of problems that affect the conciliation. Some of them affect more than the others. However, by using adequate policies of conciliation, the incidence in the life of the employees would be reduced.

In the next graph we can see the incidence of different problems about the conciliation:

**Población trabajadora: incidencia de problemas sobre la conciliación**



Table taken from Fundación Pfizer.

As seen in the graph, the main problems that arise from not conciliating are the lack of free time to dedicate to other activities (personal or family aspects) and the great number of hours that the employee are in the workplace. It provokes a decrease of the employee productivity and it even affects the health of the employees (e.g., problems like stress or anxiety). In turn, employees with children also have problems to coordinate the school and the laboral timetables, and the possibility to find nurseries with reasonable prices and timetables for their children.





### **Benefits of the conciliation**

Obviously, the importance of laboral and family conciliation is due to the fact that if we establish this in an adequate and balanced way, it gives a number of benefits both for the company and the staff, and for the general society. Some of the most important benefits would be:

#### ❖ Benefits to the society:

- Gender equality: it eases that the women have the same rights as the men.
- Encourage the maternity and paternity: it eases that the employees can coordinate their job and the children cares.
- Helping the environment: the option of teleworking let the employees do their activities from home and they don't use the transport. It implies a reduction of the pollution.

#### ❖ Benefits to the employee:

- Higher motivation and satisfaction in the workplace.
- It improves the health and well-being of the employees due to fewer problems of stress and anxiety.
- Relationship between employees and company get closer due to the fact that employees feel valued: they perceive that the company is worried about their health and well-being and it provokes an appreciation that let a great relationship between employee-company. As a consequence, it causes a best work environment and the possibility to solve the different problems that appear every day in a most optimal way.

#### ❖ Benefits to the companies:

- Major attraction and retention of the talent: a company with adequate conciliation policies will have a major retention capacity of the talent because the working conditions offered to the employee are better than the companies that not offer these conditions. It would suppose to the employee a major opportunity cost if he/she decides to go to another company. When attracting staff to the company, these conditions will also influence due to the implementation of specific laboral conditions that others maybe do not have.
- Project a modernity image: it is a way to be distinguished from the rest of companies. Having a "Responsible Family Business" is propitious for the



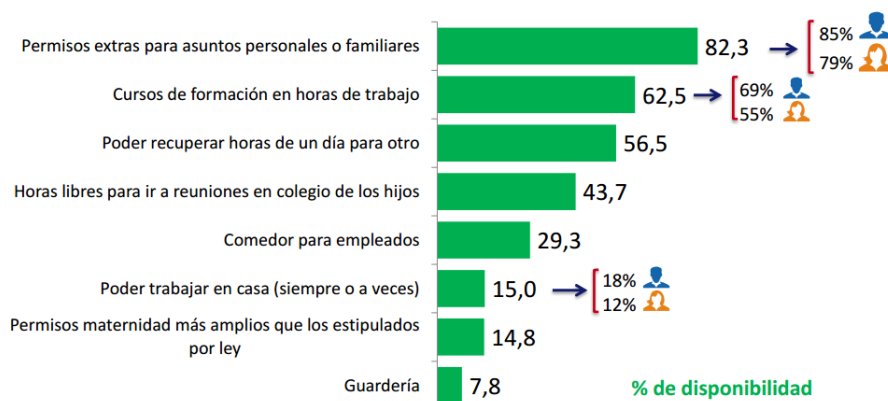
company in order to make the society see that this is a company concerned about their employees and fully integrated in the problems that people have in 21th century.

- Major involvement and fidelity of the employees: obviously the employees are greatful with the company if it is worried about them and the company give facilities to combine their laboral and family lifes. This provoke that the fidelity of the employees to the company improve and they are involved more in their job. As a result, the activity of the company remains being adequate or even improving to achieve these life benefits.
- Productivity and efficiency increase: a company with adequates conciliation policies to the laboral and family life will have employees with the features mentioned above (motivated, involved...), as well as it will reduce the absenteeism of the employees and it is probably that they have a great productivity, due to the fact that working hours will be more efficient.

The progress of new technologies and their use suppose a progress to the companies and an indispensable element in the laboral conciliation items. Nowadays, it is possible working from mobile phones, tablets, computers... Therefore, it is possible to draft documents from somewhere using the internet. The investment in new technologies is essential for all the companies that want to introduce measures of laboral conciliation.

In the next graph, we can see the main services/activities that companies give to their employees for a better conciliation:

### Prestaciones/servicios disponibles en la empresa/trabajo



\* ¿De cuáles de las siguientes prestaciones o servicios dispone Ud. en su empresa / trabajo?

Base: trabajan por cta. ajena (554)



Table taken from "Fundación Pfizer".



As we can observe, telework is still a measure a little bit established in our country, as well as nursery services to employees' childrens, whereas the extra permits for personal affairs and the training courses in the working days are the activities with greater acceptance in the companies.

After that, we have to point that being a company that really facilitates the laboral and family lifes not only implies the application of these measures, unless it require a commitment by all the organization. That is to say, companies should have a corporate culture favourable for the conciliation. These types of companies are charecterized for two basic items:

- ✓ Existence of favourable attitudes to the conciliation according to the management; they must have a great conviction that the measures to enable the conciliation are adequates and positives both for the company and for the employees.
- ✓ It has to be a company which is sensitive with the co-responsibility; that is to say, it should understand that the conciliation does not have to do with genders, since it sometimes benefit women because they often have to do the house chores and children cares. Companies must act equally with both genders, being aware of the factthat men and women are able to do these home tasks.

All of these policies, measures or practices that companies try to apply to have a good conciliation have the strongest defence in our country in the Association for the Rationalization of the Spanish Timetables, which indicate in his manifest that the most important objectives of rational timetables must be, among others:






- To conciliate personal, family and laboral lifes.
- Co-responsibility in the distribution of house chores and family cares.
- To encourage the equality between men and women.
- To improve the quality of the people lifes.
- To increase the productivity.
- To sleep enough time.
- To encourage healthy life.
- To decrease the accident rate.



Finally, in order to conclude, we have to indicate that nowadays we are in a complicated political situation in Spain, where the four politician parties that obtained more votes, do not get to reach agreements to establish a government. It is a highly topical and very interesting topic in this final project. It is interesting to observe the next graph because it contains the different measures that politician parties would implement in terms of conciliation. This is a reflection of the society that we live and the way of thinking of the Spanish people at the moment Without undertaking any evaluation of the measures that would be the most appropriate since this is a very subjective question and influence the own ideas to act, I think that it is very interesting to attach the next graph for all the reasons explained before.



## Medidas de conciliación en los programas electorales y en propuestas posteriores

					
<b>PERMISOS</b>	Ampliación de 10 días para padres con discapacidad o hijos discapacitados	Ampliación de 2 a 4 semanas. Progresivamente igualarlo al de maternidad. Intransferibles	26 semanas totales. 8 obligatorias para cada uno. Resto compartidas	Calendario para igualar el de paternidad al de maternidad. Iguales. Intransferibles con 100% del salario y guardando el puesto de trabajo	26 semanas totales. 8 obligatorias para cada uno. Resto compartidas
<b>ESCUELAS DE 0-3 AÑOS</b>		Dotación de escuelas infantiles públicas con gratuidad progresiva	Complemento salarial: crédito para acceder a guardería privada. Sin recursos, acceso gratuito o con tarifa reducida	plan de instauración progresiva de la enseñanza pública y gratuita desde 0 años	Universalizar de manera progresiva la oferta de escuelas infantiles en la primera etapa de 0 a 3 años. Oferta pública asequible
<b>CONCILIACIÓN LABORAL / ESCOLAR</b>		Comedor y extraescolares en festivos y vacaciones	Adaptación del calendario escolar al calendario laboral. Reducción de las vacaciones escolares de verano a dos meses	Adaptación entre jornadas escolares y laborales	Comedor y extraescolares en festivos y vacaciones
<b>JORNADAS</b>	Que la jornada laboral acabe a las 18 "con carácter general"	De 8 a 18. Continua. Contrato a tiempo parcial	Desde las 8. Compacta. De 30 a 45 minutos para comer	Jornada laboral máxima de 35 horas semanales	Que la jornada laboral termine a las 18
<b>FLEXIBILIDAD HORARIA</b>	Reconocimiento a empresas y organizaciones que incorporan modelos de flexibilidad	Incentivos.		Sí	
<b>TELETRABAJO</b>	Desarrollo normativo y efectivo	Un día cada dos semanas	Un día a la semana	Si	Sí, al menos un día a la semana
<b>SELLO / CERTIFICACIÓN</b>	Reconocimiento a empresas y organizaciones que aplican buenas prácticas. Sello con incentivos fiscales	Sello horario racional. Incentivo en concursos públicos	Certificación ISO. Ventajas en contratación pública		Sello por horario racional
<b>RACIONALIZACIÓN DE HORARIOS</b>	Adelantar el final del 'prime time' a las 23.00h. Recuperar el huso horario GMT que nos iguala con Londres y Canarias	Adelantar el final del 'prime time' a las 23.00h y otras actividades de ocio y cultura	Recuperar el huso horario GMT que nos iguala con Londres y Canarias		Recuperar el huso horario GMT que nos iguala con Londres y Canarias



**Acuerdo PSOE-C's**



## 2.1 Comparative to conciliation between Spain and European countries.

If we try to make a comparison between the measures taken into account the conciliation in Spain and those regarding the other European countries, we will realize that, according to a report by the Evolution of the European Family in 2014, there is a lack of labour flexibility. As a result, less than 30% of the European employees dispose of certain measures of labour flexibility. Although there are some countries that ease the conciliation, Spain is at the tail end of these countries with the 88% of the employees having the same rigid working timetable as Latvia and Portugal, whereas Finland and Sweden are on the tip of the ranking.

The maternity and paternity leaves are key facts that improve conciliation since they allow the gender equality concerning the care of the children and the conditions in the labour market. We have to highlight that Sweden is the only country that has an equality permit between men and women when taking care of the children because this permit gives 480 days of leave for each one of the genders. In this sense, Spain is the last country of the country since it only gives 122 days of leave for women and 15 days for men. In the following table, we can see the different days of leave that European countries have:

	Permiso maternidad	Permiso paternidad	Porcentaje de sueldo
España	112 días	15+15 días (del permiso de la madre)	100%
Suecia	480 días (60 para compartir con el padre)	480 (60 para compartir con la madre)	80%
Noruega	322-392 días (21 antes del parto y 42 después. El resto lo puede compartir con el padre)	70 días	100% (80% en el caso de optar por 56 semanas)
Finlandia	105 días +158 compartidos con el padre	18 días + 158 compartidos con la madre	80%
Alemania	98 días (6 semanas antes del parto y 8 después)	84-98 días	100%
Grecia	119 días	Ninguno	100%
Italia	154 días	91 días	80%
Rumanía	126 días	126 días	85%
Portugal	120 – 150 días	15 días	100% (80% en el caso de optar por 150 días)



The social benefits also have the importance concerning conciliation. For instance, in a country that receives more economic resources for the benefits mentioned before, it is permitted that employees do not have to work more hours at work. It also allows them to find a second job in order to cover family expenses. In this sense, Spain is also at the tail end of the ranking due to the withdrawal of the “baby cheque” in 2011. This fact implies that families do not receive any payment of this type. The only payment they receive is 25 € every month as long as the household income does not exceed 11500 € every year. The following table shows the difference between Spain and other 4 countries that are more developed in this sense both economically and academically.

:

	Ayuda	Educación: guardería, primaria, secundaria y universidad
<b>España</b>	25.24 €/mes hasta los 14 años ( solo familias con renta inferior a 11.500 euros)	Gratis primaria y secundaria
<b>Suecia</b>	100 €/mes hasta 18 años o fin de estudios	Gratis (salvo guardería)
<b>Noruega</b>	125 €/mes hasta 18 años	Gratis
<b>Finlandia</b>	90-170 €/mes hasta 18 años ( cuantía según número de hijos)	Gratis
<b>Alemania</b>	184 €/mes hasta 18 años	Gratis

Own development



### **3. Work times in Spain.**

As seen in the last section, there are several aspects that allow the conciliation of the working and private life of the employees. One of the key aspects, perhaps the most important one, is the working timetable that these employees have. This aspect is going to be analysed and compared with the one by the other European countries in order to see the situation concerning working conditions.

Generally, the working culture in our country states that part-time employees work a lot of hours during the day and they employ a lot of time having lunch (2 hours in some cases). We start the working day too early, that is to say, over 8:00-9:00 o'clock in the morning, then we normally stop at 14:00 to have lunch and we return to our workplace at 4:00 in the afternoon, finally we end our working day over 19:00-20:00 in the evening. This would be the working day of millions of employees in Spain. As we can see, employees spend an average of 9-10 hours at work. Therefore, it is so complicated to conciliate the working and family lives since we also spend 8 hours sleeping and, as a result, we only have 6 hour for our private and family lives (leisure time, household chore and so on). This kind of timetable is especially within our society due to two historical events of the middle of the twentieth century. These events will be explained in detail within their historical frame.

#### **3.1 Historical evolution of Spanish works times.**

The origin of the problems created by these working timetables in Spain comes from the post-war. After the civil war, Spain was destroyed and a lot of families were in poor conditions. Therefore, they needed to obtain as many incomes as possible. At that time, women could not work without husband's permission so we can find discriminations towards women within the work environment. All these fact led to the modification of the working timetables in which men had to work in the following way:

They have to work from 8 to 14 in the morning. Then they had to take a nap in order to rest and recover to face the following job that started at 16 in the afternoon and finished over 21 or 22 at night.

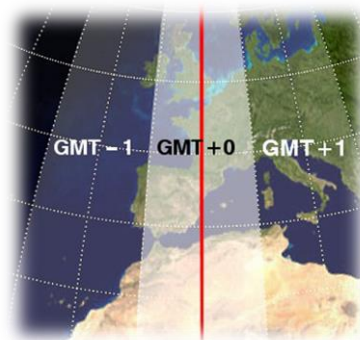




All these modifications, apart from influencing the current working timetable, they also changed our daily routines since Spain is a country in which people usually have lunch and dinner too late and we go to bed late at night. These facts imply health problems for employees due to the lack of sleep and stress.

Another fact that affects the working timetables and the possibility to conciliate is the time zone that we have nowadays in Spain. The Spanish time is out of phase related to the solar time, that is to say, when the sun is located at the top, that is, at 12 o'clock in the midday according to the solar time, the Spanish clocks strike 13.30 pm. This jet lag comes from the time of the Spanish dictatorship, when the dictator Francisco Franco moves an hour forward the Spanish time in order to equalize this time to the time Germany imposed to the occupied countries. That is to say, the time is GMT+1:00, an hour more than the one we must have regarding our geographical situation as we can see in the picture below.

According to the Association for the Rational Planning of the Spanish Work Timetables, the solution would be to come back to the time zone of Greenwich used by our country in 1942. Thus, it would be an easy and immediate process because not moving the time forward when spring arrives would be enough. In addition, the process should be done with several changes concerning social activities. For instance, the TV prime time should move an hour forward and continuous working days must be fostered as well as the timetables at schools and the lunchtime breaks.



Jos Collins, an expert regarding rationalization of the Spanish timetables, states that the reality of the daily life in Spain is governed by the solar time as the other countries and it is impossible to be against this fact. He also points: *“People are driven by the Sun, and in Spain they have lunch at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and they have dinner at 8 o'clock in the evening, in spite of the fact that the clocks strike respectively 3 o'clock and 10 o'clock. Due to this timetable, we go to bed late, wake up early and we sleep an hour less than the time recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO)”*.

This fact negatively affects the performance at work. The author mentioned above emphasises the benefits that we would have if we used the logical solar time again. These benefits are as follows: we would have breakfast well at home; we would sleep the time recommended by the WHO; it would enhance employees' motivation and



productivity without reducing the working day; we would finish with the useless presence at work; and we would spend more time with our family and friends apart from being a simple and free initiative by the government.

The same author also tried to defend in front of the Committee of the Representatives that Spanish people still maintain the traditions acquire during the post-war when moonlighting became general. He said “Against the disastrous economic situation, people must have two jobs, the official one in the mornings and an informal job in the afternoons. Due to this fact, the public administrations or the banks do not generally have the same timetable in the afternoons and there is a long break between the two jobs” – according to the Belgian expert.

Thus, the solutions that Collins suggests are twofold. First, we have to reuse the time zone of Greenwich and foster the continuous workday having a break of an hour in order to have lunch. By doing so, we would get a better conciliation between private and work life, a major productivity and it would increase our resting time.

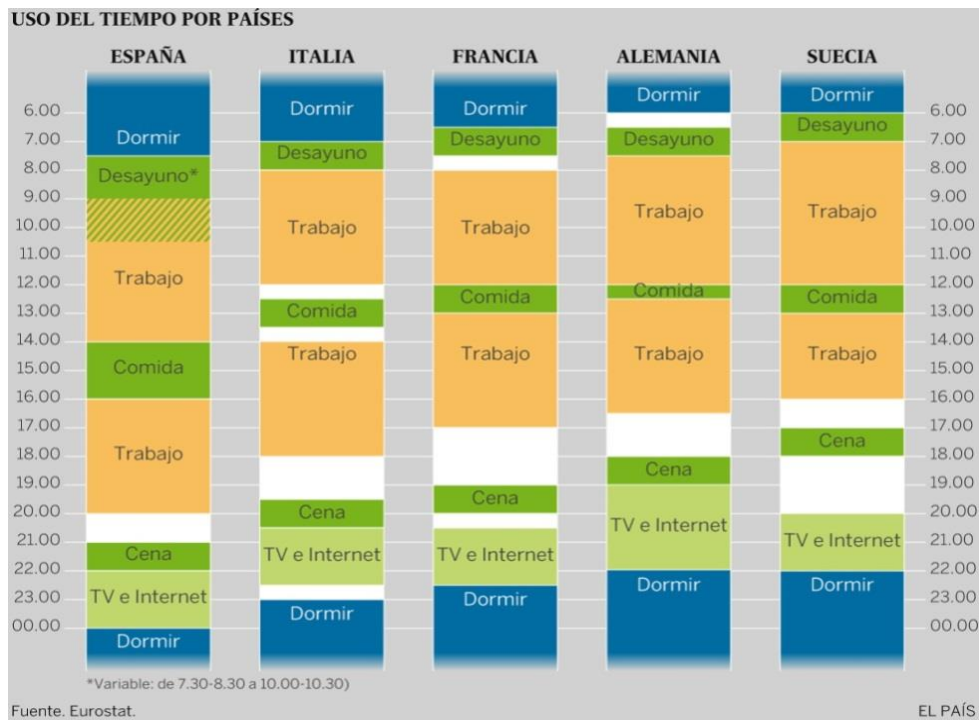
As we can observe, the typology of the predominant working timetables in Spain and many of the deep-rooted traditions in our country come from the 1940s. They did not seem relevant at that time but we realized the great influence these traditions have had in order to acquire some of the habits the Spanish society has nowadays. As a consequence, both the moonlighting that implied the existence of the part-time workdays, and the change of the time zone that modified the solar time and the Spanish official time are two aspects that are dealt with not only within a historical frame. These aspects are also important when doing the comparative of timetables between Spain and the other European countries and they must be mentioned again in the following sections of the current project.



### 3.2 Spanish works times vs European non-stop works times.

Focusing on the problem of the extension of the working timetable and the part-time workday, in the next graph we can observe the different working and personal habits established in several European countries:

:



Source: Eurostat

In this graphic, we can observe how in Spain we are late in order to do the different daily activities respecting the other countries. In this sense, much of the blame is on the part-time workday and the duration of the lunch breaks.

Starting with the problem of going to bed too late, due to the fact that the TV prime time is from 22 to 00 at night, that implies that we get up later and we start our workday over 10 o'clock in the morning and we finish at 14 o'clock. Then, we have a break of two hours for lunch and we finish the workday over 8 o'clock in the evening, coming back home at 21 in order to have dinner. This is our daily routine from Monday to Friday, that is to say, what is known as the Spanish part-time workday, the one that millions of Spaniards do everyday.



While other countries such as Sweden or Germany start their workday between 7.00 and 8.00 am finishing at 12.00 in the midday and having a break between 30 and 60 minutes to have a light lunch, which allows employees to have a better performance during the afternoon. Then, they finish over 16.00/17.00 pm. This fact allows them to have more hours to devote for their personal issues as well as having lunch and going to bed earlier in order to have a good resting. This is well known as the European non-stop timetable.

The working timetable in Spain has distinct features, which make it different from the working timetables of most of the European countries. First and foremost, the main feature is the existence of the part-time jobs, that is, people start working in the morning until they the time of having lunch, having a break to have lunch and continuing the workday in the afternoon. As seen in the previous section these workdays sometimes last until late in the evening.

Another feature is the large number of hours that we work during the day, week and year. According to the Association for the cooperation and the economic development (OCDE) in the year 2014 there were big differences between the duration of the working days in European nations. Therefore, we can realize that the shortest working days of the European continent can be found in Germany (114 hours per month). This fact implies more than five working hours from Monday to Friday. Netherlands is in the second position with 119 hours per month, almost 6 hours per day as Norway. Then, we can find Denmark and France with 1438 and 1489 hour every year respectively.

On the other side, the worst position in the ranking is Greece, where there is an average of 2042 working hours (670 hours more than in Germany which implies 9 hour during the workday. Apart from Greece, we can also find other countries such as Russia (1985 working hours every year), Latvia and Poland with 1928 working hours per year. These four countries would be the worst countries regarding the quantity of working hours.

Finally, in Spain we have the workday of 8 hours established. It supposes 40 hours every week and 1689 hours every year (280 more hours than Germany, 200 more hours than France and 12 more than the United Kingdom. However, in this sense there are some countries with worse work conditions than Spain such as Italy or Portugal. These countries work respectively 45 and 168 more hours than our country.



In spite of the fact that in our country many hours are worked, it does not imply a better productivity, since the countries working less hours than ours are the ones having a better productivity.

Bearing in mind the case of Germany, we can highlight four key facts that help us to understand how a country working 35 hours per week and having 24 days of vacation paid can have the highest level of productivity,

- The working hours mean working hours, that is to say, employees cannot use the social networks and the mobile phone. Moreover, they cannot waste the time talking to their workmates about things that are not related to their workplace. They devote this time to their working tasks and they do not get distracted.
- Direct communication, that is to say, in order to not lose the information from the intermediation of a message. For instance, the German employees consult directly their proposals with their superiors, new alternatives or suggestions. That way the information flows directly and without any intermediaries.
- The importance of having a good life outside work: In Germany, when the workday is over, it is completely over. For example, they want to establish a prohibition of receiving e-mails from work when the workday has finished (over 6 pm in the afternoon). When the employees finish their workday, they spend their time on their personal and family life.
- The possibility of combining maternity and paternity with work: the maternity leave can reach the 14 months (divided as preferred) with a salary of the 67% of the usual wage that will be provided by the state. Moreover, they can apply for a similar leave during three years (unpaid), either of the spouses having the possibility to return to the working market afterwards. Due to this fact, the German maternity and paternity model is the most permissive and the longest of all the models from the developed countries.

These four key facts make the German employees feel more comfortable in their workplaces because they know that the timetables in which they must be focused on their work (these tasks do not imply too many hours). Thus, they are free to do the activities they desire; they also have a direct communication with their superiors, fact that makes them feel more important and valued within the company. Therefore, they can perfectly conciliate their working and private life due to the possibility that they have to ask for maternity and paternity permits. As a result, MOTIVATION +



CONCILIATION = HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY. The employees are happier and more motivated; they will have a better performance during the workday due to the conciliation.

### **3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of non-stop work times.**

Already analysed and compared the most common working timetables in Spain (part-time work day) and the European non-stop (continuous work day), is the time to comment the advantages and disadvantages that this model have, from which it is recommended its deployment in our country for a many advantages that I analysed then:

1. Increase the motivation: continuous work day have a direct impact in the motivation of the employees due to they are more satisfied, happy and with a better willingness to the work thanks to they have time to dedicate for their personal and family life, that's to say, its easier for they conciliate their personal and family life.
2. Strengthened the identification with the project and company: satisfied employees will identify with more facility with the company if they know that the company taking account their needs and the time to attend it.
3. Reduce the stress: the stress accumulated for the long working hours of the part-time work day disappear and this has positive repercussions in the job performance.
4. Encourage the time optimization: since they have less hours that in a full-time employment, the employees learn to optimize positively their work hours, are more efficient and decisive in their daily tasks.
5. Better work plannings: the employees will be required to learn how planificate their work days with the enough advance, through the operative work meetings that let them distribute their times along the week.
6. Improve the break: the continuous work day let that the employees suffer less physical and psychological wear. They get home more rest, with time to enjoy with the family and entertainment moments and they go to the bed early with a less sensation of exhaustion. In this way, they arrive the next day at work in better conditions to realise their work.
7. Facilitate the disconnection: when the employees finish their work in a reasonable hour, it let them disconnect during some hours of their laboral



concerns. A quality entertainment time is essential to release the mind and to make up for a new productivity working day

8. Development new aspects: in this way the employee have more time, which enable that they can discover new aspects in his life due to he/she can do training courses and personal development.
9. Increase the productivity: finally, all these reasons join in a main reason, the productivity. Productivity increase in a significant way, and it benefit both the employees and company and demonstrate the profitability of the implementation of measures to reconcile and working timetables.

An example of the convenience of the application of continuous work day in the companies of our country is found in Iberdrola, that in 2007 it became in the first company of Ibex-35 to approve this work days, measure by which they had benefits 9000 employees getting excellent results increasing the productivity in 500.000 hours a year. The company attribute these benefits to the fact that the satisfaction of the employees implies a better commitment with the company and its goals. Furthermore with this implementation of the continuous work day, Iberdrola have achieve minimize its rates of absenteeism in 10% and the accident rates almost 60% in the last years.

On the other hand, the measure has wrought also an important cost savings for the company minimizing the water and electricity use, although the most important benefit has been to attract talent and incorporate the best professionals to its staff, this is a competitive advantage.

However the main advantages has been for its employees, that now enter to the job at 7:15 a.m. and exit at 15:30 p.m. with a difference between the time they begin and the time they finish of 39 minutes. Due to all these items, according to the Monitor Empresarial de Reputación Corporativa (MERCOR), Iberdrola is one of the 8 best companies to work, and according to an internal survey 87,6% of the employees of the company greatly appreciate the continuous work day, that let them have afternoon to attend their families, friends or hobbies and enjoy of free time that have a great impact in a better quality of life. We have to add to this fact the economic saving in transport, due to they only realise one journey (if they returns at home to dinner).





Concerning the drawbacks that the application of the continuous workday might have in a company, the most important ones are as follows:

1. A working culture quite rooted in the society: many employees still consider that presentism is only a way to show the commitment they have with the company. This way of working would finish with the continuous workday but an adaptation period would be needed.
2. Business' interdependence: there is a possibility by which the companies that implant the continuous workday in their daily life have customers or partners still using the part-time workday of our country. This fact can bring problems when communicating among different companies since the time when the workday would finish in each one of the companies would be different.
3. Existence of businesses that cannot apply this workday: several sectors like hostelry or transport have some difficulties applying the continuous workday to their working life since they offer services needed throughout the entire day.

As we can check, the advantages of the implementation of the continuous workday in a company widely outweigh the drawbacks. These drawbacks might be solved by change the culture and the traditions that we have in our country nowadays. This perfectly represents that most of the experts are sick and tired of saying that the continuous workday is the system that offers more benefits for the employees and for the enterprisesthese days. Therefore, it should be applied to most of the companies as soon as possible in order to improve the quality of our lives and a better conciliation of the working, personal and family lives.

#### **4. Specific issues of the study.**

Once analysed and explained generally the problem of the working timetables and its rationalization in order to enable the conciliation of the laboral and family life of the employees, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of working days in Spain in comparison with the other European countries, it is time to analyse the distribution sector in our country and, specifically, the leading company of this sector, that is, Mercadona.





#### 4.1 The distribution sector in Spain.

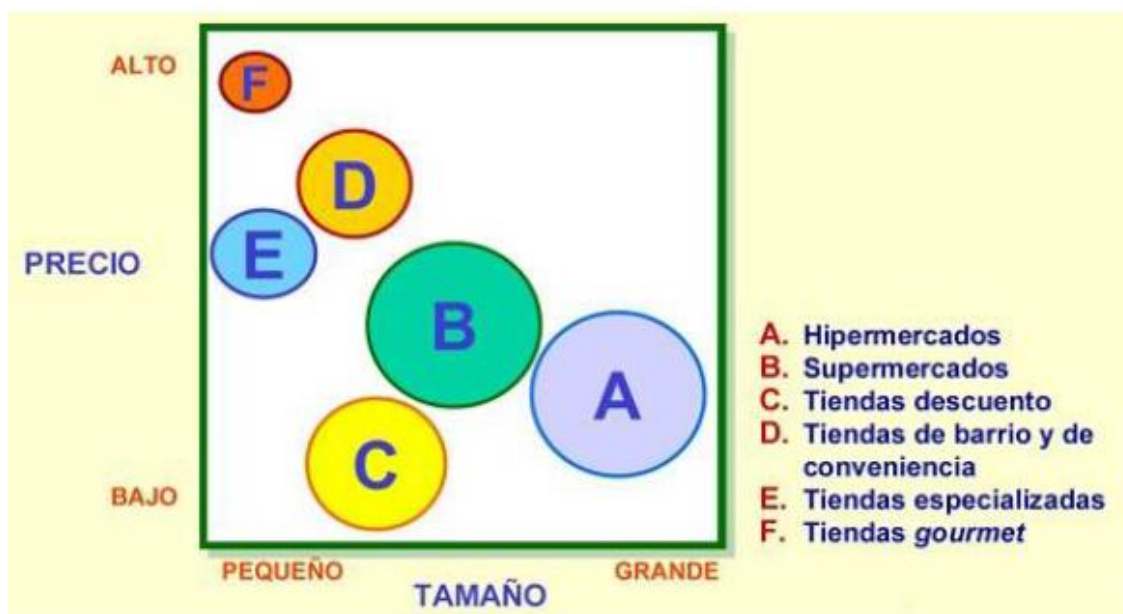
According to the sector classification of the INE, the commercial distribution is computed as an economic activity belonging to service sector, together with others like tourism, transport, communications, companies service or communications technology. As referred in the “Casificación Nacional de Actividades Económicas (CNAE), the types of companies that belong to the commercial sector are consignments of vehicles and petrol, retail trade and wholesade trade.

In other words, the commercial distribution can be defined as the set of tasks destined to organize the exchange between offer and demand, that is to say, between manufacturers, providers and consumers.

According to García Magarzo, director of the “Asociación Española de Distribuidores, Autoservicios y Supermercados (ASEDAS)”, the sector of commercial distribution has a great market with new needs, a great variety of products and technological and scientific advances. It is an organised and modern distribution because it contributes with added values for the consumer like:

- Status, introducing material transformations in the products.
- Location, with ubications that ease the distribution and transport of goods.
- Extended commercial timetables that ease the purchase.
- Customer service, after-sale, guarantee...

In the next picture we can see the position of the 6 types of establishments responsible for the commercial distribution regarding to the prize and size variables :





As already checked the little and specialized establishments are the ones which have the highest prices, since many times they are exclusive shops, with expensive products or corner shops that have less profit margin.

On the other hand, the biggest facilities like supermarkets and hypermarkets are the ones which have the lowest prices due to this fact, they buy large amounts of products and they have higher margin in the prices.

In the last years, the distribution sector has been really affected by the continuation of the crisis and it nowadays keeps a price war that implies that some of the main distributors are in a complicated situation. The price competence is the thing that prevails in the distribution market with Mercadona on the top and discounts establishments such as Aldi, DIA or Lidl following it.

According to recent studies, the companies with a low-price position continue concentrating the market (mainly Mercadona and Lidl) which have increase their market share from 32% to 34. The rest of the supermarkets and hypermarkets have a market share about 21% and 14% respectively. As a comparison with the other European countries, Spain is in a middle situation in a distribution concentration since dates of Europanel; Mercadona, DIA and Carrefour have a combined market share of 46%. There is a great difference between both extremes of the ranking because countries like Sweden or Denmark have figures superiors to 70%, while other countries like Italy or Germany have dates of 24% and 35% respectively.

Another interesting fact is that the large formats are not already the focus of attention of the consumers, having a tendency to change towards proximity formats, that is to say, the consumer value falls into having an establishment near home rather than having to move to big superstores that implies them a large cost of time and money.

Apart from this tendency, the consumers keep demanding improvements in the shops and in the distribution channels. 41% of the Spanish consumers believe that the most important change should be the shop experience, and 28% of the consumers think that the shopping process must be integrated and coherent between channels and devices. According to Miriam Molino, director of Digital Consumo & Retail de Accenture: *"The shop and mobile phone are going to play an important role through mobile services in the shops that allow to locate products, access to offers, recipe suggestions...This world is going to be an area in which distributors are going to be working in the next years"*.



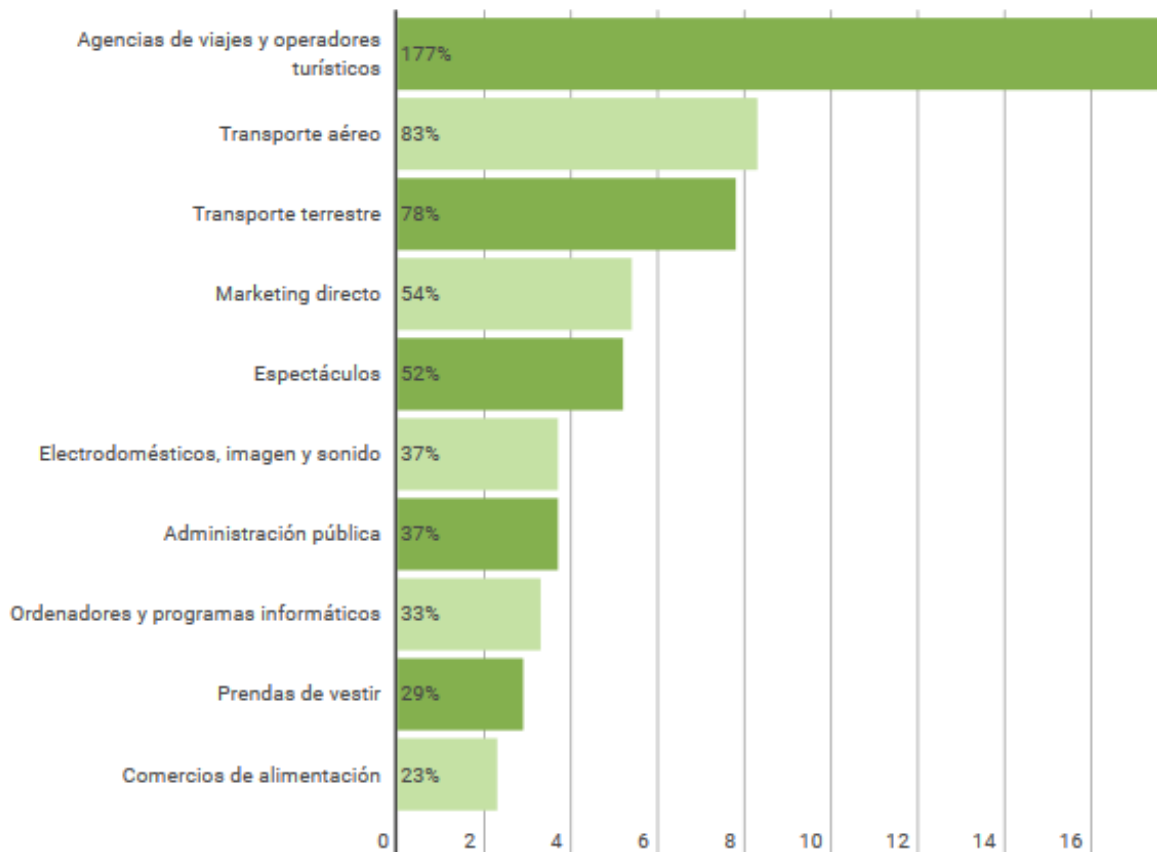
There are three keys to facilitate an exceptional experience:

1. Know the customer: it is essential to achieve a complete vision of the customer to talk to him with coherence. In this point, the online distributors take advantage of it because they are able to treat their customers as mister or misses and they know their “purchase history”
2. Careful treatment in the sale of fresh products: here the physical distributors take advantage due to the fact that a fresh product that can be ordered in several formats (slices, pieces...), apart from the fact that you see instantly the product in its state.
3. Extend the offer: the own brand generates and improves the grown margin between 10-30% regarding the supplier brand; it also improves the differentiation and complicate the comparisons in the prizes. Furthermore, it allows covering the range of products, either to position the company in the segment of low prizes or developing premium products. The offsetting is an increase of the inversion, a major complexity in the management range, the loss of support of the suppliers of brand products and the possibility of not persuading the customer.



A channel that is becoming important in the last years due to the advances of the new technologies is the e-commerce. Nevertheless, within the online business in the sector of commercial distribution it keeps being one of the most delayed. However, this channel is in phase of expansion yet, in which the bulk of factors of the sector considers that the online market will become potential in a long term and without vocation of replacing the traditional purchasing. It must not be seen as a threat, it is an alternative consumption. As we can see in the next graph, there are a lot of sectors that use this channel in a large extent:

**VOLUMEN DEL NEGOCIO DEL 'ECOMMERCE' EN ESPAÑA**



Source: CNMC



Concerning the electronic commerce, a new threat have emerged for the Spanish distribution sector: the entry in this market using the e-commerce, of two giants like Amazon or Google, which are seen now as a business opportunity in the online sale of products that the people consumes in traditional surfaces like supermarkets or hypermarkets . The entry of these large companies in the national market could be a severe blow for companies that are operating in the state level because the Spanish companies dealing with distribution still leaves something to be desided respect to the online sale. To begin with, a lot of companies charge an excessive delivery costs. The prices overcome 6 euros and not too many establishments reduce prices when the cost of the purchase overcomes certain quantities. The big companies have especially this problem although it seems to be strange. For example, in Mercadona buying online has an average cost of 7.21 euros, while in El Corte Inglés or Hipercor the price is between 6-8 euros.

This is not the only problem that the supermarkets have in their e-commerce experience. The service is limited in geographical levels and only covers specific areas in Spanish geography and even in some cities; it can be difficult to get the service of the purchases in some areas or concrete districts. Furthermore, practically no supermarket has online attention services for the customer and there are too many of them that still have a design of web typical from the begginigs of the Internet. .

The things that would become a threat for the Spanish supermarkets and hypermarkets would possibly be an advantage for the consumers, since the entry in this market of a powerful company like Amazon, it would provoke the existence of an apropiate rules regarding the needs of the e-commerce consumers, imposing lower shipping costs and shorter delivery time.



## 4.2 Predominant working timetables in the sector

Regarding the predominant working timetables in the sector of the commercial distribution, in the supermarkets and other superstores, the predominant timetable is from 9 to 21 with no closure during the workday due to the fact that they sell essential goods and they must have a wide timetable that allows consumers the possibility to buy such goods whatever the working timetable they have. Although, we have to point out the exact timetable that supermarkets follow because each region is determined to do certain modifications. However, there are some general rules that have their validity globally in the state.

The regulation of the commercial timetables in Spain is ruled under the provisions of the Law 1/2004, of 21<sup>st</sup> December, which establishes the Commercial Timetables. This law was modified by the Royal Decree-Law, of 13<sup>th</sup> July, which establishes some measures to guarantee the budget stability and foster the competitiveness. Recently, this law has also been modified by the Royal Decree-Law 8/2014, of 4<sup>th</sup> July, by which some urgent measures were established for the growth of the competitiveness and the efficiency.

Therefore, the following principles have basic nature and they must be directly applied in all the country independently of the legislation of the region, and in case of conflict between a state law and an autonomic law, the state one will prevail to be applied first.

1. Freedom of schedules as main principle, within the legal framework that regulates them.
2. Global timetable: it could not be restricted by the regions with less than 90 hours during the set of workdays of the week.
3. Sundays and festivities: there are a minimum of 16 Sundays or festivities, which can be reduced by the respective regions to up to a minimum of 10. In case each region does not establish the faculty of applying a set of openness criteria in Sundays and festivities, the traders are free to open whenever they want.
4. The following businesses are free regarding timetables according to the Law 1/2004, Of 21<sup>st</sup> of December:
  - Establishments devoted to the sale of bakery, patisserie, bread, press, petrol, flowers and plants.



- Convenience shops with a useful area of 500 m and opened for the audience during a minimum of 18 hours per day with the offer of specific products established by the law.
- Commercial establishments that have a useful exhibition area of 300 square meters, excluding those that are not considered as SMEs.
- Shops established in border crossing points, stations and means of ground, sea and air transport
- Establishments located in specific popular tourist areas.

Since every region has the power to do different measures in the regulation of commercial timetables and we cannot analyse all of them, I would like to emphasize the rules of our region, the Valencian Community, which has particular measures such as the following ones:

- The establishments could open ten Sundays or festivities, which the city halls can replace one or two of them by local festivities.
- The establishments integrated in service-delivery facilities devoted to tourism also have plenty freedom of timetables, apart from those mentioned before in the state regulation. Moreover, The establishments mainly devoted to the sale of commercial products that devote at least the 80% of their commercial area to the offer of cultural products have freedom of timetables.
- An exceptional timetable can be given to concrete days under non-recurrent special circumstances that increase the business opportunities in the local trade.



### **4.3 Mercadona: company targeted in the case study.**

After analysing the commercial distribution sector generally, we are going to check how the company chosen for the current project works, that is to say, the leader company of this sector in Spain, that is the chain of supermarkets Mercadona.

Mercadona is a Spanish company of supermarkets belonging to a family. Its aim is to meet the needs of its customers concerning food issues, personal hygiene and home care and pets. It is located in 49 provinces in 17 regions around Spain (not located in Melilla, having 1574 supermarkets in the end of 2015). Two facts that show the importance of this company are the five millions of families that buy in Mercadona and a market share regarding the distribution sales organized in Spain of 14.7%.

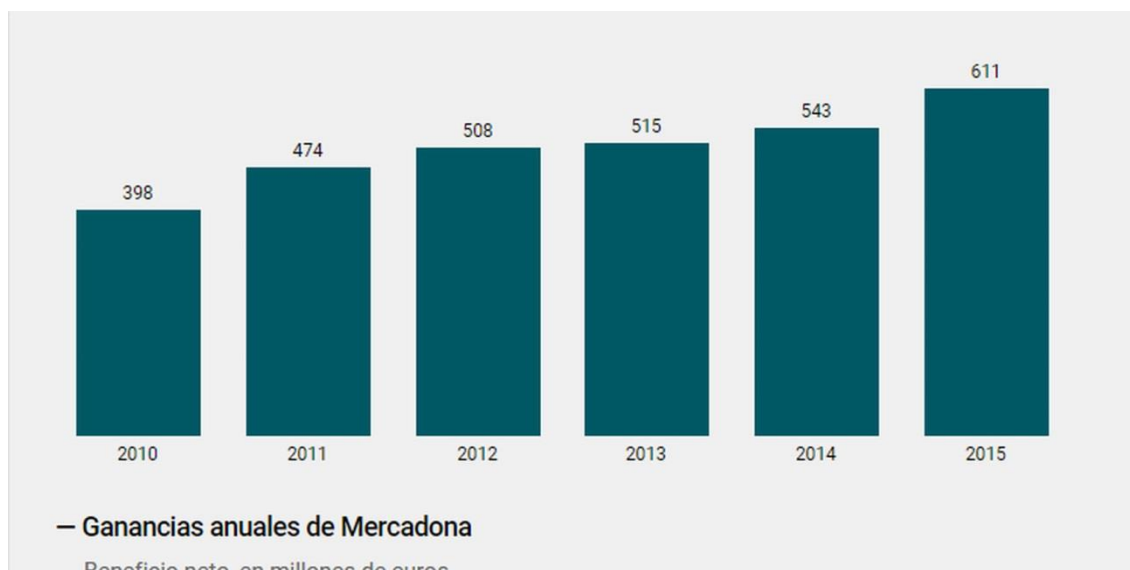
Concerning the employees of this company, we have to highlight that this company has a workforce of 75'000 employees that have a work stability. This company has invested 39 EUR millions in training the last year. It has also created 1000 new full time jobs. The initial gross salary of the basic staff is about 1'277 euros per month (1109 € on a net basis) and apart from these facts, in 2015 the company give the staff a bonus of 277 EUR millions due to the achievement of certain objectives.

Regarding the contributions that Mercadona makes to the society, we have to point out that it has a tax contribution of 1497 EUR millions. Besides, the impact of the assembly chain of this company in Spain implies 1.8 % of the national GDP (i.e., 19.500 EUR millions). This company creates 640'000 direct, indirect and induced jobs and collaborates with more than 100 feeding centres, 55 food pantries and other entities. Moreover, it has donated 4'200 tons of food.

As for the capital of the company, Mercadona has reached the annual sales of 20'831 EUR millions (increasing 3% regarding the last year) becoming the first group concerning annual sales in Spain, investing 651 EUR millions and having a net benefit of 611 EUR millions (12% more than 2014).

In the next graph, we can see the increasing evolution of Mercadona taking into account the net benefits. In this sense, Mercadona has become a business reference both nationally and internationally increasing its benefits from 399 EUR millions in 2010 up to 611 EUR millions last year.





Source: Mercadona

The CEO and maximum shareholder of the company is Juan Roig Alfonso who acquired this company in 1981 from his parents who founded it in 1977 within the business group called Cárnicas Roig. He is a well-known person within the business world because he has been awarded with the Principe Felipe Business Excellence in 2009, possessing the Alta Distinción of the Valencian Community and recently obtaining the Gold Medal for Merit at Work in the Council of Ministers due to *“his great effort creating and developing business projects that allow him not only to create employment, also his consolidation as well as his social commitment from his artistic and business work”*

The rest of the Board of Directors is occupied by:

- Hortensia María Herrero Chacón: She is the vice-president and the wife of Juan Roig.
- Fernando Roig Alfonso: He is member of the council and the brother of Juan Roig.
- Rafael Gómez Gómez: member of the council.
- Hortensia Roig Herrero: She is member of the council of the company and the daughter of Juan Roig.
- Amparo Roig Herrero: She is member of the council and the daughter of Juan Roig.
- Juana Roig: She is member of the council and the daughter of Juan Roig.



- Carolina Roig Herrero: She is the secretary of the council and the daughter of Juan Roig.

As mentioned before, it is a family business since all the members of the council of the company belong to the same family.

This council has a great a variety of managing directors who are responsible for the different areas of the company, all of them being supervised by Juan Roig.

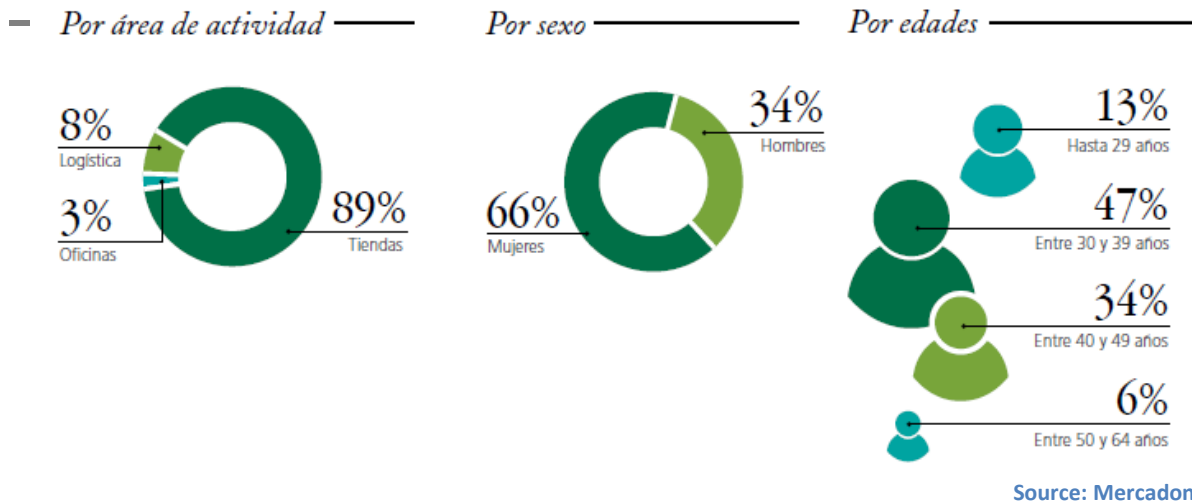
The mission of the company is clear: "Being complete prescribers of the necessary solutions in order to allow "El Jefe" to make his total purchase (fresh and dried products) within a sustainable agri-food chain".

In Mercadona the customers and the consumers are called "El Jefe" because he/she is considered as the most important factor of the company. That is to say, if they are satisfied, sales and benefits will be increased. It also implies that company and employees share the growth both in an economic level and work-quality.

Focusing on the main agents referred by the current project, they are the employees, in the last year in Mercadona there have been a set of facts that have implied benefits for the company. They are as follows:

- ✓ 8150 employees have been promoted and they have increased 11% their monthly salary.
- ✓ 98% of the employees have obtained any economic compensation due to their commitment.
- ✓ 338 people have been promoted to management positions, 51% of them are women.

As for the distribution of the staff, as observed in the graphs dealing with the inferior area, the prevailing activities in the company are the tasks done in the different establishments that Mercadona has around Spain, activities done by the 89% of the total staff of the company. As for the logistic activities, these are done by the 8% of the staff of the company and the other 3% are devoted to work in the offices. We can also realize that most of the employees of the company are women (66%). Finally, this a is a very young staff since the 81% of it is between 30 and 50 years old, whereas only 6% of the staff is more than 50 years old.



### **Conciliation in Mercadona**

Regarding the topic of the conciliation of the working and private life, It can be considered as a crucial topic for Mercadona since the company has realized about the good results achieved and the goals are reached when the employees are satisfied concerning this topic. As a result, Mercadona has a great number of measures in order to make this conciliation possible. First of all, we have to highlight that in 2015 6% of the women employees decided to have children, while 2769 working mothers extended in 30 days the months given as maternity leave and established by the law. Throughout the year, 15630 employees had reduced schedule and even many of them decided to take their children to the nursery educational centres that the company has had since 2001.

Mercadona has a great number of measures that aim at making the employees coordinate in the best possible their private life with the job. The most interesting measures are as follows:

- Financing an informative leaflet dealing with the rights of the employees concerning the conciliation of the working and private life and distributing this leaflet to the employees.
- Guaranteeing the exercise of the rights established by the law.
- Possibility to extend the maternity leave in order to take care of them until the children will be 8 years old, keeping the position of the employee.
- Leave permit for the care of dependent relatives, with a maximum of 5 years.
- Special leave of 3 years for gender violence victims.



- Giving permits unpaid for the women employees having assisted reproduction techniques.
- Unpaid permits for procedures related to international adoptions.
- Preference for geographical moving for reasons related to the caring of children and relatives with the second grade of consanguinity.
- Giving the possibility to carry on with the same working-time for two years. After ending the right to reduce the workday for the caring of children (with a part-time job contract).
- Possibility to join the paternal and the maternal leave to the period of holidays.
- License of up to 30 calendar days, in case of death of the spouse or the unmarried partner properly registered, being paid the first five days.
- The employee will have the right to accompany the children under the age of 12 years old needing any medical attention.
- Possibility to accumulate the reduction of the workday for lactation in 30 calendar days, joining it to the period of maternity or paternity leave.
- Great number of measures against the sexual harassment or gender violence such as collaboration agreements on this topic with associations and city halls, psychological help and so on.

As already seen, there are a lot of measures that encourage the care of the children and dependent relatives by giving leave permits even higher than those established by the law. Mercadona is also a company strongly committed with the gender violence victims since this company gives facilities to them in order to make them continue with in the best possible way.

Another measure is the fact that the company closes the supermarkets in festivities and Sundays. This fact allows the staff to have these days off, these days are usually the days that all the workers of Spain have free for work and it makes them enjoy of free time with their family or leisure.

Summarizing, Mercadona is a company that encourages the conciliation between the working and the private life of its employees. The key facts showing this conciliation are: flexible-working timetables without any rotation, the equality of salaries, availability of a higher maternity leave than that offered by the law, not working on Sundays and festivities, the possibility to have nurseries for their children in some logistic centres and the fact that most of the employees live close to their job positions.



**Babysitting service. Source: Mercadona**

In conclusion, Mercadona is, according a research on the situation of the conciliation in Spain taken from *Instituto Internacional de Ciencias Políticas*, the leader company in the distribution sector in Spain and the fourth company in this sense in a general ranking only worse than Repsol, Leche Pascual and Vodafone.

#### **Horarios en Mercadona**

Regarding the working timetables, in the supermarkets of Mercadona the employees work in continuous working days from Monday to Saturday in two different shifts, both lasting 7 hours with an average maximum of 40 hours per week of effective work in the annual figure.

The first shift is from 8:00 a.m. to 15:00 hours, and the second one is from 15:00 to 22:00 hours. Within the two shifts, the employees have a rest time of 30 minutes, where they can lunch or eat an afternoon snack and then they can continue with the tasks.

Analysed the two shifts, we can observe that there are benefits and disadvantages in both. Due to the fact that shifts start or finish at 15:00, the employees have the possibility to have lunch in their home either before starting the workday or after the laboral day. This type of shifts based on continuous working day also enable the employee to do other activities like household chores as well as enjoying of a good rest and this allows them to work the next day in full conditions.

On the other hand, a possible disadvantage could exist when the employees do the afternoon shift, because they do not have much time to be with their children when they finish the school.



The distribution of working day is done from the business management so that the staff know with a minimum of 10 days in advance the complete working timetable of the next month. According to the needs of the work organisation, employees could work 10 hours per day on Fridays, Saturdays, Mondays or festivities eves. This fact ensures the alternation of the staff and with a minimum of 5 hours per day to complete the working days and 3 hours of part-time working days. The workers also have the possibility to accumulate hours in determined times of the year, both for the staff that work full workday or work in part-time job, always respecting the breaks established by the law and with a maximum of 40 hours per week.

There is a possibility that the employees can have a reduction of the workday for family reason, that is to say, due to the care of children under the age of eight years old or the care of a dependent relative. The timetable organisation and the determination of the period of lactation or reduction of the workday are responsibilities of the employee, within his ordinary workday. In case the workday could not be reduced, the employee would be moved to a closer (not farther than 15 km) centre than the current centre of the employee in which he/she can enjoy of this workday. Once the employees do not have the necessity to continue with the reduction of the timetable, they will return to the former shift.

Another possibility that the company offers is the change of shifts between employees, who have liberty to realise this as long as the person know do the task perfectly.

Regarding to the employees holidays, indicate that they have a holiday remunerated period of 30 natural days, from which at least 15 must be between 1<sup>st</sup> June from 30<sup>th</sup> September.



## 5. Possible changes and improvements.

Once I have done the study of the company, it can be seen that in the worktime topic is difficult to establish some improvement, as explained before, Mercadona has some conditions that are difficult to be improved (continuous working day, possibility of reduction of the workday, entry time allows employees to leave the children in the nursery and multiple permits are even higher than those established by the law). As a consequence, the next improvements are based basically on practices of conciliation to improve the life quality of the employees. Subsequently, a set of changes and improves are suggested and implemented to the good functioning of the Mercadona supermarkets. It could improve the conciliation of laboral and personal life of the employees:

- ✓ Increase the number of nurseries: the nursery services are only established in the big cities of Spain (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia...). Due to this fact it is recommended to install, at least, a nursery service for the children employees for town groups, with a transport service that collect and return the children.
- ✓ Economize the shopping cart of the employees: as they are working in a supermarket, it would be a good measure that their shopping cart would have a substantial discount and this purchase was delivered in their private homes. This will help to increase the employees' fidelity and allow them not to come back to the place where they have been in the working day.
- ✓ Creation of information services: it would be interesting to create a department providing information and consulting for the employees. It could provide items like life-work balance, retirement funds, day care centres for dependent people...
- ✓ Global medical insurance: to implant a global medical insurance in the best possible way with the purpose that the employee could save the payment of private insurance.
- ✓ Reimbursement of transport costs: pay the transport costs of the employees who do not have the work centre near their homes.
- ✓ Leisure activity schedules: establish agreements with leisure companies or travel companies where the employees can find better economical conditions to do different activities in their personal lives.





## 6. Conclusions.

Once completed and explained all the study of the importance of the rationalization of the working timetables for the conciliation of the laboral and personal life of the employees in a general way in our country and compared with other European countries, and doing the same with the distribution sector and the leader company, Mercadona, the next conclusions are established

The working days prevailing in Spain are characterized by their rigidity and their long extension due to the deep-rooted culture of part-time workday, with an excessive time of break for lunch. This situation hinder the possibility of an adequate conciliation of the laboral and family life, which in 2015 was a topic with a great concern for 80% of the population according the "Observatorio Sage".

There are different practices that in case to be applied by companies they will ease in a great way an adequate conciliation. They are as follows: good policies of permits, laboral flexibility, teleworking that allow the employees to do their work from home, and so on. The correct application of these measures implies benefits for the society, encouraging the gender equality and the maternity/paternity, and for the employees providing them of a great satisfaction in the work and health improvements. Finally, the company is also benefited because it has a major capacity of talent retention and increase the productivity.

However, Spain is still a country that is late regarding the rationalization of working timetables and the conciliation when it is compared to the other advanced European countries. Due to this fact, Spain is in the last ranking positions like a country with most people with rigidity working timetables (88%), as well as in issues of maternity leaves, where it cannot be compared with other countries like Sweden, Norway, Finland or Germany. Finally, in terms of social benefits, it is also one of the countries with worst conditions, since the financial supports for the families in the top countries of the ranking are four times greater than Spain, as well as the free university studies, which we do not have in our country.

Concerning the working timetables in Spain, there is a philosophy of many hours in the workplace pretending a great commitment with the company. However, a lot of these hours are unproductives. In Spain, people work a lot of hours and finish late the work day due to, especially, a strongly deep-rooted tradition of the part-time workday and the excessive time for lunch, which provoke that many laboral days finish at 20:00 or even more late. All of these things were favoured by two historical facts: the post-war that forced many men to find a second job and the change of the time zone which propitiate that the standard time in our country is not the same as the solar time. These





two issues deployed in the 40's are not modified and difficult the conciliation of the laboral and family life.

Unlike Spain, in the others European advanced countries the majority of workdays are done in an intensive and continuous way, that allows a better productivity and let the employees have many free time, due to the fact that they finish the working day over 16:30/17:00.

To establish the advantages and disadvantages of the continuous working day versus part-time journey, the result is widely favourable for the continuous work due to the fact that it offers a lot of potential improvements in the working days and in the life of the employees.

Regarding what has been said before, in my opinion, Spain needs a change of culture and mentality regarding the working timetables and the ways to do the different works. It should apply the continuous working day in all the works that it can possible with the purpose of improve the productivity of the companies and the quality of life of the employees because it is demonstrated that when more free time has the employee, more satisfaction obtain and this provokes an impact in the quality of the work, where they can work less hours but these are more productive. That is why if we want to be a country with the same developed economy that the great world powers and achieve a great quality of life, it will be essential that the items which improve the working timetables and the practices that enable a good conciliation of laboral and personal life have the highest priority for the society.

Respecting, the distribution sector, in Spain there are different types of establishments but the great market share is distributed between 2 supermarkets (Mercadona and DIA) and 1 hypermarket (Carrefour) with 46% of market share combined. The preferences of the consumers are changing and now the people prioritize the proximity of the facilities more than the great facilities, while the distribution channel that is still in phase of expansion but it will win more importance in the future is the e-commerce, where the entry in the market of companies like Amazon and Google is a serious threat for the traditional physical supermarkets which still do not have an advanced system of online sale.

The working timetables of the distribution sector are legislated by the central government but the autonomous communities have the power to do modificatinos of them, like the number of holidays, number of Sundays opening or working hours per week.

The prevailing timetable in this sector is from 9:00 a.m to 21:30 p.m for the large retailers, while the small distributors close for lunch and in the evening the establishment closes a bit earlier.



Finally, the company analysed, Mercadona, has a fantastic policy of working timetables with continuous working days, possibilities of reduction of schedule, freedom to change work shift and so on. In terms of conciliation practices, Mercadona has been pioneering regarding permits for maternity/paternity superiors to law, possibility to extend the leave until the children has 8 years, as well as other practices that encourage the employees for the geographic mobility, licenses for other permits, many measures against the gender-based violence, babysitting services in the big cities, and so on.

Due to this fact that once studied the case of this company I can state that this is one of the best Spanish companies regarding working timetables and conciliation of laboral and personal life (the 4<sup>th</sup> best company in Spain according to the "Instituto Internacional de Ciencias Políticas), offering many facilities to the employees for combining in the best possible way their work with the free time, especially for the child share.



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