

### **Abstract**

This paper examines the division of labor in the households of 172 female factory workers in Bogota, Colombia. All of these women played crucial roles in what can be considered the family wage economy. They contributed substantially to the total income of their households and participated in domestic labor as well. There were notable differences among the respondents, however, with regard to the responsibilities they shouldered. Widows and separated women had the heaviest burden, married women had a somewhat lighter burden, and single women bore the least responsibility for supporting their households. Overall, the respondents seemed to be satisfied with their jobs though they did not strongly advocate women's employment outside the home. They performed wage labor within a context of strong, traditional family commitments.

### **About the Author**

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## **Women's Productive and Reproductive Roles in the Family Wage Economy: A Colombian Example**

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WOMEN'S PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE ROLES  
IN THE FAMILY WAGE ECONOMY: A COLOMBIAN EXAMPLE<sup>1</sup>

There is agreement that industrialization is accompanied by changing family patterns and alterations in the division of labor within the family, but exactly how these transitions occur is far from clear. At one time the prevailing school of thought among sociologists posited a linear change from the extended family household to the nuclear family household during the period of industrialization. Contemporary sociologists, aided by social historians, have strongly challenged this view. The evidence from recent studies of Western Europe, the United States, and Asia (see Salaff 1981 and Salaff and Wong 1982 on China) indicates that working-class families have adhered to the extended family pattern throughout industrialization in order to survive. The present paper offers documentation of a similar extended family pattern among the families of female industrial operatives in Bogota, Colombia.

The social scientists who proposed that industrialization brought the demise of the extended family argued that this family form became dysfunctional in a new economic setting. The nuclear family, by contrast, was supposed to have a wealth of advantages in the modern setting. For example, while the extended family was thought to impede geographical and social mobility, the nuclear family was thought to enhance mobility and to be more consistent with an emphasis on individual achievement. With continuing industrialization, moreover, it was assumed that nuclear family members could depend on public agencies to provide services which were once provided by the extended family (e.g., child care, education, support for the elderly). Finally, the early analysts argued that the division of labor within the nuclear family became highly specialized to cope with external changes. Thus, within the nuclear family the husband fulfilled the important "instrumental" functions through work outside the home. Meanwhile, the wife carried out the "expressive" functions through her household and childcare activities (Goode 1963).

Numerous social historians insist that this model of change is class-biased in that it only describes the transformation of middle-class families. Using data from eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western Europe, Tilly and Scott outline a much more complicated, gradual change in family forms among peasant and working classes. They argue that industrialization paralleled a shift from the extended family economy of rural areas to the extended family wage economy of urban areas. In the latter: "The composition of the household no longer was dictated by the need for household laborers . . . but by a need for cash" (Tilly and Scott 1978: 105). Within the family wage economy, women played major productive as well as reproductive roles; they were not confined to domestic chores. Unmarried daughters regularly contributed to the joint family income. Even wives and mothers worked outside the home for money when their husbands' incomes were insufficient and/or there were no children who could participate in the labor force. Among working-class women, there was a sense of responsibility to the family that included wage labor when necessary. "Women worked outside the home because they had to ..." (Tilly, et al. 1976: 456-457).

Clearly, these women were not motivated by any sense of individualism. "...family interest and not self-interest was the underlying motive for their work" (ibid. 457).

During comparable stages of industrialization in the United States, working-class families also maintained extended family bonds. Dublin (1979) presents compelling evidence of the family wage economy among nineteenth-century textile workers in Lowell, Massachusetts. With the entry of Irish immigrants into the mills, the practice of several family members contributing their earnings to an extended family pool was quite prevalent. Dublin writes of immigrant daughters:

On average, they contributed to the support of their families for a good ten years before marrying...Economic necessity coupled with a different conception of familial duty, rather than visions of individual economic gain or social independence motivated millhands within the new family labor system (1979: 182).

A number of decades later, this same sense of responsibility prompted working-class black and immigrant women to join the industrial labor force in other cities. Pleck comments on the employment of Italian teenage daughters to support their families in depression-ridden Chicago in 1896 (1979: 371). And it is only in the 1930s that Italian and Jewish immigrant daughters in Providence, Rhode Island, are reported to have finally gained a "feeling of entitlement to their own earnings" (Smith 1979: 408).

Although young female industrial workers in the United States most often left work when they married, there were many married working-class women who were obliged to return to work in times of family crisis. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, married black women worked outside the home to supplement their husbands' low earnings. Other married women worked when their husbands were "absent, crippled, or incompetent" (Degler 1980: 386). Again, these women entered the labor market not to pursue their own individual goals, but to provide for their families.

Trends in family patterns for countries that are still undergoing industrialization are less fully documented. To the extent that industrialization has provided employment for women, however, it seems to have fostered women's productive roles within extended family arrangements. Whatever the conditions of their employment, moreover, these women appear to regard their wage labor as another way of helping their families (Safa 1976: 70).

Among textile workers in Mexico City, for example, Piho found that "...94 percent of the women provided full or partial support for other family members: mothers, children, sisters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews..." (1975: 221). In many Third World countries, urban job opportunities encourage the rural-urban migration of young women. These migrants, upon finding urban jobs, either send their wages back to their

families or bring their families to the cities (Beneria and Sen 1981). In some countries, the employment of women in industrial, export-market firms is "the only remaining strategy for acquiring an income for the rest of the family" (Elson and Pearson 1981: 97). And, in situations where the opportunities for female industrial employment outstrip the opportunities for male employment (as in "runaway shops" along the U.S.-Mexican border), one result of industrialization has been an increase in families headed by single, unattached women (Safa 1981: 427).

In this paper I study how the families of female industrial operatives in Bogota, Colombia, have adjusted to the women's participation in industry. I consider three main questions:

- (1) What are the household arrangements these families have developed to satisfy the needs for market and domestic labor?
- (2) What are the productive and reproductive roles of the women within their households?
- (3) What are the women's attitudes with regard to their specific employment situations, and what are their sex-role attitudes in general?

At the outset, I expected the answers to these questions to be similar to those found in previous studies of European and North American industrialization. I recognized, however, that conditions unique to the contemporary Colombian context might produce different responses.

Most obviously, foreign investors have imported technologies and employment practices into Colombia that are based on prior European and North American experiences. At the same time, Colombian labor legislation is more protective of industrial workers than was labor legislation during early European and North American industrialization. Colombian legislation effectively prohibits child labor in large, industrial firms whereas child labor was common during the early period of industrialization in both Europe and North America. Working-class children often worked in factories alongside their mothers or instead of their mothers. Colombian working-class families cannot depend on the wage labor of young children to the same extent.

The level of urbanization and the rate of urban growth in Colombia are much greater today than they were in Europe and North America during earlier periods of industrialization. As a consequence, working-class families in Colombia are more likely to have all their members located in the city. In addition, it is likely that Colombian working-class families have a higher standard of living than that prevailing during the period of industrialization in Europe and North America. The reflection of standard of living is the infant mortality rate. According to recent estimates, the infant mortality rate in Colombia is 56 (Population Reference Bureau 1983); infant mortality rates in France and England in the middle of the nineteenth century were about 150 to 240 (Tilly and Scott 1978: 102). The implication

of this difference for women's reproductive roles is that Colombian working-class women are likely to bear fewer children than were their European or North American predecessors.

Finally, working-class Colombian women are constantly exposed to foreign ideas through education and the media. The values and norms of other cultures, particularly middle-class North American culture, have had an impact on their thinking that cannot be matched by such external influences in earlier periods of industrialization in Europe and North America.

#### SAMPLE

Since this study was aimed at an understanding of the lives of working-class women, I chose a sample of women with employment experience in large, modern, industrial firms. Unfortunately, there are no census or survey data that would allow me to determine the representativeness of my sample. I think, however, that the information gathered from these women provides insights into what are more general patterns among working-class families.

The sample included 172 female factory operatives who were employed in one of ten selected manufacturing firms in Bogota as of early 1977. Each of the ten firms had at least 100 female employees, and the firms ranged in size from a total of 135 workers to a total of 900 workers. They included subsidiaries of foreign firms (whose names are familiar to U.S. consumers) and wholly-owned Colombian firms. Among the products manufactured by the ten firms were food, textiles, clothing, shoes, drugs, cosmetics, electrical appliances, toys, and printed materials.

The personnel manager in each firm was asked to provide a list of all female operatives who had been with the firm for at least a year. From these lists, a sample of women to be interviewed was randomly selected. Once a woman's name was chosen, she was contacted by mail inviting her to be part of an independent study of Colombian women. A few days later she was visited and interviewed in her home. In the interview, which lasted from one to two hours, each woman was asked about her employment history, her family formation history, her current job situation, the distribution of her wages, the structure of her household and childcare duties, her attitudes toward her own job, and her attitudes toward women's roles in general.

Table 1 outlines some of the personal characteristics of the entire group of respondents and for subgroups of respondents by household structure. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 54 years, with an average age of 32.7 years. Native Bogotanas made up 29.1 percent of the group; the majority were migrants from other areas. The respondents, on the average, had 5.5 years of education, or slightly less than a grammar school education.

Using the work histories on the respondents, some interesting figures on the respondents' employment experience could be calculated. On the average, the respondents were 20.4 years old when they first started working. Of those who had married, 82.5 percent had worked before marriage. Furthermore, the respondents had spent more than half of their adult (after the fifteenth birthday) years, 56.7 percent, working outside the home.

Of the 172 respondents, 40.1 percent had never married; 47.1 percent were married or in consensual unions; and the remaining 12.8 percent were widowed or separated.<sup>2</sup> The women who had married did so at the average age of 22.1 years. If we consider only those who had been pregnant at least once, the first pregnancy (including miscarriages, stillbirths, and live births) occurred at the average age of 22.5 years. There were 108 mothers (62.8 percent of the total) who had an average of 2.7 children. Of surviving children, the average age was 7.1 years.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the women, 74.4 percent, started at their current jobs when they were single. Likewise, the majority (66.3 percent) were childless when they began their current jobs. They had been 24.2 years old, on the average, when they had started working at the sample firms, and had worked for their current employers for an average of 8.5 years. The respondents' length of job tenure ranged from one to 29 years with their current employers.

With few exceptions, the respondents were engaged in routine, repetitive, unskilled jobs--sewing, finishing, inspecting, and packing. These are, in fact, typical jobs for women on the "global assembly line" (see Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983). Despite the years of seniority many of the women had, only 8.1 percent (or 14 respondents) had reached supervisory positions. The normal work week for the respondents was five full weekdays plus a half day on Saturday, for an average of 45.8 hours per week.

Compared to all blue-collar workers, the respondents earned relatively high wages. The median monthly wage for the 172 women was \$2,625 Colombian pesos or approximately \$66 U.S.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of a 1976 government survey, I have calculated a median monthly wage of \$1,603 for all non-agricultural workers and operatives in Bogota (D.A.N.E. 1976a: 37). The respondents' wage advantage is not surprising, however, given that the women were employed by large, modern firms whereas the majority of blue-collar workers are employed in small, less technologically-sophisticated firms.<sup>5</sup>

From the descriptive statistics, we can get a better picture of who the respondents were and also of how they might differ from another sample of female industrial operatives. I suspect that the choice of women with at least one-year's employment experience led to two important deviations from a fully representative sample. First, it is likely that the respondents were older than other possible samples of women in industry. Second, and related, the respondents had all survived a variety of employment practices that eliminated other women from the sample. For instance, the respondents had survived the period of probation. In order to avoid paying special

benefits, some firms routinely hired women on six-month contracts and then let them go after the contracts expired. Women on these "probationary" contracts were probably younger than women in my sample. Although the sample may have this bias, and others, I think that it was a wise choice to study women with permanent employment contracts. The respondents and their families had made relatively stable adjustments to their employment outside the home.

#### HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND FAMILY TYPE

Two aspects of the respondents' living arrangements deserve attention: (1) whether the respondent was the household head; and, (2) whether the household contained an extended family. These considerations precede an analysis of the division of labor within households.

Of the 172 respondents, 23.3 percent were household heads; 44.2 percent were wives of the household head (including married women and women in consensual unions<sup>6</sup>); 21.5 percent were daughters of the household head; and the remaining 11 percent lived in households with another relative or friend as the household head (see Table 1). There were very distinct patterns by marital status in the propensity to be a household head. Widows were the most likely to be household heads (100 percent), followed by women who were separated (64.3 percent). Single women were the most likely to live with a parent (43.5 percent) or another relative (23.2 percent) as household head. Among the women who were separated, some lived in households where they were not heads: 28.6 percent lived with parental heads, and 7.1 percent lived with another relative as head. Almost all of the women who were married (95.4 percent) and all of the women who were in consensual unions (87.5 percent) were wives of the household head.

The behavior of widows and older, separated women in the Colombian sample conforms to a suggestion by Tienda and Ortega Salazar. They say that women in an advanced life cycle stage who suffer marital disruption are the most likely to become household heads. Such women are able to depend more on their own children for both market labor and domestic labor than on the relatives outside the nuclear family. Therefore, they become heads of their own households rather than forming a subfamily in a relative's household (Tienda and Ortega Salazar 1980: 5). The contrasting behavior of young, single women and young, separated women is also in accordance with this suggestion. Younger women at an earlier life cycle stage cannot count on their own children for support, so they must rely on relatives. Consequently, they are likely to be part of a household with another adult as head.

Two extreme cases from the Colombian sample illustrate these differences in behavior at different life cycle stages. One of the respondents, a 43-year-old widow, was the head of a household in which six of her eight children lived. When her husband died in 1974, she was forced to work, though she "wasn't accustomed to it." Along with three of her children, she earned enough to support the household. One of the older daughters living

in the household took care of her younger siblings at home. This woman's case is in contrast to that of a 21-year-old, single mother of two children who lived in a household headed by her father. Both her parents and two of her siblings lived in the house in addition to the respondent and her children. The respondent and one brother supported the household; her mother cared for the respondent's two children. Though the respondent had had liaisons with a number of men and lamented that she was "always left pregnant," she had never moved out of her parents' household.

The one, very clear distinction between the living arrangements of the Colombian respondents and those female industrial workers in the earlier days of industrialization in Europe and North America was the complete absence of dormitory living in Colombia. During the initial days of industrialization in Europe and North America, dormitories run by employers and other private citizens were a frequent residential choice of young, female factory workers (Degler 1980; Dublin 1979; Scott and Tilly 1975; Tilly and Scott 1978; Tilly, *et al.* 1976). The closest thing to dormitory residence the Colombian respondents could choose, as did 11 respondents, was solitary living in one rented room of a large house.

Table 2 presents information on the family type of the households in which the respondents resided. For the purposes of this analysis, "nuclear" families include households with one adult, one adult and his/her children, or a couple living with their children. Any other living arrangement is an "extended" family. Clearly the extended is still important; among all respondents 52.3 percent lived in extended family households and among respondents with children 54.7 percent lived in extended family households.

There were interesting, and statistically significant, differences among the respondents in terms of their propensity to live in extended family households. Respondents who were household heads were the least likely to have extended family households (40 percent), and respondents who lived in households with parents, siblings, and others as heads were the most likely to live in extended family households (67.9 percent). The respondents with children who lived in households with a parent, a sibling or someone else as household head by definition lived in extended family households. Households headed by the respondent's husband were intermediate; approximately half of these households were extended family households regardless of whether all the respondents or only the respondents with children were considered.

Contrary to findings from other studies (Angel and Tienda 1982; Tienda and Ortega Salazar 1980), households headed by the respondents (female-headed households) were not the most likely to contain extended families. One explanation for this phenomenon may be the ability of these respondents to support households through their own market labor and that of their children. Alternatively, these women may not have had any non-nuclear family members who could be incorporated into the household contribute to its maintenance.

What might be considered the "ideal-type" nuclear family was an infrequent arrangement in this sample. Male-headed households consisting of a married couple and their children constituted 23.3 percent of the total. This figure hardly suggests that the respondents had abandoned the extended family as a viable living arrangement and rushed to establish more modern, nuclear families.

#### THE DIVISION OF LABOR WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS

The importance of mutual aid and shared responsibilities among household members becomes clear in an analysis of the respondents' productive and reproductive roles. The figures in Table 3 help illustrate these roles.

In terms of the respondents' productive roles, the major findings are: (1) the respondents were vital contributors to the support of their households; and (2) the importance of respondents' financial contributions varied by household structure. Looking first at the figures for all households, there can be no doubt that the respondents played essential productive roles in their households. On the average, there were 2.1 wage earners per household, thus the respondents made up half the family resources devoted to market labor. A very large part, 76.1 percent, of the respondents' wages was contributed to their households. This contribution was slightly more than half, 50.5 percent, of the total household income.<sup>7</sup> As anticipated, there were no children under 15 who were wage earners. Even among unmarried young adults (persons 15-19 years old) in these households, the labor force participation rate was only 17.3 percent. The working-class families in this study did not depend on children for financial contributions, and thus were more dependent on the contribution of adult women than were similar families in the industrialization period in Europe and North America.

It is also clear that the respondents' productive roles differed considerably by household structure. Though households in each group averaged more than one wage earner, those headed by respondents had only 1.6 wage earners. Households headed by the respondents' husbands had, on the average, 2 wage earners and households headed by "others" averaged 2.4 wage earners. From another perspective, 62.5 percent of the respondents who were household heads were the only wage earners in their households, whereas only 5.3 percent of the women in households headed by their husbands and 8.9 percent of the remaining women were the only wage earners in their households. This is related to the differences in total household income, the share of her wages a respondent contributed to the household, and the household's degree of dependence on the respondent's contribution.

The poorest households were those headed by respondents, and these were the households in which the respondent's contribution was the largest share of her wages as well as the largest share of the total family income. Households headed by husbands enjoyed the highest level of income with intermediate levels of contribution by the respondent. These husband-wife households had two wage earners on the average with the respondent

contributing close to half the household income. In households headed by "others" there was an intermediate level of income with the smallest relative contributions by the respondent.

While all the households were dependent upon the wage-earning capacity of the respondents, the least prosperous households were those in which the dependence was greatest. It also appears that husbands as joint wage earners and as contributors to the total household income were more successful than other family members. Though households with the respondents' fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, or other persons as household heads had more wage earners than husband-wife households, they were less well-off.

Information from Table 3 also permits a further evaluation of the respondents' reproductive roles. In Table 3 we can see that: (1) the respondents all bore some responsibility for housework and childrearing; and (2) the respondents' reproductive roles varied according to household structure. Additional information, not shown here, revealed that the respondents shared some of the reproductive activities with other women in the household, but their husbands rarely took part in any housework or childrearing chores.

With an average household size of 5 persons, it would seem that there were other adults to share domestic chores with the respondents in most households. Nonetheless, the respondents were still very active participants in the daily, routine chores of maintaining a home. They averaged 24 hours per week on housework. These housework hours were strongly related to the respondent's own position relative to the household head and to the number of people in the household. The respondents who were household heads lived in the smallest households and had one of the heavier burdens of housework. Wives of household heads lived in intermediate-sized households, and had the heaviest housework burden. Respondents who lived in households headed by "others" lived in the largest households and spent the least time on household chores. Most women felt, as one respondent complained: "I get home tired, worn out from work--and I have to work a lot in the house."

The number of hours spent on housework did show some relation to family type; the simple correlation between housework time and family type (where 0 = nuclear, and 1 = extended) is  $-.203$  ( $p = .005$ ). Respondents in extended families did less housework, probably because other family members assumed some of the responsibility for domestic labor.

Other data in Table 3 show that the respondents had considerable childcare burdens. Including women with no children, the respondents had nearly two children each (1.7 children). Furthermore, the respondents with children had young children. Of the 108 mothers, 49 percent had a youngest child under five, and 19.4 percent had a child less than a year old. In short, though the respondents did not have high fertility levels, they were quite likely to be mothers, and mothers of children who needed constant attention.<sup>8</sup>

Again, there were differences among households in terms of childrearing responsibilities. Households headed by the respondents themselves were those in which the respondents had an intermediate level of fertility, and the oldest children. At the opposite extreme, in households headed by "others" the respondents had the fewest children and their youngest children were of an intermediate age. In households headed by husbands, the respondents had the most children, and the very youngest children.

To better understand the division of labor within households, it is essential to know who contributes to domestic labor other than the respondent. Husbands, logically, might be participants in reproductive activities or domestic labor. Of the 81 married women asked to report on the frequency of their husband's help around the house, however, only 11.1 percent said that their husbands helped them every day or several times a week. The overwhelming majority, 88.8 percent, said that their husbands rarely or never helped them around the house. Given the infrequency of husband's participation in housework, it is not surprising that the time respondents spent on housework was unrelated to their husbands' help.

When the same married women were asked about particular childcare chores, there was even less indication of husbands' participation. Not one wife, for example, reported her husband taking a sick child to the doctor. And of women with children under 12, not one cited her husband as a regular caretaker during the time she was working. Whether housework or childcare is considered, husbands as a group simply did not contribute to domestic labor.

Table 4 shows the childcare arrangements of the respondents; 57.1 percent depended on a grandmother or other female relative for childcare. Fewer women, 26.2 percent, depended on an outsider. And, even fewer, 16.7 percent, left their children alone. None of the respondents used an institution, such as a daycare center.<sup>9</sup>

Differences in childcare arrangements varied by household structure. In households where the respondent was head, there was a notable dependence on other children to take care of their siblings (35.7 percent). Where respondents lived in households headed by their husbands, there was a notable dependence of friends, neighbors, and maids for child care (31.7 percent). Finally, in households with other persons as heads, almost all of the respondents (90 percent) depended on female relatives to care for their young children. As others have suggested (Lopez de Rodriguez and Leon de Leal 1977), in large households there are economic pressures for women to work combined with alternative childcare possibilities.

To some extent, it can be said that the respondents who were household heads were in a double bind regarding childcare options. They were less likely to live in extended households than other respondents, so were less likely to have female relatives available for childcare. In addition, these respondent-heads were less likely to live in households which could afford to pay for childcare. Consequently, these women were often obliged to leave their children alone while they were at work.

By comparison, women living in husband-headed households could either rely on female relatives or afford to pay for childcare by a non-relative. Women with young children living in households headed by "others," almost always found suitable, inexpensive caretakers among extended family members in the same household.

#### SUPPORT OF PARENTS

Additional evidence of the respondents' important productive roles is in the amount of support they provided for parents.

The majority of the respondents (148 or 86 percent) had at least one parent who was living and whose whereabouts were known to the respondent. Among this subsample, fully 68.2 percent were providing support to their parents. Nearly half of the respondents, 45.9 percent, lived in the same households with their parents. Another 22.3 percent of the subsample contributed a portion of their wages to parents who lived in other households. Single respondents were the most likely to contribute to the support of their parents (79.4 percent); married respondents were somewhat less likely to support them (63.3 percent); and women who were separated or widowed were least likely to provide parental support (47.1 percent). This pattern is clearly the inverse of the respondents' obligations to their husbands and children.

Among the respondents who provided some support for parents living in another household, 11.5 percent sent money to parents who lived outside the metropolitan area. In three of these cases, the respondents sent money to parents who cared for one of the respondent's children. In most cases, the respondents were helping to support their parents and siblings. The majority of these generous respondents (13 of 17) had migrated to Bogota specifically to find work. They had migrated with a family member, a friend, or alone, but had left their parents behind. In spite of the distance from their parental home and the passage of considerable time (an average of 13.4 years since migration), these respondents still maintained some financial responsibility for their parents.

The data suggest that this financial burden is more often shouldered by daughters than by sons, at least with regard to the financial support of parents living in the same household. A tally of household members in all 172 households reveals that there were unmarried sons and daughters over 14 living in 82 households. The number of such unmarried children ranged from one to six, with an average of 2.4. For every 100 unmarried daughters over 14 in these households, there were only 47 unmarried sons in the same age category. This skewed sex ratio leads me to suspect that daughters took on more responsibility for parental support than did sons. Even if there were no difference in the propensity to work, the presence of so many more daughters might indicate a stronger commitment on their part to parental support.

Hammel, et al. (1982) found skewed sex ratios in the U.S. during the nineteenth century, with boys predominating on the frontier and girls predominating in the more industrialized eastern regions. They attributed these findings to available employment opportunities for young men and women in the different regions and appropriate family choices in favor of children who could be expected to find work. More specifically, Dublin found sex ratios similar to those of my sample in the homes of nineteenth-century mill families in Lowell, Massachusetts, and concluded:

...it is clear that daughters were much more integrated into the family economy than sons...[and] they continued to live at home with their parents considerably longer than did their brothers (1979: 171).

Unfortunately, neither the Colombian data nor the U.S. data make it possible to measure the contributions of children living in other households to their parents' support.

It is clear that my Colombian respondents shouldered a large part of the financial responsibility for their families, particularly their parents. Though they usually shared the burden with members of the same household, they often went beyond the bounds of their own households to help support family members.

#### JOB SATISFACTION AND SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES

The functionalist model of change proposes that attitudes change along with changes in family structure. Industrialization is supposed to be paralleled by a move from familistic to individualistic values, with the latter often being called "modern." In accordance with the functionalist model, women who work outside the home after the transition to the nuclear family emphasize individual goals and have "modern" sex-role attitudes.<sup>10</sup> As already mentioned, however, these attitude changes were not characteristic of working-class women in Europe and North America. Nor do they characterize working-class women in industrializing Asia (Salaff 1981). What evidence is there of attitude changes among the Colombian respondents?

The respondents expressed considerable satisfaction with their jobs and wanted to continue working (73.3 percent said both). This rivals the highest levels found for working women in the United States (O'Farrell and Harlan 1982: 253-254). Even more revealing is the set of reasons that the Colombian women offered for their job satisfaction. Of all the respondents, 17.6 percent said that they were happy helping out their families economically; 49.6 percent were happy with their job conditions; and only 1.6 percent (2 respondents) said that they enjoyed being independent. It is also interesting that when married respondents were asked about their husbands' feelings with regard to their employment, these women provided similar explanations for their husbands' feelings. Of the married women, 52.6 percent said that their husbands were satisfied with their wives'

employment. The universal explanation for this satisfaction is found in the words of a mother of three, married to a mechanic: "[He's satisfied because] I help him with household expenses."

Further support for a familistic interpretation of the respondents' job satisfaction can be found in the simple correlations between satisfaction and other factors. The only two variables which are significantly related to the respondent's job satisfaction (coded as a dummy variable, where 0 = not satisfied, and 1 = satisfied) are wages (zero-order correlation is .253,  $p = .001$ ) and the presence of children under 12 (zero-order correlation is .196,  $p = .005$ ). Women who earned the most and women who had young children--regardless of difficulties with childcare--were the most satisfied. Surely, this was due to a genuine sense of being able to fulfill their family obligations. Husband's satisfaction was also strongly related to the respondents wages (zero-order correlation is .282,  $p = .01$ ). Both the respondents and their husbands were satisfied with the respondent's employment to the extent that she was able to share in the family's support.

Proponents of the functionalist model of change and others who argue for consistency between behavior and attitudes might expect the sample of Colombian working women to have modern sex-role attitudes. The survey results show a much more complicated picture.

While 89.5 percent of the respondents agreed that it was fine for a married woman without children to work, they had very different ideas about other circumstances of women's employment. On a series of statements about sex-role attitudes, the respondents showed rather traditional views (see Table 5). Their scores on this set of sex-role attitude statements ranged from 14 percent who were modern on one statement to 50 percent who were modern on another. Moreover, on a sex-role attitude scale constructed from the five individual statements, the respondents did not have very modern scores. The average for all the respondents on the sex-role attitude scale was 8.56, while the highest possible, most modern score was 15. It would seem, therefore, that the respondents behaved in ways that contradicted their values! All of them worked outside the home, many with young children. At the same time, however, they did not approve of women with children working. They did not believe that women were happier at work than at home, nor did they believe that women should have careers of their own.

A regression analysis of the factors influencing sex-role attitudes sheds some light on this discrepancy and helps us to understand the differences among respondents (Table 5). Of the variables considered in the regression, age and education are the two strongest determinants of attitudes. Age has some negative influence on sex-role attitudes (coefficient is  $-.146$ ,  $p = .05$ ). Education, on the other hand, has a positive influence on sex-role attitudes (coefficient is  $.180$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Younger, better-educated women were more likely to be modern. Two additional factors, number of children and respondent's salary, do not have strong influences on sex-role attitudes. Though one might expect that women with children, who have the severest "role conflict," would be most

traditional, this is not the case. Given what has already been shown about the relation between job satisfaction and wages, one also might expect that women with higher wages would have the most modern sex-role attitudes. This is not the case.

In my view, the best explanation for the regression results is that age and education are good indicators of a break with familism and a movement in the direction of individualism. The respondents represented a number of cohorts, including women born before World War II and women born after World War II. Certainly these cohorts were raised in different historical contexts.<sup>11</sup> Respondents born after World War II were probably educated in schools that followed North American teaching practices (maybe with large inputs of U.S. dollars and U.S. personnel) and must have been exposed to more North American values through the media. One respondent summarized the change in women's roles over time quite well: "Women now grow up with more freedom. And they can work even when married." The younger, better-educated respondents, in short, had absorbed the North American emphasis on individual achievement. It is less likely that their older, less-educated peers would have undergone any similar change in attitudes.

Perhaps, this distinction is best seen in responses to the two sex-role attitude statements which define a woman's work as an independent venture:

- (1) It is O.K. for a woman with children to work if her husband can support the family.
- (2) It is preferable for a woman to have the support of a good husband than to have a profession or career of her own.

These statements contain an aspect of women's work that goes beyond familial commitments. And, these two statements are more strongly correlated with age and education than the other three. Older, less-educated respondents were more likely to express traditional attitudes. Younger, better-educated respondents were more likely to express modern attitudes. The latter group was the one to demonstrate some sign of a change in values in line with the functionalist model. As one of these young women declared, "I'm used to getting my own money and distributing it the way I want." And, another added, "I work for my own economic wellbeing and personal satisfaction."

## CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that 172 female factory operatives in Bogota, Colombia assumed both productive and reproductive roles within their households, following the model of the family wage economy. They contributed substantially to the total income of their households and performed domestic chores. There were differences, depending on the household structure, among the productive and reproductive roles the respondents played.

The respondents who were most burdened were women whose marriages had been disrupted by death or separation. Widows and separated women with

children who were household heads were the major and often the sole supporters of their households. Furthermore, other than their own children, they had few family members in the household to perform domestic chores. Ironically, these same women, being older and having less education than the other respondents, were the least likely to espouse modern attitudes regarding women's work. They were themselves forced to work outside the home for financial reasons, but they did not approve of a woman with children working.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the single women without children who lived in households headed by parents, siblings, or other individuals, had the lightest burden of responsibilities. Though these women contributed to the household income and were sometimes the most important wage earner, they usually shared productive activities with other, adult members of the household. Moreover, since they frequently lived in extended families, they could count on other women within the household to share domestic labor.

The married respondents with children living in households headed by their husbands had an intermediate level of responsibility. They shared the burden of financial support equally with their husbands, contributing about half of the household income. If they lived in nuclear family households, they performed many of the domestic chores themselves. Sometimes they paid an outsider to handle the childcare tasks. If they lived in extended family households, they selected another female adult, usually a grandmother, to help with cooking, cleaning, and childcare. Among these married women, it appeared that reproductive activities--such as housework and childrearing--were entirely sex-segregated. Husbands left domestic responsibilities to their wives and to other available women.

Whether or not they lived with their parents, the respondents were likely to support their parents in some way. This responsibility persisted over long distances and even over many years of physical separation from their parents. What is more, this responsibility seems to have been more the norm for unmarried daughters than it was for unmarried sons. As one respondent commented: "[I work] to help support my mother and my brothers and sisters."

There was generally a continuation of strong extended family ties for the respondents, which, in the Colombian case, is functional. In an economy with extremely high rates of unemployment and underemployment, the respondents were a lucky few to have high paying, stable industrial jobs. For their extended families they were prime sources of income. At the same time, in a developing, capitalist country, where there is a shortage of basic public services (let alone the day care and communal kitchens found in some socialist countries), the respondents were dependent on extended family members for provision of certain services. Within the extended family, sometimes residing in a single household, sometimes residing in separate households, the division of labor cut across the generations.

The independent, self-sufficient, liberated working woman was a rarity among the respondents. As a group, the Colombian women expressed rather traditional sex-role attitudes in contradiction to their active participation in the labor force. Their ambivalence and their reluctance to fully accept work outside the home are reflected in a few quotes: "Since the economic situation is so difficult, even though a woman doesn't want to work she has to do it, or else." "Before a woman didn't have to work--now she does--the cost of living is so high." "[My husband] feels very lonely when he gets home." "[I would prefer not to work] because I would be home more and things would go better."

Huber and Spitze have found a similar discrepancy between attitudes and behavior for a sample of married couples in the U.S. Their conclusions seem fully applicable to the Colombian findings, when they state, "nicely developed ideologies occur mainly among intellectuals and academics... married couples are remarkably resistant to changing household norms..." (Huber and Spitze 1981: 165-166).

The Colombian respondents and their families have developed creative and highly successful strategies for dealing with rapid, often chaotic changes. During their parents' generation, nearly a third of the respondents' families had been peasants or small landholders. By 1977, these families were largely removed from the land and dependent upon urban wages for their survival. The contrast between the employment experiences of the respondents' mothers and their own pursuits was striking. According to the respondents, nearly 80 percent of their mothers had been housewives during all of their adult years. Those few mothers who had worked for a cash income were likely to have performed work at home: sewing, washing clothes, selling home-cooked food, operating small stores.<sup>12</sup> What a dramatic contrast this was to the lives of the respondents themselves, who put in ten- or twelve-hour days, six days a week, in modern factories. In the face of such radical transformations, the respondents and their families managed to survive by preserving elements of the traditional household structures and the traditional family forms that are useful in a modern setting.

NOTES

1. A Rockefeller-Ford Population Policy Grant during 1976-1977 supported the survey on which this paper is based. Many people were of assistance in the year of field work at the Corporacion Centro Regional de Poblacion in Bogota, in particular Jerald Bailey, Elsa Gomez, and Elena Prada deserve my thanks. Data analysis was supported by the State University of New York, University Awards Committee with a 1978 summer grant, and by the Ohio Wesleyan University Computer Center. I would like to thank Roger Pijacki and Michael Good for their help with special computer problems. Neuma Aguiar, Jonathan Cohen, Jan Smith, and anonymous reviewers offered valuable comments on earlier drafts of the paper. One of these earlier versions was presented at the 1983 Latin American Studies Association meetings in Mexico City.
2. Though legally possible, divorce is virtually unknown in Colombia.
3. Elsewhere it has been shown that these working women differed from a matched sample of Colombian housewives; the working women had delayed marriage and childbearing and, as a result, had fewer children (Rosenberg 1982).
4. This calculation is based on an exchange rate of \$40 Colombian pesos to the U.S. dollar.
5. Of all manufacturing firms in Colombia, only 4.2 percent had at least 100 employees (D.A.N.E. 1977b: 185).
6. In the discussion that follows, the category of "wife" includes both married women and women in consensual unions.
7. Directly comparable figures on women's contributions to family income are not available for Colombia. Recent U.S. data shows that among North American families there were fewer wage earners per family, and much lower relative contributions by female heads, wives, and others (Angel and Tienda 1982: 1366 and 1369).
8. Of all the respondents, 39 percent had been pregnant while on their current jobs. Among these women, the number of on-the-job pregnancies ranged from one to four. These respondents had all taken advantage of the legally-required 56 days of paid maternity leave.
9. The respondent's dependence on other female relatives was much greater than that of North American working women. Presser and Baldwin report that in the U.S. 27 percent of employed women with children under five leave their children with a relative other than a member of the nuclear family (1980: 1209).

10. The use of the adjective "modern" here does not imply any value judgement. In the context of this discussion of attitudes, "modern" sex-role attitudes are those which include individualism, a sense of independence, a focus on achievement for personal fulfillment, etc.
11. No significant difference in birthplace is found among age groups. It appears that the age cohorts were all raised in very similar geographic settings.
12. Though many of the respondents were from agricultural backgrounds, only 1.7 percent reported that their mothers had done any farmwork. This underreporting coincides with other recent findings on women's roles in Colombian agriculture. As Deere and Leon de Leal (1981) have shown, although women do play important roles in agricultural production, their contribution is largely unappreciated--even by other women.

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Respondents by Respondent's Relation to Household Head

Characteristic	Respondent is:			
	Head of Household	Wife of Head <sup>a</sup> of Household	Other <sup>b</sup>	Total
Average age	35.6 (N=40)	34.4 (N=76)	28.3 (N=56)	32.7 (N=172)
Avg. years of education	5.0 (N=40)	5.0 (N=75)	6.6 (N=55)	5.5 (N=170) <sup>d</sup>
Avg. age when employed at first job	23.4 (N=40)	19.0 (N=76)	20.4 (N=56)	20.4 (N=172)
Avg. age at first marriage for ever-married <sup>a</sup>	20.2 (N=19)	22.3 (N=76)	24.6 (N=8)	22.1 (N=103)
Avg. age at first pregnancy <sup>c</sup>	21.7 (N=23)	22.8 (N=73)	22.1 (N=14)	22.5 (N=110)
Avg. age when first employed at current job	28.2 (N=40)	23.1 (N=76)	22.8 (N=56)	24.2 (N=172)
Percent single when first employed at current job	62.5 (N=40)	65.8 (N=76)	94.6 (N=56)	74.4 (N=172)
Avg. years employed at current job	7.4 (N=40)	11.3 (N=75)	5.5 (N=56)	8.5 (N=171) <sup>d</sup>
Marital status				
Percent single	52.5	---	85.7	40.1
Percent married	0.0	81.6	5.4	37.8
Percent in consensual union	5.0	18.4	0.0	9.3
Percent separated	22.5	---	8.9	8.1
Percent widowed	20.0 (N=40) (100%)	---	0.0 (N=56)	4.7 (N=172)

<sup>a</sup>This category includes both legal marriage and consensual union.

<sup>b</sup>In household headed by other than self or spouse.

<sup>c</sup>Includes miscarriages, stillbirths and live births.

<sup>d</sup>Some respondents could not offer exact information on these variables.

Table 2. Extended Family Households and Respondent's Place in Household Structure

Percent Extended Family <sup>a</sup>	Respondent is:			Total
	Head of Household	Wife of Head <sup>b</sup> of Household	Other <sup>c</sup>	
All respondents	40.0 (N=40)	47.4 (N=76)	67.9 (N=56)	52.3* (N=172)
Respondents with children	40.9 (N=22)	50.0 (N=70)	100.0 (N=14)	54.7** (N=106)

<sup>a</sup>"Nuclear" families include those with one adult, one adult and her/his children, or a couple and their children. "Extended" families include all other living arrangements.

<sup>b</sup>"Wife" includes both married women and women in consensual unions.

<sup>c</sup>In households headed by other than self or spouse.

<sup>d</sup>Two mothers who did not live with their children are excluded.

\*Chi-square is significant at  $p = .05$ .

\*\*Chi-square is significant at  $p = .001$ .

Table 3. Selected Economic and Social Characteristics of Households by Respondent's Place in Household Structure

Characteristic	Respondent is:			Total
	Head of Household	Wife of Head <sup>a</sup> of Household	Other <sup>b</sup>	
Number of wage earners	1.6	2.0	2.4	2.1** (N=172)
Total monthly household income <sup>c</sup>	\$3,317	\$5,671	\$4,512	\$4,745** (N=168 <sup>d</sup> )
Percent of respondent's wages contributed to household	93.4	83.7	52.6	76.1** (N=170 <sup>d</sup> )
Respondent's contribution as percent of household income	76.2	46.3	36.8	50.5** (N=167 <sup>b</sup> )
Number of persons in household	3.4	5.2	5.8	5.0** (N=172)
Number of respondent's children	1.8	2.6	.3	1.7** (N=172)
Age of respondent's youngest child	10.6	6.0	7.1	7.1* (N=108 <sup>e</sup> )
Hours respondent spends on household each week	24.5	29.7	15.9	24.0** (N=171 <sup>f</sup> )

<sup>a</sup>"Wife" includes both married women and women in consensual unions.

<sup>b</sup>In households headed by other than self or spouse.

<sup>c</sup>This figure is in Colombian pesos.

<sup>d</sup>A few respondents did not know what the total household income was, or exactly how much they contributed.

<sup>e</sup>Age of youngest child is considered only for the subsample of mothers.

<sup>f</sup>One respondent did not know how many hours she spent on housework.

\*F-test of differences among means is significant at  $p = .005$ .

\*\*F-test of differences among means is significant at  $p = .001$ .

Table 4. Childcare Arrangement for Women with Children Under 12 by Respondent's Place in Household Structure

Childcare Arrangement	Respondent is:			Total
	Head of Household	Wife of Head <sup>a</sup> of Household	Other <sup>b</sup>	
Other children in household	35.7	15.0	---	16.7
Grandmother or other female relative	50.0	53.3	90.0	57.1
Friend, neighbor, maid or combination	14.3	31.7	10.0	26.2
Total	100.0 (N=14)	100.0 (N=60)	100.0 (N=10)	100.0* (N=84)

<sup>a</sup>"Wife" includes both married women and women in consensual unions.

<sup>b</sup>In households headed by other than self or spouse.

\*Chi-square is significant at  $p = .10$ .

Table 5. Standardized Coefficients for Regression Predicting Sex-Role Attitude Scale<sup>a</sup>

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	COEFFICIENT
Age	-.146*
Years of education	.180**
Number of children	.047
Respondent's salary	.076
R <sup>2</sup>	.065
N	172

<sup>a</sup>The sex-role attitude scale was constructed from responses to the statements shown below. The responses were first scored with the values of 1 = traditional, 2 = undecided, and 3 = modern. Then the scores were added, so that a total score of 5 was the most traditional and a total score of 15 was the most modern. For all 172 respondents, the mean score on the sex-role attitude scale was 8.56.

- (1) It is O.K. for a woman with children to work. (50 percent of the responses were modern.)
- (2) It is O.K. for a woman with children to work if her husband can support the family. (14 percent of the responses were modern.)
- (3) Women are more content at home taking care of their children than working outside the home. (14 percent of the responses were modern.)
- (4) A working woman can have as good a relationship with her children as a woman who doesn't work. (41.9 percent of the responses were modern.)
- (5) It is preferable for a woman to have the support of a good husband than to have a profession or career of her own. (47.1 percent of the responses were modern.)

\*The coefficient is significant at  $p = .05$ .

\*\*The coefficient is significant at  $p = .001$ .

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