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THE CHANGING CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY- PATTERNS OF
INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Maria Lorenia Parada-Ampudia
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Institute of Development Studies
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I. INTRODUCTION

There is a common trend to believe that in capitalist societies, money and power have a causal relationship, that is, that money should bring power and power should bring money

Until the last decade there was also a common assumption that women 'do not work' and therefore women do not have money, hence do not have power. From this assumption, some Development programs, focused on women, were aimed to create income generating projects for women.

Writers as Boserup (1970), together with many feminists, have demonstrated the assumption 'women do not work' to be false and have pointed women's participation in work in many areas to be significant and indispensable for the social reproduction of society. In addition, some other studies underlined that the point was not then, that women 'do not work', but the little or most of the times the lack of economic retribution that women's work has, both at home and in the labor market.

Many studies are at the present, analyzing women and work, focus on paid-work, and some others in unpaid-work, both within and outside the 'family/household' /1

Within these studies, the relation between women's employment (women's wages) and women's empowerment, as been found as

/1 In an attempt to unify the ideological meaning of 'the family' with the material relations related with 'the household' I have decided to use the term family/household. This is mainly based in the discussion risen in section II of this work.

problematic in the sense that women's wage has not necessarily implied change in women's condition. This problematic relation has required of a more detailed analysis of women's subordination and specifically women and men power relations in different spheres.

The analysis of women's subordination has required of the creation of theoretical categories such as, 'gender' which refers to the social construction of the masculine and the feminine, and the 'sexual division of labor' (SDOL) as the social attribution of different qualities and attributes to women and men (See Whitehead, 1979).

The analysis of the extent to which women's wages is related with women's autonomy has required of the exploration of patterns of resource distribution within the family/household, especially between wife and husband.

I consider that the analysis of the liberating potential of women's wages touches specially (within the arena of power), the complex relation between material relations and ideology. That is, an analysis of 'how the things actually work' and 'how the things are supposed to work' has been necessary.

In the following I will first, describe the analytical categories of gender and the SDOL as a feminist framework to analyze, in section II, the different concepts of 'the family' as used in the social sciences and how feminists have criticized this concepts. In this part I will finally underline the often forgotten ideological side of the 'the family' and its role in the dynamics of family/households. In section III, I will describe some

patterns of income distribution founded in some feminist studies, the main variables related to this patterns, and women and men power relations within them.

Finally, in section IV, I point out some general conclusions derived from these studies as well as, some policy and research implications.

Gender and the sexual division of labor

During the last 20 years an increasing number of feminists have worked within the social sciences trying to develop a social-political analysis which would enable the analysis of women's subordination as well as other forms of subordination. In this analysis they have underlined that to understand social reality, it is necessary to explore the social construction of 'gender' and the dynamics of the sexual division of labor.

'Gender' refers to the social construction of the masculine and feminine and to the social attribution of different qualities and attributes to women and men. There are, according to Whitehead (1979), different arenas in which gender is the decisive operator:

- the domestic, where gender relations are ascribed (where the character derives from the position: mother, daughter, father, son, wife, husband).
- and the community, where gender relations are gender bearing (where gender is defined by the place in the occupational hierarchy: doctor-nurse; boss-secretary).

It is also assumed that as gender relations are socially constructed and these effect economic, political and social processes. The latter also modify, restructure, undermine or reinforce gender relations.

In arguing that gender relations are structured in terms of dominance-subordination, these analysis are concerned with the realm of power relations in which relations of cooperation and conflict exist. Within these cooperative-conflictive relationship women and men are seen as active individuals involved in renegotiating relations.

Power relations are defined here not only as the relations in which to exercise power is to prevail over the contrary preferences of others concerning 'key issues' but also to determine which issues are the 'key issues', indeed to determine which issues come up for decision, and excluding those which threaten the interests of the powerful. And finally it also implies the power that operates to shape and modify desires and beliefs in a manner contrary to people's interests (Lukes, 1986). The ways in which gender relations are expressed in society are, as I said before, culturally and historically specific, hence depend highly on class, age and ethnic aspects.

A major division which has lead to much theoretical debate is that of class. The interrelation of class and gender focus on the link between the economic system (mode of production) and women's subordination. About this relation different views within feminism have emerged.

Among the different feminist analyses, some theorists have emphasized class relations over gender (marxist orthodox position), while others emphasize gender relations over class (radical position). Socialist-feminist approaches have pointed out the shortcomings of undermining class or gender aspects. Some socialist-feminists have brought a conception of two semiautonomous systems (sex-gender system/mode of production, according to Rubin, 1975) (patriarchy/mode of production, according to Hartman, 1976 and Eisenstein, 1979) that are conceived as interconnected and mutually reinforcing (see Young, I., 1981).

According to Iris Young (Op.Cit.) this dualist approach has several problems. Examples of this approach include that of Juliet Mitchell, which assumes patriarchy as an ideological and psychological structure focussing her analysis in the interaction between this structure with the material relations of society. Heidi Hartman's approach sees patriarchy itself as a system of material social relations distinct from and interacting with social relations of production.

In both approaches two problematic aspects remain. First the trend to use patriarchy in an ahistorical universal way regardless of historically and culturally specific forms. The second is the fact that real life does not present itself in a dualistic manner but as an integrated whole, as a product of the multiple relations of not only gender and class but also race, age, ethnicity, sexual preference.

To analyze the specific forms of interrelation of the genders in all societies produced by this social division and in an attempt to build a unifying theory and analysis in which material and ideological factors are an integral aspect, some feminists have generated the analytical concept of the sexual division of labor (SDOL) defined by Kate Young (1987) as

"the mechanism by which a set of ideas about men and women, their natures, their capacities, and their attributes, are translated into a set of material practices which ensures that men and women are constantly made aware of not only of 'being a women' or 'being a men' but also of the terms on which these two social constructions should interrelate"(Young 1987:11)

In this sense the SDOL is based on the social notions about naturally different capacities for women and men which separates and at the same time bonds them in a resulting exchange cooperation system between genders. Besides the allocation of 'proper' tasks to the 'proper' gender, a differential value to these tasks is also assigned.

Despite the fact that the ways in which female and male social relations are historically and culturally specific, the assignation of child care to women is almost universal, as is the assignation of women to the socially undervalued 'private-domestic sphere'. Men are associated with the socially highly valued 'public sphere'.

These 'gender approach' sees women as gendered subjects which are not passive bearers of gender relations. They also resist and struggle individually or collectively and develop strategies to create minimum spaces of control over their lives. Actually, the creation of these strategies has been the focus of many feminist

studies, among others, the studies on patterns of income distribution within the family/household.

In an attempt to analyze the strategies created within women and men power relations and the relation of these with the economic, social and historical context, some feminist works have focused on the family/household as a primary locus of women's subordination.

THE CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY WITHIN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The political nature of 'the family' is expressed in the enormous disagreement about what is meant by the term 'the family', what the reality of 'family' structure and dynamics are and what they should be.

Despite some differences, the concepts of 'family' and 'household' used within the social sciences have been highly influenced by Parsons' functionalist account of social reality and the marxist tradition which have in some sense shared the view of 'the family' as a 'natural' unit which obey to external forces. This view assumes mainly that 'the family' is:

- a universal existing institution
- based in biological reproduction
- involving co-residence
- unit of production-consumption
- unit with internal domestic functions responding to external public changes
- unit of egalitarian pooling and sharing income-resources.
- unit organized with a 'natural' division of labor between genders, assigning women to reproductive and men to productive activities.

Parsons' concept of the nuclear (monogamous) universal family consisting of parents and their still dependent children has been demonstrated to be inaccurate by many anthropological cross and intra cultural studies(see Harris, 1981).

This assumption leaves out of the analysis the variations in family/household composition which depend on conjugal and

residential arrangements. This is, it ignores patterns of polyandry and polygamous marriage, as well as, whether the household is, for instance, nuclear or extended.

As I have already pointed out, there exists in social scientific work an ideological association of women-family-biological/reproductive activities with the domestic sphere. This conception involves various main aspects:

- it assumes as 'natural' the dyad womanhood-motherhood where women's self realization is seen as uniquely achieved through their roles as mothers.
- based in the fact that women produce children the association of the fact of childbirth with housework is taken for granted.
- it sees women as 'physiologically' linked to 'the family' realm where the reproduction of human life is assumed to be separated from social production of the means of subsistence, (see Edholm et.al, 1977).
- it locates women and the reproduction of human life in the domestic sphere while men and social production in the public sphere.

Within the view of the reproduction of human life as separated from social production it is implied that:

- family/households are isolated economic independent units, and
- the former are determined by the latter.

According to Parsons' model the independent economic structure of 'the family' adjusts to the shifting external conditions of the economy and political organizations, (Parson, 1955:186 in Anderson, 1982). This assumption fails to account, on the one

hand, for the ways in which inter-family/households, inter-community relationships have a dialectic relationship with the consumption and production patterns of the family/household, (see Garcia, Munoz and de Oliveira, 1982; Whitehead, 1981; Schmink, 1984). On the other hand, it ignores the relations between reproductive functions of the household and social reproduction (see Edholm et.al, 1977) and society and the economy at large.

Some family historians have also supported this critiques arguing that "far from industrialization causing changes in the family, changes in the production and in domestic life in the direction of modern forms of production and domestic social organization went together". (Anderson 1982:36)

The consequences of a supposed 'autonomy' of the individual family/household derives also from an assumption that the family/household has a different form of circulation and distribution of labour and goods. Those that take place within (the domestic domain) are characterized by egalitarian and common pooling and sharing relations as opposed to the competitive and conflictive ones that take place outside (the public domain).

However, it has been found that resources are not, as the Parson's model assumes, distributed 'to each according to his needs' (Parsons Op.Cit:187). That, for instance, women's access to land is rarely independent and is usually through a male kin while men's access is through inheritance. That women are less able to mobilize labor than men are, and finally that family/household members share inequitably in consumption and income (e.g. Whitehead, 1981; Schmink, 1984).

The view of family/households as units of production, consumption and reproduction is another assumption which must be carefully analyzed. Although these activities of production, consumption and reproduction can be found within the family/household unit, none of these have been found as universal characteristics.

Not all family/households contain them together. An example is that in Mafia Island in Tanzania where women and men have separate access to resources and do not share all their resources to produce, even in conditions of co-residence. Among the Hausa in Northern Nigeria, husbands and wives sell to each other their crop products and they manage and spend their incomes in 'the household' in a separate form. Finally, in matrilineal descent family/households in Ghana, husbands and wives live in separate dwellings (See Yanagisako, 1979; Imam, 1988).

Another critical point (not separated from the above) is the idea of a 'natural' division of labor within the family/household. Some writers, such as Harris (1981) have argued that this conception is inherently biologist. It ignores the fact that labor relations within the family/household are not only historically and culturally variable but also are the subject of conflict between genders.

Together with the assumption of 'natural' gender division of labor there exists also the assumption of complementarity between the sexes. This implies mainly the following aspects:

- it is also the base for the presumption of egalitarian pooling and sharing (pointed out above) and
- the conception of the authority of the male 'household head'.

Nevertheless the last assumption is not so much unfounded and over-extended (Imam, 1988). It has besides ignored multiple forms of family/household organization, for instance the increasing numbers of female headed households, and also served to invisibilized women's (and children's) economic contribution to the family/household. It has 'hidden' women behind men, fathers, brothers and husbands (See Meillasoux, 1981).

In addition, it is important to point that while male 'household' head control can be found to be over-extended, in many cases it does not involve 'real' or 'total' control. "The nature and extent of this control needs to be investigated and specified rather than assuming an undifferentiated autocracy, or even an undifferentiated communality, within domestic units." (Harris, 1981:57). For instance, many studies have demonstrated that family/household organization of production affects radically power relations and structure within family/households (see Yanagisako, 1979; Harris, 1981; Whitehead, 1981; Schmink, 1984). Therefore the analysis of power relations within family/households has to take into account social and economic aspects, as well as gender and age factors.

Deconstructing the concept of the family/household unit involves various areas of which the following have been suggested in the above discussion:

- co-residence
- marriage
- gender power relations
- housework
- sexuality
- procreation
- motherhood and mothering
- parenthood
- definitions of kinship and gender
- economic relations (distribution, resource allocation, consumption)

Looking at this incomplete list, one can see why the definitions of the family/household concept have been so wide and have engendered such debate.

In the following I will analyze how the concepts of 'family' and 'household' have been differentiated and linked in some feminist writings.

The most common distinction between the terms 'family' and 'household' within social sciences, according to Yanagisako (1979) has been made on the following basis:

- Family, defined in terms of kinship (genealogically defined relationships), and
- Household, defined in terms of co-residence.

However these definitions have faced different problems:

In the case of 'the family' the problem has been the definition of genealogical links that some social scientists have tried to

define by functions, but this has been impossible because "there appears to be no single function -or set of functions- that is invariably fulfilled by a set of genealogically linked individuals." (Yanagisako 1979:164)

On the other hand, according to Turner "...the social significance of kinship depends upon the extent to which it provides a basis for social relationships." (Turner, 1969:225). He argues that the rights and obligations which involve specific kin relationships are determined by variables such as, class, proximity of residence, age and so on. Nevertheless he argues that as far as kinship ties are specifically recognized, then they may be potentially significant in a social context.

Concerning the difficulties of the 'household' definition the problem has centered on defining the boundaries of 'households'. Defining it as spatial proximity is problematic in the sense that it refers to "individuals who share not only a living space but also some set of activities" (Yanagisako, 1979:164) -food production and consumption, sexual reproduction, and childrearing-. But evidence has been found that "...these activities are sometimes engaged in by sets of people who do not live together." (Ibid.p.165)

Given the multi-complex character of the family/household units and the diverse cultural meanings attached to them, Yanagisako suggests that it is "more analytically strategic to begin with an investigation of the activities that are central to the domestic relationships in each particular society, rather than with its domestic groups [that is] start by identifying the important

productive, ritual, political and exchange transactions in a society... and then proceed to ask what kinds of kinship or locality -based units engage in this activities." (Ibid.p.186)

However, assuming that the analysis of 'families' and 'households' can help to bridge the gap between social and individual levels of analysis, some feminists such as Schmink (1984) and Whitehead (1979) point out that despite the fact that not all 'households' at any one time are the site of the activities of the reproductive nucleus, it is precisely the characteristic of 'households' that they are dwelling groups in which biological reproduction and hence material maintenance go on. This implies two main aspects:

First that reproduction in the sense of birth and the rearing of children presupposes material maintenance and second, the existence of a normative connection between 'family' and 'household', in the fact that statistically kinship relations are most often the basis of recruitment to households (see Rapp, 1979).

Therefore some feminists have taken the 'family' and the 'household' as descriptive and analytical tools that can provide insights into a range of social processes. Hence although taking in account the variability found in co-residence, kinship relations and social reproduction (including biological reproduction, reproduction of the labor force and social production) 'households' can be defined mainly as units of co-residence which share most aspects of consumption, making use and allocating a common pool of resources to ensure their material

reproduction (see Whitehead, 1981; Harris, 1981; Thorne, et.al., 1982). However, in general they have in common that 'household' composition and variability depend on:

- The activities necessary for biological reproduction
- the historically specific structural demands of the production system which provides the material maintenance of every day life.
- individual life cycles which determine demographic variables.
- internal social differentiation (class, gender, age, ethnicity)

In many writings within the social sciences a trend can be found to define 'households' in primarily economic or material terms, different from sets of social relations constituting 'families'. The traditional separation of production from reproduction and the distinction between 'the family' as the reproductive nucleus and 'the household or domestic group' as the productive-reproductive unit has ignored the connections between them at the material and ideological level.

For Rapp 'the family' is the means through which people get enrolled into households.

"It is through their commitment to the concept of family that people are recruited to the material relations of households. Because people accept the meaningfulness of family, they enter into relations of production, reproduction and consumption with one another. They marry, beget children, work to support dependents, accumulate, transmit, and inherit cultural and material resources. In all these activities the concept of family both reflects and masks the realities of household formation and sustenance." (Rapp 1979:177)

Furthermore 'the family', she argue, as an ideology apart from influencing the forms in which people interact and co-reside, also permeates every social institution.

'The family' is seen as an ideology based mainly in kinship and marriage relations. Understanding kinship and marriage relations as historically and culturally specific, as well as

involving variables such as gender, class and age, it is suggested that the potential significance of these will depend on the social meanings attached to them.

In this sense, ideology must be analyzed as how it influences the ways in which people interpret their lives. It is important then to differentiate analytically what it is socially supposed to be, on the one hand from the actual ways in which individuals interact, co-reside, marry, have sexual relations, have and rear children, divorce, work and so on (see Gittins, 1985; Rapp, 1982).

The family ideology contains values about the 'correct' composition of households and recruitment to them and also it implies values about the ways in which relations between household members should be. For instance, values of mutual help, sharing, cooperation and love have been located within 'the family' realm.

"By insisting that happy marriages and happy families are made by individuals through love, devotion and hard work, the reality of the economic and patriarchal bases of marriage and the family life are disguised and ignored" (Gittins, 1985:165)

Though a differentiated analysis of ideology from patterns of behaviour is theoretically useful in uncovering women's subordination, among other things, it is important to keep in mind two caveats. First they are actually intertwined and, second that ideology is an historical creation changing through time and a social construction it is based in specific economic and political contexts. Although the ideology of the family would make us believe that there is one type of 'family', one proper

and correct way in which individuals should live and interact together, the ways in which individuals live, interact and struggle are varied.

As Gittins points out, the strength and pervasiveness of the ideology of the family, lies in its appearance as a universal experience. Claiming for its 'universality' and 'natural origins' it masks reality, translating social problems into personal and individual ones, changing potential political awareness or anger into individual confusion/isolation and guilt (see Gittins Op.Cit.; Rapp, 1982) In presenting historically variable structures and meanings as 'natural' it also implies that these are inevitable.

Actually, the study of patterns of income distribution within the family/household has required of an analytical decomposition which allows the exploration not only of the different ways in which :

- the family/household is organized
- the conjugal relations work, and
- men and women earn, allocate and spend their incomes,

but also the normative expectations that women, men and the community where they live have of 'the family', the 'conjugal contract' and within them 'what is to be a woman' and 'what is to be a man'.

III. INCOME DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS WITHIN THE FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD

Men and women are involved in a wide range of structured and interdependent relationships within marriage, kinship groups and the community as a whole.

This work will focus mainly on marriage relations through the analysis of the 'conjugal contract' which is defined as the set of goods, incomes, services and labor exchanges between husband and wife within the family/household (Whitehead, 1981)

Intra-family/household resource management will be analyzed here as an attempt to deconstruct the ways in which power relations work at a microlevel within the family/household and the role played by the family ideology within it.

As Verena Stolke (1981) argues, in the same way that class oppression and the social division of labour have their origins in unequal access to the means of production, social reproduction, which is the perpetuation of class relations and domination mediated by institutions such as marriage and the family, determines on the one hand, women's primary assignment to domestic labour and on the other hand, the undervaluation of this function.

Underlining that women's control through marriage and the family ideology in capitalist societies differs by class having different implications for economic roles in different classes, it is necessary to understand different class meanings of marriage and family to understand women's subordination.

The assumption of the universal existence of the nuclear family: male-breadwinner, his non-working wife and their dependent children (discussed above) has led to the conception that

indirect wages are sufficient to support workers and their 'dependents' (wife and children). However, in reality the salary only covers a portion of the consumption needs of the domestic group - which as it has been discussed can imply different compositions-. This forces the domestic group to create strategies to supplement the wage. For instance, in working-class family/households women are commonly primary or supplementary wage earners.

Women's income has been found to be essential to family/households survival among the poor. It not only complements male income but constitutes the central survival resource for an estimated 17-28 % of the world's sum-total households - the percentage of family/households that are according to census classified as female-headed because they are male-absent. In some areas female headed family/households reach 40 % of the total family/households. (Hilse Dawyer, forthcoming). Moreover it has also been found that besides women's income being an important contribution contrary to male patterns, family/household maintenance is women's priority (see Hilse Dwyer, forthcoming; Whitehead, 1981; Roldan, forthcoming).

In Third World countries where family/household incomes are made up of a wider range of resources than wages, in the creation of income strategies, domestic groups have used multiple resources apart from the primary wage (Beneria and Roldan 1987; Garcia et.al 1982; Gonzalez de la Rocha 1986). Therefore, the living standard of the domestic group depends on the combination of monetary incomes derived from wages, employment benefits, home

production and nonmonetary inputs such as state services, domestic work, interhousehold exchange.

The SDOL, in these countries, is more marked in the wage labor sector: a) gender stratification in works and occupations leads to a marked difference in wages b) women's activities in

the informal sector tend to be more casual, and c) women's earnings are usually less dependent on wages than those of men. (see Young, 1987; Schmink, 1982)

It is in this sense important for the analysis of the family/household to take into account the different income types and resource and the different access to work of the distinct family/household members.

Is income inequality determining gender power relations ?

Studies on income dynamics such as those in Hilse Dwyer and Bruce (ed.) (forthcoming) point out findings about important gender differences in the generation and use of income within the family/household and a significant gender variability in decision-making by culture, history and class.

Some studies about inequality within marriage have focused their analyses on the allocation of money. In these, money has been defined as a key element for the distribution of power. Goldthorpe cited by Pahl (1983) has considered the relationship between inequality and the distribution of power suggesting the following:

"Social inequality in all its manifestations can be thought of as involving differences in social power and advantage: power being defined as the capacity to mobilize resources (human and non-human) in order to bring about a desired state of affairs; and advantage as the possession of, or control over, whatever in society is valued and scarce. Power and advantage are thus closely related. Power can be used to secure advantage, while certain advantages constitute the resources that are used in the exercise of power. Moreover, different forms of power and advantage tend in their very nature to be convertible: economic resources can be used to gain status or to establish authority; status can help to reinforce authority or to

create economic opportunities; positions of authority usually confer status and command high economic rewards, and so on" (Goldthorpe, 1974:218 quoted by Pahl, 1983))

This assumption has led Pahl and others (Standing, forthcoming; Beneria and Roldan, 1987) to question to what extent do wages empower women within the family/household.

Actually some writers argue that in societies in which money is a source of power and income and wealth are central expressions of advantage, the relative economic positions of husband and wife must reflect their relationship, and at the same time the balance of power between husband and wife will be reflected in their control over economic resources. These assumptions have led some development planners to think that women's income generating projects would automatically improve women's condition, both within and outside the family/household.

Regarding the question of to what extent women's wages make them have more control over the disposal of their own income and to what extent this changes power structures within the family/household, some writers have argued that waged work has not had a significant impact on women's condition within or/and outside the family/household. Besides the fact that their low wages do not allow them to become economically independent from marriage and family/household relations, in addition their wages are often appropriated by other family/household members leaving them no personal income or control over its destination.

On the other hand, other writers have argued that however small the wage might be, a money wage constitutes a powerful weapon

that may not be helpful enough to control its destination but to increase women's say within the family/household.

In an attempt to analyze questions such as, do patterns of allocation of money reflect differences in power ? or is it more accurate to see differences in power as determining allocative patterns ? feminists have underlined that stronger than the power that money may bear in itself in a capitalist society there exist complex ideologies of gender relations, marriage and 'the family' which underlie women's condition of subordination.

Some writers, such as Beneria and Roldan (Op.Cit.), Phal (Op.Cit.) and Standing (Op.Cit) have analyzed on the one hand the circuits of flow, allocation and disposal of domestic monetary resources (material base of family/household interactions) and on the other hand, normative expectations of marriage and family, and moreover the dialectic relation between them.

It is necessary to analyze the relation between patterns of money allocation and power as complicated social processes where the two elements interact with each other, together with not only income level and income source but with the family/household developmental cycle, and the normative expectations regulating interactions and exchanges between husband and wife (family and marriage ideologies). That is, although ideological and material relations are dialectically connected, the analysis of the material base of family/household interactions and the normative expectations regulating these relations, is analytically useful. To analyze the implications of women's wages in the redistributational processes of family/households and to locate

them in a specific context of ideologies and material conditions is necessary.

In the following I shall explore different patterns of income (cash through wages and other earnings) flow, allocation and control, normative expectations and its implications for women.

Income flow, allocation and disposal patterns

Jan Pahl (1980) distinguishes between three main points in the flow of money:

Control- concerned with decisions about the allocative system to be used.

Management- concerned with the instrumentalisation of the allocative system adopted, and

Budgeting- concerned with the spending within expenditure categories.

Different patterns of income allocation have been identified in the basis of a) each individual's responsibility for expenditure between and within expenditure categories, and b) each individual's access to household funds:

1- **Whole wage:** where one partner (usually the wife) is responsible for managing all the finances and the expenditure, except for the personal spending money of the other partner. The personal spending of the other partner is either taken out by him before the wage is handed over, or is returned to him from collective funds. This system is usually associated, with non-earning wife, but can be associated with a family with several earners (joint family)(see Pahl, 1983).

According to Standing (Op.Cit) this pattern (referred to as a common fund in her study) embodies a redistributive ideology which does not differentiate earners from non-earners or high earners from low earners. However, in practice, the distribution of the fund among family/household members is variable, especially regarding women.

Beneria and Roldan (Op.Cit.) identify five points of control, exercised by men, between the entry and the exit point along the flow of this pattern (in their study called the common fund pattern):

a) Husband's ability to withhold or share information on the actual amount of his earnings. Some studies reported wives lack of knowledge of husbands total earnings. This was seen by some wives as a way to keep them dependent

b) Husband's decision of the amount to keep as his pocket money. Most studies reported that besides the difference that in general men hold pocket money while wives do not, wives not only do not object to their husband's pocket money but they considered it as a legitimate right. (see Pahl, 1980; Standing, Op.Cit.; Beneria and Roldan Op.Cit.) However, on the other hand, they did mind the amount that their husbands assigned as their pocket money, and actually this was reported as an important source of conflict, mainly in low-wages family/households.

c) The form in which the allowance or contribution is handed to the wife: This varies according to whether it is handed over daily, weekly or monthly and to the kind of expenditure that it covers. In low-income family/households the allowance handed over

in the longer term leaves the wife the responsibility for stretching the fund to cover everything without the possibility of requesting further contributions. As some authors have said, this leaves women the burden to manage poverty (see Young, 1987). However this kind of allowance was the one preferred, by the wives, over the weekly or daily ones because the former gives the wife the possibility of averting the state of uncertainty and the repeated humiliation of begging and nagging to secure the promised amount. That is, they feel more independent in this sense (see Beneria and Roldan Op.Cit).

The pattern chosen for allowance did not appear to be related to the level of the husband's earnings, but rather was dictated by his personal preference.

d) Wives contribution to the common fund. In all cases wives pooled entirely their incomes without taking pocket money.

In this point wives declared that their pooling was a wife's choice, but in practice they have little choice given that their low incomes and the ideology of maternal altruism made them expend the whole of their incomes on children and family/household members.

On the other hand, wives lower wages reinforce the undervaluing of their contributions together with feelings of insecurity and dependence.

The fact that women do not have the equivalent of male pocket money results in women's feelings of guilt because if they want to buy something for themselves it has to be withdrawn from the

common fund decreasing then the collective fund therefore depriving the children.

Beneria and Roldan raise the question of,

"whether, or to what extent, a wife's role in handling a very limited fund of money, already largely committed to necessary basics, should be considered a manifestation of control.... [in their view]...this semblance of control is illusory. In reality, the wife has no financial autonomy; the pool must cover unavoidable expenditures." (Beneria and Roldan Op.Cit.:120)

e) Husbands continue to exercise control. After handing over their contribution, he makes sure that his money is spent as he wants.

2- **Allowance system:** Despite variabilities in the most common form the husband gives his wife a set amount and she is responsible for paying for specific items of household expenditure. The rest of the money remains in the control of the husband and he pays for other specific items. In this system each partner has a sphere of responsibility and the variations on the system are based in the different patterns of responsibility and also in the form that this allowance is paid, that is weekly, daily or monthly. In this pattern, wives that do not earn wages only have access to housekeeping money, so they are left with no personal spending money. Concerning the different responsibilities for expenditure, which varies according to the family/household income, wives are often found responsible for food and/or 'extras'.

Some variabilities of this system are found also according to a) the proportion of the contribution made by wives compared with

the husbands' ones, and b) the husbands' fulfillment or non-fulfillment of his role as the main breadwinner.

3- **Shared management:** where both partners have access to all the household money and both have responsibility for management of the common pool and for expenditure out of that pool. Main variants of this system depend on the number of earners within the household. and finally,

4- **Independent management:** where both partners have an income and no one of them has access to all the household funds. Each partner is responsible for specific spheres of expenditure. Despite variances through time the characteristic is that they maintain separate flows of money.

Variances of the shared and independent management are found in the degree to which wife or husband are controllers, managers and budgeters. The division of labor in this system usually assigns husbands the responsibility for housing and establishment costs while wives spend their own earnings on food, clothing and daily household expenditure (see Standing Op.Cit; Beneria and Roldan Op.Cit)

In an attempt to analyze what determines which allocative patterns is chosen and the implications of adopting one system rather than other, in the context of the relationship between the distribution of money and the distribution of power within the marriage, Pahl (1983); Beneria and Roldan (Op.Cit) and Standing (Op.Cit.) have identified among different variables : a) total and individual level of income, b) sources of individual and total income, c) Occupation, d) family/household developmental

cycle, e) family/household complexity, f) kinship, and g) normative expectations of local culture.

Authors differ in the degree of significance of the relation between patterns of income distribution and the variables and also about the relation between variables. For instance regarding, family/household level of income Pahl and Beneria and Roldan found the 'whole wage system' or 'common fund' highly related to low-income units, while Standing does not find a significant correlation between this system either with income level nor with occupation, family/household complexity or developmental cycle.

Despite these differences, they all agree that when wives earn money they are more likely to have a measure of power (some times only verbal) over the control, management and budgeting of the family/household money. However, this power is still embedded, therefore shaped, by ideologies about the nature of marriage and 'the family' held by husband and wife and also by the social worlds in which they live.

In disentangling ideology Pahl analyses, for instance, the normative expectations about the allocation of money, and Beneria and Roldan together with Standing go further to analyze, in specific cultural and historical contexts, the normative expectations regulating legitimate or 'proper' interaction and exchanges between husbands and wives through women's and men's conceptualization of the 'conjugal contract' or the 'marriage contract'. They analyze through these the relation between what

women, men and the community see as what it 'should be' and the 'what it is' through the different income distribution patterns. Beneria and Roldan also analyze the relation between circuits of intra-family/household distribution; developmental family/household cycle, and intra-family/household exchanges of tasks required for the daily and generational reproduction of power. They differentiate quantifiable tasks - housecleaning, dishwashing, sewing, washing and ironing, buying and cooking food, etc.- from non-quantifiable ones such as, sexuality, the provision of affection and the emotional and psychological nurturance of members of the household. At this level they conclude that,

"women's control of their earnings is only minimally translated into a bargaining mechanism ... neither the economic resources available to women, such as those relating to affection and the expression of feelings - companionship, sexuality, emotional support- nor the services women can supply such as housework, procreation, and childcare are in fact effective means of empowerment in the domestic domain." (Beneria and Roldan Op.Cit.:135 and 161)

In addition, concerning the framework for these analyses, Standing makes an important point underlining that for the understanding of the specific ways in which family/household income is empirically conceptualized and distributed, the consideration of the specific historical context of these patterns and the ideologies associated with them through time is needed.

To summarize and going back to the question about the liberating potential of women's wage/income, most of the authors, despite differences regarding the extent of the liberating potential, agree in that no matter how low the wage might be, it can be used as a lever to secure a minimum space of autonomous control; as a mechanism to pursue goals of household well-being; and to lessen the damage to self-image caused by economic dependency on their husbands.

CONCLUSIONS

Some general implications,

It is not the aim of this work to analyze in detail the important research being done in these areas, but to point out how to

analyze to what extent wages are a means to empower women. It has implied that:

- Social scientists (up to now mainly feminists) have undertaken the task to explore gender power relations within the family/household.
- This exploration has led to the need to deconstruct from a gender perspective the relations within marriage and family/household.
- Despite ideologies of sharing, cooperativeness and non-conflictive relationships within marriage and 'the family' this relations have been uncovered as non-egalitarian, competitive and conflictive ones, moreover as subordination-domination power relations.
- For the exploration of the distribution of power within the marriage it is important to take into account not the marriage as an isolated phenomenon but the whole context in which it is immersed because it reflects broader patterns of gender and class relations.
- The exercise of deconstruction and the use of the SDOL as a category of analysis for gender relations has confirmed the need to integrate as a whole material and ideological relations.

Policy implications

- Family/households, in opposition to traditional views, tend not to be the monolithic units that are presumed. Therefore, concerning income distribution, they have to be approached as multi-complex differentiated intermediary units rather than as

the endpoints of existing or redirected income flows (see Hilse Dwyer and Bruce Op.Cit.)

- Individuals rather than 'family/households-heads' might be the optimal recipients of outlays related to redistribution of assets. "The cultural designation [through the SDOL] of some obligations as male or as female points to the appropriateness of directing allocations to males or to females differentially."

(Hilse Dwyer and Bruce Op.Cit.:16)

- A narrow program that focuses only on increasing women's labor-force participation however may constitute an appropriate mechanism to diminish the problems of gender-differentiated income processes, must be applied with caution. Since research has shown that women's entry to paid work results often in doubling or tripling burdens for them a better solution must be found. Hilse Dwyer and Bruce suggest that the increase of women's compensation for labor performed could be one such solution

- In addition to the importance of gender and class-differentiated policy targets, this should also be cultural and historically specific.

- The 'economistic' concept of development that has prevailed in most Development Work must be redefined recognizing non-economic objectives that are essential for full development of human beings. Educational, psychological, sexual dimensions of human relations must be included. Economic development, as economic growth is necessary but not a sufficient condition for human development. Human development requires fundamental changes in society. It especially needs the elimination of material and

ideological relations underlying gender and class, as well as other forms of domination such as, age, ethnicity, race, sexual preference, nationalities, and so on.

Research implications

The analysis of 'the family' concept and patterns of income distribution demonstrate the need to answer questions regarding the conditions in which husbands' and wives' incomes are earned, distributed and expended. It is also important to examine variables such as kinship, co-residence patterns, occupation, developmental cycle, income level and resources, the individual and social meanings of the 'conjugal contract' and 'the family', and so on, both within the family/household and the society as a whole.

Gender constitutes still 'hidden' or 'muted' relations, therefore, as Brannen and Wilson accurately underline "Research in areas which are hidden needs a rather different approach from research in an area which does not challenge dominant norms and values."1987:12 The first challenge, as they suggest is to make 'visible' those areas of experience which dominant norms and values desperately try to hide through denying, ignoring or explaining them as 'natural'. And the second one, is "...to come to terms with the problems which arise when interviewing or asking questions in areas which women [or men] have not considered." Ibid:12

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