

EXTRA DOMESTIC WORK AND GENDER FAMILY RELATIONS IN MEXICO: A THEME REVISITED

The point of departure for this paper on the effect of women's non domestic work on gender relations in the family in Mexico has been to identify the lessons already learned in previous studies at the international and national levels. With this objective in mind we first review different theoretical and methodological approaches and results of qualitative and population-based studies. From this literature review we come to the conclusion that, in general terms, non domestic work is seen today as one of the various factors that can contribute to women's autonomy and general welfare, and that the role of studies like ours is to determine the specific contribution of *different aspects* of labor force participation on *various dimensions* of gender relations in our particular socio cultural and historical context.

It is worth taking into consideration that previous investigations have pointed out that it is not necessarily extra domestic work in itself which may lead to changes in women's lives, but a number of related aspects, such as the control of monetary resources, the importance of women's contributions to the household budget, as well as the commitment and meaning of their participation in the labor market. Additionally, previous studies have underlined the potential difference between salaried and non salaried, agricultural and non agricultural, family and non family work, and above all the need to take into consideration the labor force experience and not only the economic participation in one moment in time.

It is then crucial to refine the analysis regarding the different aspects of extra domestic work that must be taken into account, but also bear in mind that economic activity is one among different factors that may influence women's condition. Others usually mentioned are rural-urban residence, schooling, and socio economic status of the woman and of the husband, besides the usual control variables such as age, marital duration and demographic family structure.

One last relevant aspect is to define what dimensions of gender relations will be the ones taken into consideration. In this regard we decided to study five different dimensions (husband's participation in domestic tasks and in children's care, wife's participation in decision making, her freedom of movement and the presence or absence of domestic violence). Following the discussion above, for each of these dimensions we explore, through multivariate logistic regressions, the role of various conditioning factors, beginning with several aspects of extra domestic work. As previously mentioned, data come from a probabilistic survey on 2 532 women residing in the main metropolitan areas of Mexico.

Results demonstrate that women's work experience (number of years worked since marriage) is the only variable that predicts in a significant way the presence of more egalitarian relationships in *all the dimensions* considered, after controlling for an important number of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. From our perspective, this finding moves the debate a step forward and points out the importance of a prolonged involvement with

economic activities for establishing differences in husband's participation in domestic tasks and children's care, as well as in the presence of women in important decisions and their freedom of movement. Besides, being a professional or a technician and making contributions to the household budget also proved to be significant aspects in some occasions. Finally, it is important to mention that the dimension which is less clearly influenced by women's economic activity is the presence of more harmonic family relations. This result indirectly supports different existing hypotheses that tend to emphasize the conflicting aspects of a change in the gender division of work and of a transformation in men's traditional role as exclusive economic providers (see table below).

Note for the organizer: This paper has already been finished but it is written in Spanish and will have to be translated in case that it receives a favorable consideration. We can send the complete paper or the complete tables with the results in a subsequent moment if this is considered necessary
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Table
 Regression Results (Exp B) for the Effect of Different Socioeconomic and
 Demographic Variables on Gender Family Relations in Metropolitan Mexico
 (1999)

	Husband's Participation In Domestic Tasks	Husband's Participation In Children's Care	Wife's Participation In Decision Making	Wife's Freedom of Movement	Lack Of Violence
EXTRADOMESTIC WORK					
<i>Work Experience</i>					
None	---	---	---	---	---
Up until 4 years	1.27	1.19	1.61*	1.13	1.48*
5 years or more	2.02*	1.95*	2.72*	1.65*	0.94
<i>Occupation</i>					
Professionals	1.58*	2.52*	2.64+	2.28*	1.16
Others	---	---	---	---	---
<i>Contributions to the family budget</i>					
None	---	---	---	---	---
Less than half	0.96	1.58*	0.89	1.92*	1.04
Important part	1.62*	0.93	1.72*	2.02*	1.11
Or all					
<i>Meaning of Work</i>					
Independence	1.09	0.73	1.48	2.17*	1.25
And to better oneself					
Others	---	---	---	---	---
SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS					
<i>Age</i>					
Younger	---	---	---	---	---
Adult	0.92	0.93	1.12	1.28+	0.96
Mature	0.85	1.35	1.12	1.69*	0.79
<i>Schooling</i>					
Incomplete element	0.69	0.41*	0.22*	0.25*	0.87
Complete element	0.70*	0.62*	0.54*	0.43*	0.93
Complete secondary	1.13	0.87	0.64*	0.60*	0.93
Complete h school	---	---	---	---	---
<i>Age at first marriage</i>					
Less 20 years	---	---	---	---	---
More 20 years	1.20	1.39*	1.15	1.24+	1.62*
<i>Age of younger people present</i>					
0-5	---	---	---	---	---
6 or more	1.15	1.08	1.17	1.37*	0.96

<i>Presence of other woman</i>					
Yes	---	---	---	---	---
No	1.75*	2.43*	0.75*	0.88	1.20
<i>City of Residence</i>					
Mexico City	0.59*	0.46*	0.55*	1.40*	0.79
Monterrey	---	---	---	---	---
FAMILY OF ORIGIN					
<i>Mother's economic activity</i>					
She did not work	---	---	---	---	---
She worked	1.27*	1.62*	1.17	1.15	0.76*
<i>Violence</i>					
Presence of viol	---	---	---	---	---
Absence of viol	0.99	1.01	1.03	1.17	2.84*
<i>Residence in childhood</i>					
Rural	---	---	---	---	---
Urban	1.28+	0.99	1.19	1.45*	1.31*

*Significant at the 5% level

+Significant at the 10% level

Source: Encuesta sobre Dinámica Familiar (DINAF), 1998-1999.