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Migration, family context and labour-force participation in Mexico City

Brígida García, Humberto Muñoz and Orlandina de Oliveira

Introduction

Internal migration has had a great impact on the expansion of labour supply, both male and female, and on the reproduction of sectors of manual wage-earners, in Mexico City. In previous papers this process has been documented by the authors for different sectors of the labour force, analysed as aggregates of isolated individuals (Muñoz et al., 1977). In this chapter, the purpose is to study the influence of the family context upon labour-force participation among migrants to the city, on the basis of interview data collected in their homes in the metropolitan area. Information was obtained on members of 2,401 households (Muñoz et al., 1977). Given the nature of this information, it is the division of labour in the family with which the migrant lives in Mexico City that is considered. It could be just as important to consider the migrant's family, left behind in the place of origin, but this is not possible.

This chapter attempts to demonstrate the importance of taking the family as the unit of analysis, in order to grasp some of the social mechanism which underlie individual participation (of natives and migrants) in the labour market. This chapter refers basically to the division of labour that takes place in the family taken as a social mechanism. It is assumed that this division of labour depends on the need to complement the wage of the head of the family and that it varies according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the family units and of their members.

This general objective is pursued through the study of the families headed by workers.¹ Participation of the labour force (male and female, migrant and native) in economic activity will be analysed. This labour force originates in different 'family contexts', which are defined on the basis of characteristics of the heads of households (income and migratory situation) and those of the family group (life-cycle, kinship composition and size).²

Migrants and natives in the kinship structure

The most direct consequence of the fact that the majority of individuals live in families is that the working-age population—migrant and native—is made up of people at different stages of their life-cycle: heads, spouses, sons, etc. Table 1 shows their location in the kinship structure of the households in which they live at an aggregate level (without regrouping individuals into families).

The labour force is also diversely constituted, but less so than the working-age population. This is possibly due to the fact that there is a need not only for heads of family but for other members to participate in economic activity, because of the pressure of the low levels of income, which characterize the labour force in Mexico City (Muñoz et al., 1972).

The distribution of migrants and natives in the labour force by their position in the kinship structure shows that the heads of family are more heavily represented among migrants, whereas the sons constitute an equally important labour-force contingent among the native labour force (see Table 1).

This differential location of migrants and natives in the kinship structure of households in Mexico City shows how inadequate it would be to compare their participation in economic activity at an aggregate level. In this particular case, it would mean comparing one sub-population where 32.4 per cent are heads of household (migrants) with another where only 17.8 per cent (natives) are heads of household.

Why are migrants so different from natives in this respect? What happens to working-age migrants who are sons and who live with their families? As can be seen from Table 1, the 'sons' are lightly represented among the migrant labour force and constitute a small sub-group compared with the total migrant working age population. In this context, the question is whether this small sub-group comprises all the sons of migrant heads of family who are 12 years of age or more and live with their families in the city. The answer has to be negative because it is unlikely that there was such a marked fertility differential between migrants and natives over the last decades.

In the case of Mexico City, the most plausible answer is that the majority of the sons of migrant heads are natives of the city (Goldani, 1977), especially the ones under 12 years of age, who are not included in Table 1. From this, it follows that natives and migrants with a different location in the kinship structure can co-exist in one and the same family. The implication of this statement will be seen later on, when this is interpreted at the family level.

If both migrants and natives co-exist inside the same family groups, the labour-force participation of both contingents may be part of the same family strategy. Thus, studies that conceptualize migrants and natives separately, as two different 'worlds', and which try to explain their differential

TABLE 1.

Population 12 years and older, by migratory status, economic activity and location in the kinship structure: Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)

	Migrants					Natives				
	Do not work	Work	Male	Female	Total	Do not work	Work	Male	Female	Total
Total	40.9	59.1	—	—	100.0 (3,373)	52.7	47.4	—	—	100.1 (5,165)
Family-heads	5.8	32.4	31.0	7.2	38.2	1.9	17.8	16.9	2.3	19.7
Wives	21.9	4.4	0.3	26.0	26.3	13.6	2.7	0.1	16.2	16.3
Sons and daughters	3.4	4.2	3.5	4.1	7.6	29.6	17.7	23.8	23.5	47.3
Other ¹ relatives	9.8	8.5	7.3	11.0	18.3	7.6	6.6	5.2	9.0	14.2
Domestic ² employees	—	8.2	0.4	7.8	8.2	—	1.1	0.1	1.0	1.1
Don't know	—	1.4	—	—	1.4	—	1.5	—	—	1.5

1. Includes a small percentage of non-relatives.

2. This category refers to domestic servants who live in the house of the employer.

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

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behavioural approaches*

participation in economic activity—at an aggregate level—on the basis of migratory condition, age, education, sex, marital status, have a limited analytic value. It must also be seen that family influence over participation in economic activity, if it exists, can affect both groups of the labour force—migrant and native—at the same time, in the case of one and the same family.

*The division of labour in a family of migrant
and native workers³*

This chapter now looks at labour-force participation as affected by the family context in households headed by migrants and natives. In each case the role of women is considered.

Since migrant and native heads of family are very heterogeneous in socio-economic terms, one specific occupational group has been analysed. In fact, it would make little sense to compare the migrant's family with that of the native in general terms without differentiating the social strata. Otherwise one would compare very dissimilar family contexts under the title of migrant's family and native's family, as much in terms of the position of the head in the occupational structure, as in terms of the kinship composition of the households, their size and the age distribution of their members (García and Oliveira, 1979).

Employees and manual labourers can only be selected for analysis if the quantitative importance of migration in forming occupational groups is taken into consideration. Moreover, an analysis of the families of migrant and native workers is of very special theoretical interest. This analysis would throw some light on the role of the family in the reproduction of the industrial proletariat (Singer, 1977; Meillassoux, 1977). In this context, the following points should be examined: (a) the degree to which the wage of the head of household whether migrant or native is sufficient to support the family, and when this is not the case, the strategies of labour-force participation adopted by different families; (b) the roles played by women in this context; and (c) the significance of the domestic division of labour for the reproduction of the working class.

The families chosen (Table 2) clearly reflect the heterogeneity of the working class in Mexico City. Because these workers participate in varied economic contexts and have different degrees of qualification, they earn wages which vary from below the minimum legal wage to twice the legal minimum or more. In 1970, 36 per cent of the worker heads of household were earning approximately the minimum wage, the weight of the migrants being the greatest in this group. The immediate question is whether the strategy of labour-force participation among migrant workers' families would be different from that of natives' because of their greater poverty. In order to answer this question without losing sight of the implications of what has

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and labour-force participation in Mexico City*

TABLE 2. Worker heads of households by level of income and migratory condition: Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)

Level of income ¹	Migrants	Natives	Total
Up to 1.2 times the minimum wage	22.3	13.9	36.2
From 1.2 times to twice the minimum wage	18.8	19.4	38.2
More than twice the minimum wage	8.7	16.9	25.6
TOTAL	49.8	50.2	100.0 (367)

1. For the purpose of the analysis the minimum wage unit was applied. The survey took place between December 1969, and the first months of 1970. In this period, the minimum wage rose from \$847.50 to \$960 monthly. Given that the codification was made on the basis of the first quantity, the minimal category was defined as 1.2 times the minimum wage (\$1,017). The order intervals were defined arbitrarily, on the basis of the results obtained in previous analyses (Muñoz, Oliveira and Stern, 1972).

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

TABLE 3. Migratory composition of workers' households according to the migratory status of the head: Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)

Migratory composition of the family group ¹	Migrant head ²	Native head ²
All are migrants	12.3	—
All are natives	—	71.7
Migrant wife and native children	38.8	14.4
Migrant wife, other migrant relatives and native children	9.0	2.7
Migrant wife (no other members)	—	3.2
Migrant wife, children and/or other native or migrant relatives	7.5	—
Native wife and children, other relatives are migrants	3.2	3.2
Only the head is migrant	23.9	—
Other cases	5.3	4.8
TOTAL	100.0 (188)	100.0 (187)

1. The presence of non-relatives and domestic servants in the worker's family in Mexico City was very small in 1970.
2. Migrants: Born outside the metropolitan area. Were 11 years of age or more when they arrived in the capital to take up residence. Natives: Born in the metropolitan area. If born outside, they arrived in the city when they were less than 11 years old.

been stated in the previous section, the migratory composition of the families should be taken into account.

The data at a family level clearly show that what has been said at an aggregate level for the migrant population holds for the households with migrant heads: the weight of the 'typical' family, composed of migrants only, can be seen in Table 3. In only 12.3 per cent of the domestic units with migrants heads are all migrant members. The most common situation

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(38.8 per cent) is that the head and his wife are migrants, while the sons and daughters are natives. It should however be pointed out that 23.9 per cent of the domestic units with migrant heads are composed of members born in the city, with the exception of the head. The existence of native sons and daughters in the households headed by migrants is the most important aspect offered by the analysis of their migratory composition.

Among households headed by natives, those where all members are natives form a majority (71.7 per cent). In 20 per cent of them, however, the wife is a migrant. This fact acquires significance as an illustration of the manner in which migrant women participate in economic activity, within the family organization of the workers' households headed by natives of the city.

Migratory heterogeneity of the workers' families clearly shows what has been suggested previously: the contingents of the migrant and domestic labour force do not constitute two 'worlds' apart. They co-exist within families and therefore their participation in economic activity may be a response to shared social mechanisms, like particular arrangements to obtain the necessary income for the maintenance and reproduction of the family.

Additional income is important for a large number of workers' families. The extent to which this fact stimulates different strategies of labour-force participation will be analysed. Families with a low income and those in which the heads earn high wages will be compared as will those of different migrant status; families headed by migrants and those headed by natives.

*Strategies of labour force participation
in different family contexts*

Participation rates

The analysis of mean rates of family participation⁴ (total, male and female) is a good point of departure to determine variations in the degree of labour-force participation of various family members in the workers' households.

The participation rates for the whole population of the metropolitan area (based on the survey date), as compared to the rates among workers' households, shows that the latter are higher among men (86 and 72 per cent) and lower among women (18 and 30 per cent). These differences may be attributed to the fact that households with male heads in the labour force have been selected for analysis. In this way, male participation rates are overestimated and female rates underestimated given that it is women family-heads who have a relatively greater participation in economic activity.

The differences in the male and female participation rates may also be due to the characteristics of households. Nevertheless, when the total and masculine participation rates of households headed by workers are compared with the rates of other social groups (García and Oliveira, 1978),

there are practically no differences. The differences show up when comparing female participation rates; these are slightly lower among households headed by workers than in those headed by others.

Although households headed by migrant workers show low rates of female labour-force participation, when the head's wage is lower, there is a greater female participation rate (see Table 4). Why this difference? If it were only the result of relative poverty, one would expect the same phenomenon among households headed by natives. It is important to examine some of the factors conditioning labour-force participation—especially that of women—which are rooted in the socio-demographic characteristics of the household. The reference here is to the kinship composition of the domestic unit (nuclear, extended, etc.), to its size and to its life-cycle (age of the head). Whether a domestic unit is nuclear or extended, large or small, headed by younger or older men, this is related to the composition by age and sex of the household and can facilitate or inhibit female participation. It seems that these characteristics, along with the wage level of the family head, influence participation rates.

It has been shown in previous analyses, that the women of manual labourers' families, as well as those of other groups, have higher participation rates when they belong to non-nuclear units or to units which are in the more advanced stages of the life-cycle (García and Oliveira, 1978). In those cases, a larger number of women for the household tasks and less family obligations towards small children, facilitate female participation in the labour force.

In the case of the families of workers who earn approximately the legal

TABLE 4. Worker headed households: participation rates (male, female and total) by level of income and migratory status, Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970

Migratory status	Up to 1.2 times the minimum wage	From 1.2 times to twice the minimum wage	More than twice the minimum wage	Total
Migrants				
Male	91.2	85.5	83.7	87.7
Female	26.6	18.7	10.0	20.7
Total	59.7	54.6	47.7	55.7
Natives				
Male	90.1	83.2	79.4	83.8
Female	17.2	10.2	18.6	15.0
Total	54.1	49.0	47.6	49.0
Total				
Male	91.1	84.3	80.9	85.7
Female	23.0	14.4	15.7	17.8
Total	57.6	51.8	47.6	52.8

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

minimum wage, the average size of households of migrants and of natives is rather large (about six members). This characteristic increases the need to work for both groups. Yet, there are important differences in kinship composition and life-cycle between the poorer migrant and native families, and these favour female labour-force participation among the migrant families.

Young nuclear families are more predominant among native than migrant-headed households. Among the latter, there is a greater relative number of nuclear and extended families in an advanced stage of the life-cycle (see Table 5). The socio-demographic characteristics of the households of poor-migrant-headed families, along with their economic needs, stimulate higher female-participation rates in the labour force.

A slightly higher income of the head (from 1.2 to twice the legal minimum wage) discourages female participation in economic activity, among migrant as well as native-headed households (see Table 4). The influence of income dominates the socio-demographic characteristics of the households, and these lead to greater economic participation of women in the intermediate wage level than of those in the minimum wage level, for both migrant and native headed households (Table 5).

Nevertheless, when economic pressures are lighter, the relationship between income and the socio-demographic characteristics of the household, as far as female labour-force participation is concerned, is more complex than has been stated previously. For migrants, the influence of income would appear to be more decisive because, if the life-cycle is emphasized, the households of the better remunerated heads are those showing the smallest rates of female economic participation (Tables 4 and 5). Among native heads, when socio-demographic characteristics are highly favourable for female participation in economic activity (Table 5), a higher income does not discourage women from working (Table 4).

This encourages a search for new elements to explain female economic participation, especially among the better remunerated families, like the natives' households. Among these, it is useful to consider the individual socio-demographic characteristics of the female labour force according to different family contexts. It is also necessary to look at the type of occupations and activities of women in the labour market: whether they are industrial workers, manual workers in services, or engage in non-manual activities. The analysis of occupation is important because it depends as much on the characteristics of the labour force (age, schooling, marital status, etc.), as on the dynamics of the economy and labour demand. Finally, it would be important to study in greater depth female economic activities outside the labour market, such as unpaid domestic labour.⁵

By introducing these elements into the discussion, one may formulate the hypothesis that some families, like the better remunerated households of native workers, have a greater number of women better equipped than others to participate in the economy. This would be the case primarily

TABLE 5.

Kinship composition and life-cycle of worker-headed households by level of income and migratory status, Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)

Kinship composition and life-cycle	Up to 1.2 times the legal minimum wage		From 1.2 times to twice the legal minimum wage		More than twice the legal minimum wage		Total
	Migrants	Natives	Migrants	Natives	Migrants	Natives	
Nuclear	65.4	69.8	56.2	75.4	76.6	60.0	66.0
15 to 44 years of age	47.4	60.4	42.5	63.8	46.6	43.3	50.6
45 and over	18.0	9.4	13.7	11.6	30.0	16.7	15.4
Extended	26.9	23.7	31.5	23.2	16.7	30.0	26.2
15 to 44 years of age	15.4	19.9	19.2	14.5	10.0	20.0	16.8
45 and over	11.5	3.8	12.3	8.7	6.7	10.0	9.4
Without nuclear component	7.7	7.6	12.3	1.4	6.7	10.0	7.7
15 to 44 years of age	7.7	5.7	9.6	1.4	6.7	6.7	6.3
45 and over	—	1.9	2.7	—	—	3.3	1.4
Total	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9
15 to 44 years of age	70.5	85.0	71.3	79.7	63.3	70.0	73.7
45 and over	29.5	15.0	28.7	20.3	36.7	30.0	26.2
	(78)	(53)	(73)	(69)	(30)	(60)	(363)

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

for daughters, who, because of their individual characteristics (age, schooling, etc.),⁶ would satisfy certain specific demands for female labour that exist in the city. For instance, in the last decades, there has been an expansion of non-manual jobs which require a female labour force with some schooling, for example, teachers, nurses, secretaries, cashiers and receptionists (Muñoz and Oliveira, 1976). This hypothesis assumes that in these same households the majority of wives are engaged in unpaid domestic work, while some of the sons study, as the level of male participation rates observed in this family context seems to indicate (Table 4).

In this study, the necessary information to prove this hypothesis is not available. Nevertheless, there follows an analysis of the women who participate in economic activity, in the relevant contexts.

Types of labour-force participation

With the purpose of identifying those who participate in economic activity in each household, domestic units have been classified into those in which: (a) only the head works; (b) the head and other men work; (c) the head, other men and/or women, the wife excepted, work; and (d) the head, other members and the wife work. This classification into 'types of participation' is considered useful to illustrate how the division of labour by sex is influenced by a person's place in the kinship structure of the family (García and Oliveira, 1978).

The prevailing type of participation among families of workers is that only the head of the family works (about 52 per cent of the cases; see Table 6). This undoubtedly reflects the weight that the nuclear units with young heads have in this group, among migrant- and native-headed families (see Table 5). In these households the children are not yet old enough to enter the labour market, and the wife, with no help from other relatives or from domestic servants, performs a key role as an unpaid domestic worker. This implies that for a great proportion of the workers' households, the characteristics of their families (in this case the absence of an available labour force) will make it more difficult for them to get out of this situation of relative poverty.

This is more evident among the families headed by native workers than among those of migrants with the lowest income, as a result of the differences in kinship composition and family life-cycle in both groups. In 64.7 per cent of households with native heads earning about the legal minimum wage, only the head works, certainly because among them 60.4 per cent are young nuclear units (Table 5). Among households headed by low-income migrants, the wife (a migrant, in the majority of the cases) and other members (men and women) often participate in the labour force, complementing the wage of the head. The percentage of households where 'only the head works' declines to 43.9 per cent in this group (Table 6) and young nuclear units make up only 47.4 per cent of them (Table 5).

TABLE 6.

Type of labour force participation by level of income and migratory status among worker headed households, Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)

Type of participation	Up to 1.2 times the legal minimum wage		From 1.2 times to twice the legal minimum wage		More than twice the legal minimum wage		Total	
	Migrants	Natives	Migrants	Natives	Migrants	Natives		
Head	43.9	64.7	47.8	59.2	56.3	45.2	51.8	
Head and other men	19.5	9.8	17.4	22.5	21.9	21.0	18.8	
Head, women and/or men	17.2	17.5	24.6	11.3	12.5	27.4	18.8	
Head, wife, and/or other members	19.5	7.9	10.1	7.0	9.4	6.4	10.6	
	36.7		34.7		21.9		29.4	
TOTAL	100.1	99.9	99.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	
	(82)	(51)	(69)	(71)	(32)	(62)	(367)	

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

It should be emphasized that the wife's participation in the labour force does not take place in such a marked form in any other of the family contexts analysed. Among families of workers earning more than the legal minimum wage, female participation results from the presence of other women—and not the wife—in the labour market. Among families of native heads earning higher wages, working wives are very few in relation to the available female labour-force found in these families (Table 6). This reinforces the hypothesis that it is the daughters, rather than the wives, who are gainfully employed.

To summarize, among workers' households there is a division of labour assigning different roles to different members of the family in so far as their participation in economic activity is concerned. If all the households headed by manual workers are considered, in 48 per cent of the cases other members besides the head work. Given the heterogeneity of this group of households in terms of the level of income of the heads and of the kinship composition and life-cycle of the household, the division of labour varies considerably from one family context to another.

When the socio-demographic characteristics of the domestic units compound the need to work, there is a greater female participation rate in economic activity, represented, to a large extent, by the wife and other women, as happens in the homes of the poorer migrant family-heads. On the contrary, when the heads earn more than the legal minimum wage, the wife devotes herself to unpaid domestic labour and other members of the household participate in different ways in the labour market.

Occupations of the members of the worker's family

There follows a description of the occupations of female and male workers, migrant and native, belonging to different family contexts (households with migrant and native worker heads earning different wages). This analysis illustrates the impact of migration on the occupational structure of Mexico City and its influence through the family division of labour, and also reveals how the family participation in economic activity produces differences in the 'class' composition of the workers' domestic unit.

Briefly, the workers' families reproduce a male labour force, made up mainly of natives who to a great extent make up the industrial proletariat, independently of the family context in which it originates (Table 7).

Both migratory status and specific occupations are much more diverse among the female than male labour force produced by these families (see Table 8). There are also important variations in these aspects among different family contexts: households with migrant or native heads, with higher or lower wages.

Among households where the wages of the head are close to minimum

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TABLE 7.

Worker-headed households with male workers, by migratory status, income of heads and occupation of male workers, Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)¹

Migratory status and occupation of male workers	Up to 1.2 times the legal minimum wage			More than 1.2 times the legal minimum wage		
	Migrant	Native	Total	Migrant	Native	Total
Total:	75.7 (25)	24.2 (8)	99.9 (33)	48.1 (37)	52.0 (40)	100.0 (77)
Industrial workers ²	42.4	12.1	54.5	29.9	24.7	54.6
Other manual workers ²	18.2	9.1	27.3	14.3	13.0	27.3
All non-manual ²	12.1	3.0	15.1	2.6	11.7	14.3
Other ³	3.0	—	3.0	1.3	2.6	3.9
Migrant labour force ⁴	21.2 (7)	6.1 (2)	27.3 (9)	19.5 (15)	7.8 (6)	27.3 (21)
Industrial workers ²	9.1	—	9.1	13.0	2.6	15.6
Other manual workers ²	6.1	6.1	12.2	5.2	2.6	7.8
All non-manual ²	3.0	—	3.0	1.3	2.6	3.9
Other ³	3.0	—	3.0	—	—	—
Native labour force ⁴	54.5 (18)	18.1 (6)	72.6 (24)	28.6 (22)	44.2 (34)	72.8 (56)
Industrial workers ²	33.3	12.1	45.4	16.9	22.1	39.0
Other manual workers ²	12.1	3.0	15.1	9.1	10.4	19.5
All non-manual ²	9.1	3.0	12.1	1.3	9.1	10.4
Other ³	—	—	—	1.3	2.6	3.9

1. As in previous tables, family contexts are defined according to the level of income and the migratory condition of the worker head. As made clear in the text, the label 'family labour force' does not include the head.
2. Here we included a small number of cases in which there was a predominance of the insertion in question.
3. No predominance could be established.
4. In only one case there was 'family labour force', migrant and native, inside the home.

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

subsistence levels, families of migrant heads with a high proportion of female and migrant workers predominate. Migrant women from these households (mainly the wife or other relatives) enter the labour market to perform manual activities in the services sector. In contrast, native women from the same family context, mainly daughters of migrants, when in the labour market tend to enter manufacturing industries. It is possible that the individual characteristics of these women (age and schooling) along with their location in the kinship structure, account for these differences.

Among households headed by better-paid workers, as opposed to the poorest group, those with native heads predominate, and the labour force in these families tends to be both native and female. Households with migrant heads, a minority in this better-income group, also present this characteristic (probably due to the rare participation of the wife).

Besides these differences, there are other occupational contrasts in this group between migrant and native women, and between male and female

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TABLE 8.

Worker-headed households with female workers, by migratory status, income of heads and occupation of female workers, Mexico City metropolitan area, 1970 (percentage)¹

Migratory status and occupation of female workers	Up to 1.2 times the legal minimum wage			More than 1.2 times the legal minimum wage		
	Migrant	Native	Total	Migrant	Native	Total
Total	69.3 (27)	30.8 (12)	100.1 (39)	46.8 (29)	53.2 (33)	100.0 (62)
Industrial workers ²	28.2	10.3	38.5	8.1	14.5	22.6
Other manual workers ²	30.8	12.8	43.6	16.1	14.5	30.6
All non-manual ²	7.7	5.1	12.8	21.0	21.0	42.0
Other ³	2.6	2.6	5.2	1.6	3.2	4.8
Migrant labour force ⁴ :	38.5 (15)	17.9 (7)	56.4 (22)	16.1 (10)	9.7 (6)	25.8 (16)
Industrial workers ²	10.3	—	10.3	3.2	1.6	4.8
Other manual workers ²	23.1	12.8	35.9	8.1	6.5	14.6
All non-manual ²	5.1	5.1	10.2	4.3	—	4.3
Other ³	—	—	—	—	1.6	1.6
Native labour force ⁴	30.8 (12)	12.9 (5)	43.7 (17)	30.6 (19)	43.6 (27)	74.2 (46)
Industrial workers ²	17.9	10.3	28.2	4.8	12.9	17.7
Other manual workers ²	7.7	—	7.7	8.1	8.1	16.2
All non-manual ²	2.6	—	2.6	16.1	21.0	37.1
Other ³	2.6	2.6	5.2	1.6	1.6	3.2

1. As in previous tables, family contexts are defined according to the level of income and the migratory condition of the worker family-head. As made clear in the text, the label 'family labour force' does not include the head.

2. Here we included a small number of cases in which there was a predominance of the insertion in question.

3. No predominance could be established.

4. In only one case there was migrant and native 'family labour force' inside the home.

Source: Phase A of the survey on migration.

workers (see Table 7). Migrant women, a minority, follow the occupational pattern of the migrant labour force in general: they are found mainly as manual workers in the service sector. On the other hand, native women, a majority among females, often cross the barriers of the 'labouring class' taking part in commercial and administrative activities. By so doing, women in this group differentiate themselves from native men in general and from native women coming from poor homes, who are so often found at home. This tendency is seen more clearly among households with native heads, but is also to be observed in households with migrant heads.

To summarize, the families headed by workers contribute to the reproduction of the working class, mainly through the incorporation of poor migrants and their families. In this context, the broadening of the industrial proletariat comes about not solely through the incorporation of migrant and native heads of households: the incorporation of native sons and daughters is another important contribution. This reproduction

process of the industrial proletariat is rooted in the low wages received by a large number of workers heading households. This brings about the necessity for other members of the family to work, which widens the supply of labour to be employed by capital and therefore puts a downward pressure on wages, and starts the process all over again.

The women participating in economic activity contribute to some degree to the widening of the proletariat. They also introduce variety into the class composition of these households. This comes about through the economic participation of the migrant woman, who come basically from poor households, as much as through the participation of the native woman who come from better remunerated migrant and native households. In the last case, the participation of the native woman enlarges the 'white collar' sector. This process of 'social mobility' inside the worker's family, has a minor but not insignificant effect upon the contribution these families make to the reproduction of the industrial proletariat. In quantitative terms, in 78 per cent of the cases analysed, all members of the family who work are manual workers.

Final considerations

This chapter has shown the ways in which the workers' families carry out the task of reproducing the labour force, looking at the different strategies of division of labour and the role played by female labour in this context. Depending on the degree of poverty, which is a phenomenon that affects more the homes with migrant heads, participation of various members of the family in the labour force becomes more pronounced.

Although there may be transfers and non-monetary income received by the labour force, wages are generally fixed independently of the needs of the family group. As a result, there are many households in which the wage of the head is not sufficient to cover the expenditures of a large family. Therefore, in domestic units headed by low income workers a division of labour which stimulates participation in the labour force by other members is established to complement the income of the main wage-earner. The availability of family labour becomes a fundamental necessity for subsistence. The low wages of some are complemented by the low wages of the others.

Greater female participation in economic activity occurs mainly in the families of migrant workers earning approximately the minimum wage: such participation is mainly that of the wife in gainful employment. Under these circumstances, the wife plays a dual role: as a housewife and as a worker. This is possible when economic need is accompanied by a family context that allows for it. The wage of the head does not automatically condition this participation for it is also influenced by the type of internal structure of the domestic unit such as particular arrangements in the kinship composition, life cycle and size.

These results show the importance of rethinking the concept of labour-force supply in terms of groups of individuals organized in families, instead of as aggregates of isolated people. Of course, individuals also have a series of characteristics that may condition family labour participation, as was suggested in the case of the better remunerated native heads of households.

The economic and socio-demographic characteristics of the family group, the location of the individuals in the kinship structure of the household and individual characteristics complicate the interrelationships between labour demand at the level of the economic structure and the participation of the individual in the labour market. In this sense, the family can be conceptualized as a mediating instance between both phenomena.

The analysis of the division of labour inside the different family contexts was fundamental for the purpose of elucidating some of the mechanisms referred to, and for the purpose of describing the role played by the family in the reproduction of the workers' group as such.

The importance of the process of labour-force reproduction has been stressed, independently of the level of income and migratory condition of the head. It may be suggested that as the industrial sector expands and consolidates in Mexico City, conditions will be created for generations to reproduce one after another. This may result in the emergence of a proletariat of urban origin, with a longer tradition as industrial workers.

Although the 'typical' worker family predominates in the households headed by manual workers in Mexico City, there is a by no means insignificant proportion of cases where workers and non-workers co-exist. This is particularly the case for households in which there is a female family labour force: the migrant woman participates in the economy in manual activities or as an autonomous worker; the native woman, coming from a better-off home, tends to work in non-manual activities. It would be appropriate to examine the implications of this latter process of 'social mobility' among workers' families in greater depth in order to study the processes of the organization and development of class consciousness.

APPENDIX A

Occupational status	Definition
Employers	Independent entrepreneurs hiring wage-labour
Independent	Independent workers on their own who do not hire wage-labour
Employees (non-manual)	Dependent wage-earners performing professional, technical, sub-professional, administrative and commercial tasks
Workers	Dependent wage-earners performing manual activities. Workers in manufacturing industry (<i>obreros</i>) and in the other branches of activity
Not in the labour force	Those who did not work and were not looking for a job in the week of reference

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APPENDIX B

Domestic Unit ¹	Definition
Nuclear	A couple, with or without unmarried children. Also included are cases of a head without a spouse, with one or more unmarried children
Extended	A nuclear family and other relatives besides unmarried children. The relative might be a married son or daughter or any other relative in the vertical or collateral line of kinship
Compound	A nuclear or extended family and other persons who are not relatives of the head (domestic servants excluded). (There are no cases in this category among worker families)
Non-nuclear unit	
Unipersonal	A person living alone without relatives or non-relatives (domestic servants excluded)
Pluripersonal	A head without spouse and unmarried children, who lives with others, relatives or non-relatives (domestic servants excluded)

1. This classification is an adaptation from that followed by V. F. López (CELADE, 1971).

Notes

1. In the sense of industrial worker; in Spanish, *obrero*.
2. Throughout this text, the terms 'family group', 'family', 'household' and 'domestic unit' are used as synonyms. This is admissible because the presence of non-family members in households headed by manual workers (in 1970) was very small, i.e. they were primarily composed of individuals who were part of the family.
3. This analysis concentrates on the study of domestic units headed by manual workers. The weight of women in this category is minimal (around 5 per cent). Economic activity, occupation, the branch of economic activity and the head's position in his occupation, were the variables in Phase A of the survey that were used to define the units. The 375 homes chosen for this research represent 19 per cent of 2,000 homes with male heads included in the sample of homes of the metropolitan area and 20 per cent of the homes of male heads who work.
The switching of the unit of analysis (from the individual to the domestic unit), which takes place from this section onwards, implied the reconstruction of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the domestic units on the basis of the individual characteristics. These were: migratory composition of the home (the migratory condition of each member of the home; see Table 4 for the categories used); kinship composition of the home (see Appendix B for definition); life-cycle (the age of the family-head was the indicator of the vital cycle); size of the home (excluding domestic employees); rates of economic participation (total, male and female).
4. The mean or average rate of family participation is a relation between the number of persons of the domestic unit being 12 to 55 years old and who work and the number of persons in the same age bracket living in the unit. In this manner, the differential influence of the age structure of the homes on the indicator of family participation is partially controlled (García and Oliveira, 1978).

5. In recent years the census procedure that classifies women engaged in domestic activities as economically inactive has been seriously called into question, and several attempts at an empirical analysis of work carried out in the home have already been made (Jelin, 1974; De Barbieri, 1978; Madeira, 1977). Production in the home includes both domestic work (of which only paid domestic service is counted as an economic activity) and work carried out by home workers (which should be taken into account in the census). The difference between them is that domestic work produces goods and services basically intended for home consumption, while production by home workers in marketed; however, the dividing line between them is not always clear. The role of domestic work is especially important in the working-class family, since it reduces the cost of reproduction of the labour force (Jelin, 1974; Singer, 1977).
6. The influence of these individual characteristics on total female participation in Mexico has been analysed by various authors (Leff, 1974; Trienda, 1974; Elú de Leñero, 1975; De Riz, 1975; Rendon and Pedrero, 1976).

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