

Intrafamily Division of Labor Within the Framework of Migratory Processes: Between Going and Coming

La división intrafamiliar del trabajo en el marco de los procesos migratorios: entre ires y venires

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes some implications of migratory processes in the family world. Specifically, it investigates the division of reproductive labor into families where at least one of the parents returned to Colombia from Spain. The biographical method is used to examine the family organizational system before emigration and after the return. The results show changes, permanence, and resistance to the traditional division of labor, even though staying in Spain seems to have introduced some balance, after returning, the findings point to the provisional nature of some of these arrangements. The consolidation of female co-suppliers is evident, while men do not end up assuming their role in domestic chores. It is concluded that slowly and without contradictions, progress is being made in the transition process towards more democratic relations, where factors beyond migration combine with it to encourage the emerging processes of change.

Keywords: 1. family, 2. division of labor, 3. return migration, 4. Spain, 5. Colombia.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza algunas implicaciones de los procesos migratorios en el mundo familiar. Específicamente, indaga por la división del trabajo reproductivo en familias donde al menos uno de los progenitores retornó a Colombia desde España. Se emplea el método biográfico para examinar el sistema organizativo familiar antes de la emigración y después del retorno. Los resultados evidencian cambios, permanencias y resistencias frente a la división tradicional del trabajo, y aun cuando la estadía en España parece haber introducido cierto equilibrio, tras el retorno los hallazgos apuntan a la provisionalidad de algunos de estos arreglos. Se evidencia la consolidación de la coproveduría femenina, mientras que, los varones no terminan por asumir su rol en las tareas domésticas. Se concluye que, lentamente y sin contradicciones, se avanza en el proceso de transición hacia relaciones más democráticas, en donde factores que van más allá de la migración se conjugan con ésta para alentar los incipientes procesos de cambio.

Palabras clave: 1. familia, 2. división del trabajo, 3. migración de retorno, 4. España, 5. Colombia.

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INTRODUCTION²

The extra-regional diversification of Latin American international migrations in the 1990s placed Colombia as one of the most dynamic countries in the context of such processes. However, changes in the tendencies of international migration after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC), on one side, pushed the returning flows toward the places of origin while on the other, fostered new migrations. With the context above as a background, the present work tackles the interrelation between family and migration, being its main goal to analyze the division of labor in familial groups, where at least one of the parents lived in Spain and returned to Colombia after the 2008 GFC. In this case, we will specifically focus on the returnees to the city of Pereira.

To begin with, it is important to point out that even if GFC gave the return greater visibility among the central body of Latin American studies, as a field for reflection, is still insufficiently explored (Castro, 2020a). Well now, in the context of migration, family as a unit of analysis has been, together with return, a neglected dimension (Gil & Pedone, 2014), partly due to the predominance of the stereotyped mentality that relegated the participation of women as precursors of their migration processes (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007). Moreover, a tendency to analytically address family by resorting to theories and concepts proper to migration studies is identified (Rivas, González, & Gómez, 2009). This unidirectional chain has made an effective dialogue between these fields of knowledge difficult; in Latin America, at least three sides are identified, which have engaged in outlining interconnections between international migration and family life (Ariza & de Oliveira, 2004).

One such reflection line is framed into the concept of family survival experiences that appeared in Latin America in the 1970s. In these regions, family is deemed an agent of migration processes, for it is supposed that demographic displacements are the answer “to restrictions imposed by the opportunity structure where they are inserted” (Ariza, 2002, p. 61). Another analytical line from where the family and international migration have been approached conceives the former as a variable that depends on migration processes; that is to say, family is seen as a subject who experiences the consequences of the journey; it particularly supposes that the structure, dynamics, and stability of households alter (Ariza & de Oliveira, 2004). A third standpoint, to a certain extent emergent, theoretically anchored to the transnational perspective, which puts forward a paradigm shift in the study of contemporary international migrations, as it presumes that communities, social agency, and individual experience are dimensions that interlace in the migration process (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

In recent decades, the transnational perspective has gained relevance in the study of family life, as it unveils the persistence of family interactions that are recreated and reinforced in the distance via various sorts of interchanges (material, affective, even moral obligations). As regards return,

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the transnational approach has enabled recognizing the heterogeneity, the multifaceted, multidirectional nature, and its dynamism as a social process (Castro, 2020a). Particularly, return is seen as an element transversal to the migration experience (Sayad, 2000) because it contributes to producing dual belongings, which entails constantly renegotiating gender identities in the family organization (Espinosa, 1998).

Well now, after GFC, an important volume of research works that tried to understand the consequences of the recession for Latin American immigrants in Spain. In this regard, studies such as the one by Herrera and Pérez (2015) reveal that various observed courses of action were mediated by “the families’ transnationality experiences during their migration project” (p. 238), in like manner, they were conditioned by sex and immigration status (Cerrutti & Maguid, 2016). For their part, Gil and Pedone (2014) empirically identified that the families unfolded various migration strategies to face the crisis, being selective and phased returns one of such. That is to say, families combine the return of some of the members and the permanence of those who were able to generate incomes.

By examining the return processes of the Colombian families, Echeverri (2014) found that these displacements were led by the youngest members followed by the men in the family, whereas women were more prone to remain in Spain due to their greater facilities to secure their subsistence. As regards reinsertion processes after returning, the literature accounts for a sinuous social readjustment, ambivalent, even tense, closely linked to the processes of labor reinsertion, mediated by the expectations weaved around family reunion (Castro, 2019). To such an extent, the empirical findings in the face of Colombian families’ transnational reinsertion processes evince certain affective severance that particularly expresses in parent-child relationships (Castro, 2020b). By and large, after meeting again, it is noticed a “process of role reconfiguration and rebuilding of family arrangements regarding care, authority and affection as it was taking place when the initial emigration began” (Mejía & Castro, 2012, p. 135).

More recent research finds that gender and generation shape the experiences of return and reinsertion of Latin American migrant families, and more often than not, further inequalities (Herrera, 2016; Pedone, Echeverri, & Gil, 2014). Due to the above, it is relevant to analyze what occurs with the sexual division of labor in Colombian families that experienced emigration and return processes, which are the goals of the present article.

METHODOLOGY

In methodological terms, the biographic method is utilized as from the beginning it has demonstrated a heuristic potential for the study of migrations (Velasco & Gianturco, 2012). This method allows analytically connecting geographic mobility and the vital experience of those who have been involved in migration processes (Velasco & Gianturco, 2012). Among its attributes, one finds the possibility of making more comprehensive approaches to the migrants’ stories of life and allows focusing on family relationships at once.

Specifically, crossed bibliographic tales are resorted to, a modality based on gathering information to later cross the narrations. With this, it is intended to relativize each testimony to reach some distance, intending to build a multicentered focus that promotes a holistic vision of the phenomenon under study. In this case, crossed bibliographic tales are relevant because they help analytically account for the way the migrants rebuild, express, and provide their family experiences with meaning, in a context of geographic displacements. To that extent, the narrations of the returned parents were the core of analysis, while the versions of other members of the household, particularly children, offered balance, objectivity, and solidity to the interpretation of narrations. Indeed, having the various standpoints of members of the same family allowed building a polyphonic structure from them.

Considering that family life is a dynamic reality and starting from the supposition that the capabilities, needs, obligations, and responsibilities of the families vary according to the vital calendar (Arraigada, 2004), the stages of family life are used as criteria to classify the enquired families.³ Even if criticisms to this model have been profuse (Ojeda, 1989), Turián (2001) considers that this procedure holds at least two virtues, firstly, “it offers an analytical contribution and a distinctive methodology to study the intergenerational cyclical processes, and from a transversal perspective, it allows visualizing family as a dynamical system” (p. 49).

Choosing Spain as a destination has to do with its consolidation as one of the main destinations for Colombian migration by the end of the 20th century and the early 21st (Aparicio, 2006). In general, the background of Colombian emigration to Spain gives an account of the prevalence of the female component centered on economically active ages, being distinguishable the degree of migration regularization (Cerrutti et al., 2011). Well now, the 2008 crisis brought about changes in the migration tendencies as it redefined the intensity of the flows and stimulated a certain increase in returns, particularly men from this collective (Cerruti & Maguid, 2016). Moreover, it was decided to study the return to the city of Pereira, since emigrants from this area had Spain as the main destination (García, 2007).

The empirical material upon which this analysis is supported corresponds to 35 interviews (returnees and non-migrant) held in 2015 with resident families in the city of Pereira, Colombia. There were 17 interviews with women and seven men, aged between 32 and 66 years; likewise, 12 children of these migrants, between 9 and 37 years, were also interviewed. It is worth emphasizing that out of the 18 families which partook in the study, in 12 all the household members had returned.

Even if in each family at least one of the returnee parents were interviewed so as to complement and contrast the narrations, it was intended to include the narration of one of the children, and as much as possible, it was sought to have testimonies from other household members who had not migrated (see Table 1). In the families where it was not possible to interview at least two members,

³ Although the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) proposes the age of the mother and the youngest child as criteria for the stages of life, in this case only the age of the youngest child was considered.

it was intended that the respondent gave an account of their perception regarding other members of the domestic unit. Procedurally, each family's participants were interviewed separately, after the parents' due authorization, if the respondent was underage.

One of the criteria to select the families was that the emigration period had been longer than three years and that the residence time in Colombia after returning was longer than a year. To reach the respondents, various accesses were utilized (governmental, nongovernmental, and key respondents). Once the family was reached, the snowball technique was used for meeting another, and this with the following and so on. In this way, a sample that comprised 18 families was produced.

A semi-structured interview format was followed; it contained three modules that tried to enquire on premigration, migration, and return. In each module, questions regarding the inter-family labor distribution were included (among other topics). As regards the selection of bibliographic stories that were incorporated in the analysis, it was considered that the narrations fitted the objectives of the present article and represented the voices of men and women in each stage of the family cycle.

In operational terms, the eighteen families were classified according to the age of the youngest child at the moment of the interview, as a result, the family units were grouped in three phases: early-stage (children under 12); in consolidation (underage children between 12 and 18 years); and advanced stage (youngest child older than 19 years).

Table 1. Classification of Returning Families According to the Family Life Cycle

Early phase (Six Families)		Stages of the family life cycle Consolidated phase (eight families)		Advanced phase (four families)	
Migration between 6 and 14 years Time after returning between 1 and 3 years		Migration between 2 and 14 years Time after returning between 1 and 5 years		Migration between 10 and 20 years Time after returning between 2 and 3 years	
Parents	Children's ages	Parents	Children's ages	Parents	Children's ages
1 Pilar (36)* and Fabio (44)	2, 6 and 12 years	7 Liliana (53) and Alonso (62)	17 years	15 Beatriz (53) and Adrián (55)	21, 25 and 29 years
2 Samanta (34) and César (45)	7, 8 and 13 years	8 Ana (36) and Jaime (44)	14 years	16 Nidia (55)	29 and 31 years
3 Camila (33) and Jorge (34)	1 and 10 years	9 Consuelo (32) and Mauricio (35)	14 years	17 Martha (58) and Marcos (46)	<u>23</u> years
4 Sara (37) and Emiliano (44)	9 and 20 years	10 Valeria (45) and Álvaro (41)	13 and 14 years	18 Miriam (66)	<u>37</u> years
5 Natalia (42) and Mateo (45)	8 years	11 Elena (36) and Bernardo (39)	12 and 18 years		
6 Mirna (37)	7 years	12 Rebeca (50)** and Javier (50)	<u>14</u> , 25 and 28 years		
		13 Frida (37)	15, 18 y <u>20</u> years		
		14 Diana (37)	18 and 20 years		

* The names and ages in bold correspond to the interviewed family members

** The underlined names and ages correspond to non-migrants interviewed in the sample.

Source: Own elaboration based on the empirical information gathered. All the names are pseudonyms.

Some Analytical and Conceptual Refinements

The progressive incorporation of a gender perspective into the field of migration studies contributed to visualizing new dynamics and interaction styles that trigger migration processes in the families, which allows contesting the places and responsibilities traditionally assigned to men and women in the households (Pedone & Gil, 2016). Particularly, the migration of women as pioneers of migration projects paved the way for questions related to “ideological breaks produced around the traditional role assigned to women as guarantors of the care of children, husbands and the elderly” (Gil & Pedone, 2014, p. 8). In parallel, the rejection of the idealization of family relationships favored the comprehension of the family as a social organization crossed by various power and authority hierarchies based on gender (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007).

A frequent debate in migration studies revolves around whether “migration helps reorient and questions the normative understanding of gender roles and ideologies by altering the traditional roles, labor divisions and other significant categories of gender and generational construction” (Sørensen, 2008, p. 269). In this regard, evidence is not concluding (González, 2010); according to Gregorio (2010) “the conclusions of the works are as dissimilar as the contexts where the researches were carried out” (p. 56). In point of fact, some studies show that occasionally migrations only stimulate processes that were ongoing before traveling (Morokvasic, 1984).

Rosas (2014) finds that the effects of relationships and gender status are neither homogeneous nor unidirectional. Even so, studies on Iberian-American migrations have allowed glimpsing the way migration implies experiences that are different for women and men, at once, it stimulates the reorganization of supportive and care networks and makes room for new forms of daily family organization and “novel conceptions of maternity and paternity” (Echeverri, 2013, p. 10). Well now, understanding that the world of family is crossed by power relations that refer to gender positions, which represent a system of inequalities that shapes transnational family relationships. It is relevant to include a gender perspective in this study, more so, when the question regarding if migration processes alter the traditional role division or strengthen the asymmetries present in family life persist.

In demographic studies in Latin America, domestic reproduction has been one of the most consistently analyzed dimensions. In the present study, domestic reproduction is understood as the articulation of the productive and reproductive spheres as both points at the reposition and maintenance of the labor force. In this sense, the former refers to the set of reproductive tasks carried out regularly in the family; while the latter, to activities aimed at the production system (García & de Oliveira, 2014). In this way, it is recognized that domestic reproduction is characterized by an indissoluble and mutually influencing relationship between the productive and reproductive spheres.

In recent decades, domestic reproduction has been approached from an integral vision of the concept of labor, articulating domestic and extra-domestic activities. Results from research works related to this dimension concur in revealing that the intrafamily world is a space characterized by

configuring interdependence and uneven distribution of power; situations that essentially express in the unequal labor division in the family (de Oliveira, 2007), since there is dissimilar participation of the family members in both spheres. Therefore, we start from the supposition that domestic reproduction is a unbalance in individual responsibilities; arrangements that respond to differentiation axes such as sex and age, which define the positions and hierarchies of the family members (García & de Oliveira, 2014). These inequalities indubitably represent “uneven loads and different ways of accessing resources in which women and children, the youngest and the oldest take the weakest positions” (González de la Rocha, 2006, p. 76).

As an analytical dimension, domestic reproduction refers in this approach to the way productive and reproductive work takes place in the researched groups. That is to say, the organizational forms of the families during the return are analyzed in relation to the total workload. The above is carried out by means of two indissoluble dimensions in the reproductive sphere: domestic and extra-domestic work. Particularly, the analysis of extra-domestic work intends to find out the organizational patterns of the family economy in relation to the members who participate in production, commerce, or services, with which they try to obtain resources to ensure the family’s material sustenance.

The spheres taken as indicators of this dimension for the purposes of this study are a) continuity and discontinuity in extra-domestic participation of the family members at working ages; b) sort of labor (salaried, self-employed, a nonremunerated relative; inside or outside the household); c) sources of income (wages, rents, remittances, subsidies, among others); d) the economic contributions to the household budget and resource management.

As for domestic work, it comprises all the actions that need to be carried out to meet the basic daily needs in favor of the family’s wellbeing. It is worth underscoring that even if these activities are indispensable for the reproduction of the whole group, women are given this responsibility traditionally, thereby it is work that exhibits persistent segregation in the family core. Well now, among the set of activities encompassed in this form of work special attention is paid to the intervention of the family members in relation to a) household services (preparing food, cleaning the house, washing and ironing clothes); b) supportive services (paperwork, shopping, transport, and household repairs); c) childcare. Likewise, as much as possible, it is sought to identify the perceptions the family members express about these arrangements and their involvement.

GOING TO AND FRO ALONG THE PATH OF REPRODUCTION

... he used to cook and wash, and here he doesn't do a thing.

(Sara, 37-year-old returnee, personal communication, September 22, 2015)

Families at an Early Phase

This group comprises six families; all these families are biparental nuclear households that remained undivided during their stay in Spain; save one family, in which case the marital dissolution took place after moving to Colombia, the rest of them keep the same structure after

returning. For only one domestic unit, whose stay abroad was six years, for the others, it was longer than a decade. Their return, though longer than twelve months, in no case surpasses three years. Out of the six families, four belong to the mid-high class, the other two, to the mid-low class. The highest schooling of the heads is university (graduate and undergraduate), while for the latter, only secondary (complete).

For five of these families, the marital union and the birth of children occurred in Spain; in these cases, the migration was not decided as a family project: for half of these groups, their migration was decided as an unmarried couple, in this way, the marital union was the result of establishing in the destination. Well now, living in Spain as a couple did not discourage these women's propensity to participate in productive activities, for in all of the cases there is continuity in the female labor trajectories.

Particularly, the women in these families went from working in offices in Colombia to being housemaids in Spain; however, three of them were later hired in lodging and trade. The above comes to show that despite the increasing enrolment of women into the labor market, the employment opportunities for certain groups of women are still tied to noticeably feminized work posts, even in the Spanish context (Gonzálvez, Medina, & Tapia, 2009). For its part, the husbands' labor status was more heterogeneous before migration, whereas in the recipient country, they were mainly hired in construction.

As regards incomes from their labor activities in Spain, both spouses destined their own for the economic support of the household, in this way, women took up the role of co-breadwinners and participated equally in the management of resources. This scenario concurs with some transformations framed in long-lasting processes in some Latin American countries such as Mexico, Argentina, and even Colombia, where there are indications—subtle and not free from contradictions— of a gradual displacement of men as the only breadwinners; in this way, it is presently understood that it is a task shared by the parents (Puyana, Micolta, & Jiménez, 2013). In this respect, research works focusing on Colombian transnational families that have migrated to Spain from the city of Pereira also identified the preponderance of women as co-providers by means of economic activities performed inside and outside the households (Tapia, Gonzálvez-Torralbo, & Rodríguez-Pizarro, 2009).

In all of the cases, the continuity in the labor trajectories of these women was broken by the arrival of children; that is to say, each birth entailed the temporary interruption of their labor trajectories. It is noticeable that their labor reinsertion abroad was conditioned by the possibility of making extra-domestic labor and childcare compatible; at least it was so for half of these families. From this standpoint, the strategies women deployed to balance family and labor life make it clear that the responsibility to make arrangements to care for their children was exclusively theirs; while for their part, the men in these families did not feel compelled to perform any activity to conciliate these two spheres. The narrations of the families enquired refer to gender stereotypes that deem childcare inherent to women (Micolta, Escobar, & Maldonado, 2009).

My wife had her own schedule because she cleaned houses in several places, then she made the time to pick up the girl, come to have lunch, and if on some days she had complications, she took the girl to work (Jorge, 34 years, personal communication, October 22, 2015).

The way the contradictions between the productive and reproductive spheres were solved in these families did not necessarily imply a severance, since the strategies women deployed to obtain resources also belong to the world of labor (Tapia et al., 2009). The arrival of a second child invariably suspended the continuity of the mothers' extra-domestic activities; in fact, in one of these cases, it led the mother to permanently retire from any productive activity during the rest of the stay. In this family, this withdrawal was possible due to the husband's labor stability and income, which allowed covering the material necessities of the household. Retiring from economic activities was narrated by the mother as a couple of agreement; this traditional gender arrangement, in which the mandate of male economic provision is fulfilled, allows glimpsing that at least in this family, there was neither transformation in the sexual division of labor nor gender relationships over the stay abroad.

While the mothers in this stage interrupted their professional careers abroad—most of them temporarily—because of tasks related to care, some men experienced so due to the 2008 GFC. However, employment insurance enabled them to continue contributing to support the household together with their wives, who were less affected by the economic-labor decline of the country. Well now, except for one family, in which none of the parents managed to fully incorporate to labor activities after returning, the rest of the households, returning to Colombia favored the labor linking of men who had experienced long unemployment periods in Spain.

Conversely, women experienced a break in their extra-domestic labor activities. This sex-differenced labor insertion for returned migrants of the families under study evinces the gaps in employment opportunities for men and women in Colombia. According to Sabogal (2012), in the last two decades, unemployment rates for women have been around 5% points higher than for men. Something similar is noticed in regional differences, particularly, Pereira persistently has high unemployment rates (Arango, 2011).

It must be underscored that except for two cases, there was a relative commitment of the husbands to reproductive activities before returning, in the rest of the families, their poor participation in house chores and childcare was the norm. As a matter of fact, in three of these families, regardless of the place of residence men's contribution in this regard has been virtually inexistent. In the households where the most male participation is identified, the contributions of men coincide with their unemployment periods in Spain and Colombia alike; in this way, once men reenter the labor market, they are seemingly relieved from the household responsibilities they took up. The above allows noticing the contingent nature where domestic work is taken by the men under study.

Let's say, he's going to make lunch or breakfast for me, no, not anymore, there he was lovely, he cooked there [...] and here as he's working already, he doesn't do a thing. I tell him that I left my husband in Spain, here I'm with another man (Sara, 37 years, personal communication, September 22, 2015).

In this sense, Tapia et al., (2009) identified resistances and contradictions in the way fathers of Colombian transnational families contribute to the domestic sphere. Puyana (2003) found that men in Colombia do not accept their role in household activities, while women properly assume their role of providers.

The previously described scenario reveals that the patterns of productive and reproductive labor of the families in the early stage exhibit some rearrangements after returning, as a certain inflection is observed in the labor careers of some women, at once it favored the reinsertion of some men of the studied families into the labor market; this situation entailed a heavier domestic load for women, either because of the interruption of their productive activities or the poor commitment of their husbands to household responsibilities.

Certainly, in these families, the consolidation of women as breadwinners has meant a certain loss of obligations for the fathers and an overload of functions for mothers, as evinced in other research works (González et al., 2009).

The results show that male contribution to house chores during and after migration characterizes by being circumstantial (associated with male unemployment), it has even been non-existent for some families. This result concurs with Gregorio's (1998) findings; this author, in the context of transnational domestic groups, discovered that in the face of economic need, the roles may become flexible, though this does not necessarily imply a break in the power relations between genders

Families in Consolidation Phase

This group is more heterogeneous than the previous; not only does it comprise biparental households, but also female single parents. Plus, it characterizes because most of the households modified their structure after migrating, at once, out of new re-emigration processes started after returning, the dispersion of two households in this group took place. As a set, for the eight families in this group, the migration lasted between three and fourteen years, while the return varies between one and five years. Moreover, four households belong to the low class, two to mid-low, and the other two mid-high classes.

Considering the family life cycle this group is at, children are between 12 and 18 years of age, a situation that would imply a certain simplicity to link to extra-domestic activities by both parents, nevertheless, in two of the five biparental households, the mothers consider that childcare is their main responsibility; this way, after returning they exclusively engaged in reproductive work, whereas their husbands, after a frustrated labor reinsertion, look at re-emigration as the way to ensure the economic sustenance of the household. In both cases, the source of income is remittances and despite mothers serving as everyday managers of the resources, the migrants have

the last word as regards purchases, expenditures, or important investments. It is worth distinguishing that in these two specific families, regardless of the place of residence, the participation in extra-domestic work has been essentially masculine, while domestic tasks have been the responsibility of women, as one of them admits: "... from the beginning it has been clear that he is the one in charge of working while I take care of the house."

At once, in these two families, the least participation of the offspring is noticed in house chores; such contributions are seen by the mothers as help, not an obligation, for they place their children's schooling as a priority, supported in the idea of the mother as an unconditional woman willing to do what it takes for her children. In this sense, 45-year-old Valeria, mother of two daughters, 13 and 14, believes that her main function is to care for her children and take care of her home.

I have always thought that if one has children is to raise them and I'm very concerned about leaving the girls alone... now as adolescents you cannot leave them alone and I'm not doing that (Valeria, 45 years, personal communication, November 7, 2015).

The above allows noticing a conception of the traditional gender roles and practices, where the life projects revolve around childcare (Morad, Rodríguez, & Bonilla, 2013; Tapia, et al., 2009). In line with this, Gregorio (2010) states that beyond possible gender negotiations that take place in the transnational space, migrant women still give priority to their role as mothers. Unlike the two families previously described, in the other biparental households in this stage (three), stressed extra-domestic participation of both spouses is identified. In point of fact, it is noticed that women have a greater attachment and valorization of productive work. Indeed, the labor career of these mothers has been very stable, and the return did not interrupt their labor trajectories. The above translates as the prevalence of a model of shared provision, concurring with the observations for early-phase families.

The active intervention of mothers in extra-domestic full-time work outside the residence has not necessarily meant a double load for them, though neither has it relieved from the responsibility of their households as a whole. In fact, save for one case, an equal distribution of these tasks between the spouses is not noticed, as the performance of household tasks is ensured via family networks (other women), service personnel, and to a lesser extent, aided by adolescent children; in this way, generally, the husbands' actuation in these activities is rather limited. For this subset, the participation of adolescent children in the domestic sphere is also interpreted by the parents as help, which is no obligation in any case.

The situation is different for the single mothers in this family life cycle (three), for these are households in which the marital dissolution occurred during migration, and the mothers had to head them and take up all the economic responsibilities of the households after the fathers' unfulfillment. In this vein, recent studies have identified that after the separation some fathers "do not manage to establish a difference between their place as spouses and the role of fathers, which entails distancing and weakening of the link" (Sánchez, López-Montaña, & Palacio, 2013, p.166), to the extent that they also distance from their children not only economically, but also regarding affection and care.

For women, this situation means an overload in raising and educating the children, which becomes a sentiment of heavier responsibility (Tapia et al., 2009): “they got divorced (my parents) and then my dad started to relax and left all the responsibility to my mom” (Dora, 20 years, personal communication, November 14, 2015).

Well now, after returning, these former migrants live with their mothers, who were in charge of the offspring during their absence. These families belong to popular sectors, which possibly explains the limited availability of economic resources they experience, plus, in the three cases, extra-domestic activities are carried out in the household (hairdressing, piecework).

Moreover, in these families, mothers are the main providers and their participation in productive activities is less uninterrupted and more precarious; surely, out of economic necessity, for despite they occasionally receiving some economic support from their children, this is insufficient to afford the household expenses. This subset has in common that the older children have had to give up on their schooling expectations due to lack of money and had to start working early in their lives. Albeit the jobs these youths have had are distinguishable for their precariousness and instability owing to factors such as age, lack of working experience, and qualifications.

The concern produced in the children by the mothers’ economic overload does not necessarily become a higher commitment to doing housework; such situation is reinforced by the mothers themselves, for whom, as identified in the households in this category, the main obligation of the children is a good performance at academic activities. Certain resignation is noticed in the mothers before the double shift they take up.

[my daughter] Dora helps me a lot, but now in the situation, she is [pregnant] there’s little she can do, the little one she always wants to help and aid me in everything, but she can’t because she is studying... and it’s very difficult that the other daughter does something... then, well, it is almost always me, I do everything (Frida, 37 years, personal communication, November 14, 2015)

To sum up, the families in the consolidation phase of this study are characterized by a more heterogeneous organization as regards the participation of the members in generating incomes to support the household. As in the early stage, attention to household tasks and childcare are responsibilities of the mothers. Not only do these families lack equitable gender distribution of domestic tasks, but also take place at the generational level, as the children have a longer intervention in this phase, their contribution is interpreted by their mothers in particular as a help, not a duty.

In single-parent families, mothers are the breadwinners and also do the housework, and despite some children trying to contribute to material support, others do not have the same disposition for housework. In these cases, besides, the socioeconomic belonging seems to limit the opportunities and resources the members can access during the return. To sum up, in these family units, the organization patterns of reproductive work are relatively stable, despite migrations, that is to say, no substantial transformations in the sexual division of labor and gender relationships are

identified; this is the form they took in the premigration stage and over the stay in Spain are considered.

Families in Advanced Phase

This group characterizes because all the children are older than 19. It comprises four families: two biparental, the other single-parental with a female head. With no exception these households experienced family dispersion processes after the emigration of the parents, in one of the cases, emigration was performed by both parents, in another case, only the father; while in the other two, the mothers. Exposition to migration was for about a decade and the return varies between two and three years. Families in the advanced phase come from mid and low classes, which concurs with their schooling level, which invariably are below a university degree.

In these families, labor discontinuity after returning has been more stressed for men and women, maybe associated with the age and low qualification of the returnees in this phase (older than 45 years). In these cases, the returnees' lack of savings or incomes produced an imbalance in the model of shared provision which the two single-parent households had during migration. This situation is illustrated by means of the family of Martha and Marcos; he has not found a steady job three years after returning, hence, providing has become his wife's task, whose income is her pension; and despite their only child is linked to the labor market, he does not economically contribute to support the household, and justifies the "inactivity" of his father:

I think that at once my father wants to work and doesn't, the way I see it, I think he worked a lot and very hard there, I don't see anything wrong if he doesn't work (Ricardo, 23 years, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

The father acknowledges that his return has meant a heavier economic pressure for his wife, though he considers that as long as he received a wage, he was loyal to his family, which allows him to cope with his unemployment relatively easily.

[...] sure, one feels bad because I have worked all my life and have supported the house, I have fulfilled this duty. On one side, I feel bad, not because I'm *machista*, but because she's earning everything, but I'm also grateful that there is food on the table [...]. (Marcos, 46 years, personal communication, November 30, 2015).

Despite her husband's return has meant a heavy economic burden for Martha, she admits that at the times Marcos has had a job, she is the one that manages the money he earns:

[...] let's say he is working, he gives me his card, and then he tells me I'll go buy this, give some money... I don't see that he leaves a single peso for him [...]. (Martha, 58 years, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

As regards the contribution of the members of this family to domestic work, the imbalance is much greater, and even after the return, Martha identifies an involution regarding the activities her husband carried out before migrating, which Marcos justifies saying that it is because they have service personnel to support Martha.

The absence of economic noticeability of the returnees has given rise to certain demands in the domestic sphere, that is to say, they are expected to participate more in these activities. However, these requirements seem to substantiate the traditional valuing of family roles and duties, marked by stereotyped gender constructions. The above is noticed in Miriam's family, where her daughter, Perla, affords all the household's expenses and expects her returned mother to take up the domestic housework in compensation: "... she has to do the cooking, that for Colombian women is not being a maid, but a mother! Being a mom is to do the washing and caring" (Perla, 40 years, personal communication, November 26, 2015). However, Miriam considers that even if she does not contribute with money to support the household, the house they live in is hers and her daughter does not pay rent; this way, more than a dependence relationship, it poses certain economic complementariness, which seemingly her daughter does not recognize.

[...] she supports the house ... but she doesn't have to pay rent here, she pays the services and management... she feels I'm abusing her, but I have to take care of her son (grandson) half of the time, see that he has to something to eat [...]. (Miriam, 66 years, personal communication, November 26, 2015).

As noticed in families in the early and consolidation phases, when abroad both spouses shared domestic responsibilities in a more or less balanced manner, though upon returning it is noticed that men relieve themselves from these duties.

[...] we worked the same if he arrived first, he cooked, he did the dishes and the washing, he did stuff, if he was at home while I was at work, we shared housework... here, it is not so, work is solely for myself, that's what I don't agree with because he was an utterly different person there [...] (Beatriz, 53 years, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

Each family experience is particular, it comes from agreements and forms of coexistence that have been configured over their individual and family lives, before, during, and after migrating (Sánchez et al., 2013). In these families, the women's contesting of the ways other members participate in domestic work, adding to the relative relaxation of some men regarding their breadwinner's role denote some tensions between traditional gender practices and the conception of their roles, which may be an indication of the reconfiguration of perceptions in the face of family duties, reasserting a more modern vision of social and gender relationships, a situation that is paradoxically observed in families in the most advanced phase of the family life cycle. As a hypothesis, it is plausible to think that the absence of children at young ages, and thereby lighter pressure to raise, socialize and provide for them, linked to the experience of migration for more than a decade, have stimulated to some extent, resistance processes in the face of the traditional role division.

CONCLUSIONS

Colombia, as the rest of Latin American countries, has lived processes of modernization and modernity that stimulate transformations that in one way or another have had repercussions for the family groups (Puyana et al., 2013). In this sense, the country has experienced drastic changes as regards the growing incorporation of women into labor markets, a tendency that is noticed in the

universe of the enquired families. Nevertheless, as documented in other research works and contexts, these changes are not in line with a greater male intervention in domestic work, much less are proportionate to the multiplication of loads women have had because of their progressive participation in extra-domestic work.

In this way, the empirical findings as regards the organization of reproductive work in these families make it evident that domestic tasks are the sphere where the most persistent asymmetries are identified; being gender position and age the criteria that give the assignation of workloads in these households, where women are in charge of managing, doing or helping in housework and childcare, whereas the contribution of men and children in these activities are conceived as *collaboration*, which contrasts with the appropriateness mother women have taken their co-provider roles.

This scenario allows deducing that in these family groups a division of reproductive work based on traditional gender roles still prevails. Even so, the suppositions that attribute migration a certain influence in the reconfiguration of gender relations may find partial support in the results presented here; however, given the reversible nature of some of these arrangements around reproductive life, it is necessary to underscore that stable changes are not envisioned, this way, it is not possible to add conclusive evidence to support the liberating effect of migration on the situation of inequality of women in the family sphere.

It is worth mentioning that even if migrations enable transformations in gender relationships, for women in the early and consolidation phases in this study, beyond the possible gender negotiations, maternity still holds a central place. Surely, the preponderance they give their roles of mothers and wives is anchored to the patriarchal culture that has “naturalized the family bases as a feminine issue and the reason for being a woman; her identity is in the others, her time is for others” (Sánchez et al, 2013, p.155), this representation stresses because there are children to raise at both stages. Well now, the questioning made by women in the advanced state to the tasks associated with their role of mothers and wives may be an indication of the advancement in the transition process toward more democratic relationships, an ongoing tendency in Colombian society (Puyana, 2003).

Translation: Luis Cejudo Espinosa.

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