

# REFLECTIONSON LABORDYNAMICSIN RELATION TO THE LABOR MARKET

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## **Abstract**

The recognition that the insertion employment of people is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the familiar unit, of which they form a part, has reinforced the interest of this study to achieve an analysis of the family job in small establishments as a way of advancing the discussion of the special features of the link work – family in specific areas of the labour activity.

Based on the existence of a relationship between the work and family environment, the document proposed to deepen the various ways job participation occurs within the family members in the small Mexican establishments, seeking to know the participation characteristics and analyse the relationship between the familiar unit and the economic unit.

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**Keywords:** Work, family, small establishments, Mexico

## **Introduction**

The recognition that the insertion employment of people is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the familiar unit, of which they form a part, reinforces the interest of this study to achieve an analysis of the family job in small establishments as a way of advancing the discussion of the special features of the link work – family in specific areas of the labour activity.

The approach of these dimensions is considered relevant for the problem construction, and some concerns are considered of fundamental importance in starting the process. However, various questions which arises during the process include: Is the family labour sufficient to ensure the reproduction?, In what sense does it make sure?, What do you want to enquire about the connection between the family and the work areas? , What economic aspects are considered: market linkages with other enterprises, or productivity?, What social aspects are considered to be of interest: sexual

division work, differentiated roles in running the business, home, grade, or schooling?, Which are the cultural aspects to be considered to emphasize the distribution of tasks between men and women, and what are the role of the mother, father and children?

Based on the existence of a relationship between the work and family environment, the document proposed to deepen various ways job participation occurs in the family members in the small Mexican establishments, seeking to know the participation characteristics and analyse the relationship between the familiar unit and the economic unit.

The document organizes this discussion around the microbusiness and link work – family considering different perspectives of the phenomenon of the labour participation in small establishments. Initially, this was done from a contextual framework that allows the identification of the object of study and differentiating it from other concepts, while presenting a general view of the Mexican labour market. Thus, the conceptual framework does not pretend to be something else, than a glance at the actual problems that the job market and workers in Mexico have, without either conceptually or methodologically covering the whole phenomenon, but simply pretending to have a better comprehension of it.

### **Some data of the dynamic and trends of the job market.**

It is important to begin by pointing out that the job changes in recent decades in Mexico, have been of real importance. Thus, the evolution of the labour job force has been influenced by the transformations of various characters which are political, economic and social.

In terms of work market, their relationships have changed from two perspectives. On one hand, the demand of the job force became insufficient to generate a productive and well paid labour, and the supply-side dynamics of the labour market was concentrated on the population with higher skill levels, thereby increasing the polarization of the labour market.

In the background of these changes, some authors such as Cook (1999) also provide a distinctive feature of the Latin American region; the fact that the labour reforms often occurs after the economic reforms. Specifically, in the case of the work of Rendon and Salas (1996), they identified a number of major changes from the eighties which are: 1) the loss of the relative ability of the manufacturing sector to create new jobs, 2) the halting creation of wage labour, 3) the growth of small scale economic activities, 3) the growing outsourcing of work (being also an inherent heterogeneous inside features) and 5) the increased female labour force (Standing, 1999) along with the process has increased casualization (Mancini, 2003).

However, Garcia in 1999 pointed that the Mexican labour force grew considerably; from 20 million in 1980 to almost 40 million in 2000. This growth is mainly attributed to the increase in the working age population and the rate at which women becomes part of the workforce. A breakdown of the growth that has taken the labour force in Mexico can be seen in the Table 1. Thus, the data indicates a continuous and constant increase in the workforce from 1990 to 2010.

**Table 1.** The total workforce in Mexico 1990 - 2010

Year	Total workforce (Thousands of people)
1990	n/d
1991	31,229
1992	32,653
1993	33,652
1994	34,944
1995	35,559
1996	36,581
1997	38,335
1998	39,507
1999	39,751
2000	39,634
2005	
2010	

Source: Economic Information Base, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI)

Thinking about what happened to the job market, it can be said that the most important periods have been the economic crisis of the last two decades of the twentieth century, which occurred in 1982, 1986 and the end of 1994. Thus, this has led to an increasing deterioration in the living conditions of a large part of the population (Jusidman and Eternod, 1994). This is connected to jobs scarcity which allow workers to be employed in dignity conditions.<sup>100</sup><sup>101</sup>

In a certain sense, the importance of the unwaged work (self-employed and unpaid family workers) has been used as an indirect indicator of the magnitude of this problem. Hence, it states that in the absence of unemployment insurance, “...the growing job market imbalance occurs, rather than increases in open unemployment, in the proliferation of

<sup>100</sup> About several studies and authors have pointed out that both the crisis of the eighties, and the consequent restructuring of production processes, involved the problems intensification such as the insufficient generation of productive and remunerative works (Observe Garcia, 1999, Rendon and Salas, 2000, Garcia and Oliveira, 2003, Rendon, 2004)

<sup>101</sup> The National Survey Microbusiness (ENAMIN) stated that the employed worker is a person who in his occupation, trade, business or workshop, works alone or in association with his family members without hiring paid workers (ENAMIN; INEGI, STyPS).

*microbusiness sole proprietorships and family, and in the deterioration of the work conditions” (Rendon, 2004:53).*

Since the end of the eighties, Garcia (1989) particularized that the unwaged work in the urban economy had received an ever increasing attention.

Before the crisis of the eighties, the unwaged work in the urban economy was seen to be on a declining trend. It was supposed that the least skilled free workers would disappear, as the capitalist system production expand in the country. Occur far from that, the self and an unwaged worker had grown significantly, and was kept parallel to the crisis and economic restructuring of the country.

In the case of the less developed regions, it is possible that the existence of some non-wage sectors is more closely linked to the own nature of capitalist expansion in the Latin American economies. The greatest concentration of the population in these areas also contributes to proliferate these self-workers. In less dynamic urban areas, it can be assumed that the nature of the prevailing unwaged sectors is more connected with subsistence work in small production units, with frequent family participation.

The distinction between salaried and none-salaried works is not merely arbitrary, but is related to both the type of relationships that each worker has with his workstation; and also allows to account for the so called labour heterogeneity. In addition, *“Recent studies has shown that self-activities should not be considered a priori as synonymous with the deterioration of working conditions. It happens that, in contexts of strong contraction of wage levels, the self-workers can get to receive higher incomes than salaried workers”* (Pacheco, 2004).

### **A Relationship Approach to Production – Reproduction**

This research is based heavily on the axes of linkage production and reproduction. The study made by Chayanov (1981) about the peasant economy is considered a basic starting point, because it contains the elements of interest in the appreciation of the relationship between work-family.

Chayanov’s proposed a heuristic approach that somehow constitutes an ideal type of analysis. Thus, this was understood as the study develops and was based on the peasant organization in rural areas, and in situations where urban areas of economy does not exist. The rural areas becomes then a sort of ideal type that enables the analysis of the urban context (context in which the research takes place) from Chayanov’s study

For this author, the peasant economy cannot be explained with the judgment of the capitalist business, because it does not work with other workers who are not part of the family (Chayanov, 1981).

Another important concept for the peasant economies analysis according to Chayanov, is what is called work – consumption balance, which indicates the effort to be performed for a given production, to meet the consumption of a particular welfare. According to this mechanism work – consumption balance, the peasantry operates marginally in the profits that can give production, since it is not necessary to obtain a surplus of his production that would work more for less consumption in a short term. However, the peasant stops working until he has an urgent need to obtain resources to have a good satisfaction “(...) *The peasant family is a family that does not hire outside labour force, which has a certain amount of available land, their own production means and are sometimes forced to use part of their workforce in non-agricultural rural jobs*” (Chayanov, 1974:54).

This unit of analysis selected by Chayanov (Russian peasants) on the notion of peasant economy is derived as a special form of organization of production. The peasant economy would lock the agricultural sector where the productive process takes place in family type units, having the objective of ensuring the reproduction of their living and working conditions; that is to say, the reproduction of the producers and of the same production unit (Chayanov, 1981).

In other words, the exploitation must generate the necessary means to ensure the biological support of the family members and the satisfaction of other needs, which are culturally and historically determined, as well should provide the means to replace the benefits consumed in the performing production cycle (Chayanov, 1981).

The peasant production management, pursues the objectives described based on “(...) a different and individual rationality that characterizes the managerial agricultural”. As stated by Chayanov, the economic activity of the peasant family is governed by the balance between its members and the job self-exploitation: “*The worker’s production in the domestic exploitation will stop at this natural point balance, because any increase in the wastage workforce will prove subjectively disadvantageous. Any domestic unit of agrarian exploitation has a natural limit to their production, which is determined by the mix between intensity of annual work family and the satisfactions of their needs*” (Chayanov, 1981:23).

In the theoretical pattern of Chayanov’s economic status, it is visible that the job remuneration is equivalent to the annual entry available to the family after deducting expenses. There are no wages attributable to the family work, and also, there are no gain (unsearchable, since the level of the activity is regulated by the satisfaction of the family needs), no rent (in the

capitalist sense). The benefit of the exploitation is obtained through work – consumption balance, established by the “basic economic” balance between the hardships and the satisfaction of needs. Furthermore, the crude product of the unit formed by the amount of all annual incomes, such as agricultural and extra agricultural; discounting the exploitation costs and capital renewal; and the crude product is obtained. This will be recognized as satisfactory or not by the subjective assessment of their own fatigues of the work that each peasant family performs (Chayanov, 1981).

Therefore, it is necessary to take into account that the domestic reproduction units, in addition to meeting the physical and psychological strain of its members as individuals, also encompasses generational replacement and should refer to the reconstitution of all its capabilities. It involves elements that exceed the replenishments of its members and also the recreation of the everyday practices through individual ideological, cultural, emotions and relationships of authority and which might also be between genders and generations elements. The undertaken activities in the domestic sphere have a dual function, daily maintenance and transmission from one generation to another underlying the ideological aspect of basic social distances (Oliveira and Salles, 1989).

The production – reproduction relationship is one of the axles of analysis presented in this research. These axles frame the analysis unit; the family and the microenterprise, the family unity and the work of this unit in small establishment. Therefore, the next step in the discussion is to understand how the work and the family frame links in the theoretical discussion.

### **Family and Work: The Linkage of both Dimensions**

The traditional unit in the study of the labour market has historically been the people. However, in the context of the changes and transformations that the labour dynamic has suffered over the decades, the importance of involving the people in their family groups as analytical units has been considered more clearly.

This is the reason the interest is to discuss the role of work as a central element of the family life, considering that the study of the participation in the economic activity is enriched when the people is considered in the context of their domestic units. (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000).

Furthermore, the family and the relationship that are structured have influenced and is continuously influencing the social changes in different ways that enable the generation of new forms of organization of family and domestic gap (Lopez, Salles and Tuiran, 2001).

The households, while social relations operate on the demand for goods and services, the workforce reproduction and the relationships in everyday life, have not been left out of these changes and out of the process of economic restructuring; and neither was the recession crisis sustained years ago in Mexico. In fact, manifold evidences<sup>1</sup> indicate that the effects of the macroeconomic context on this particular area have generated an important component of social change in recent years.

Consequently, it was known that the changes in the real revenues and jobs opportunities require domestic groups to strengthen their role as direct economic agents, in the specialized units of production and management of workforce and consumption (Cortes and Rubalcava, 1994).

The importance of the family as a unit for the economic analysis is based on the supposed fact that it is an entity that takes joint decisions regarding the generation and allocation of revenue. It is this possibility of action that makes the family a fundamental unit of importance in the study of income inequalities (Kuznets, 1978).

According to Rubalcava (2001), from a socioeconomic and demographic perspective, the family incomes are an alternative study to understand the strategies adopted to survive by domestic groups, while providing insight into the use of family resources in generating revenues needed for their subsistence.

In a very important proportion, the main resource for monetary income constitutes the workforce of people which are responsible for generating the family revenues. Also, Garcia and Pacheco (2000) marked out that majority of people that is in part of the Mexican society organize their daily and generational support together in their homes.<sup>102</sup>

In this regard, it must be remembered that the differences between the forms considered by households to provide revenue will vary depending on the number of features. Therefore, domestic household composition and domestic organization (who and how tasks are responsible for allowing the reproduction of the unit inside or outside the home) cannot be neglected, as they are factors that help in understanding the changes in the distribution of household and inequality (Rubalcava, 2001).

Thus, the work that takes place in small establishments receives an increasing attention as a possible alternative for some population groups versus the recession that Mexico has experienced as an expression of struggle for survival of the family groups, and also as an increase response to the inequality of the macro structural context.

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<sup>102</sup> Look for Garcia and Oliviera (1994), Garcia, Muñoz and Oliviera (1989), Garcia and Pacheco (2000), Cortes (2001) inter alia

If you think that the family division is “(..)A *social process of work distribution based on the family status* “, it will undoubtedly have reciprocal effects on the work sphere of the family life and vice versa, considering an inextricable link between both phenomenoms(Barrerre-Maurisson, 1999:9).

Taking into account the relationships between the structure, the domestic unit organization and the different jobs their members performed, thus the people involved in two action spheres at the same time i.e. the family and the work are the major concern. This conception implies the need for an analysis that integrates both activity spheres; the family life and the organization together with the operational dynamic of the workplace.

The analysis of the links that the work keeps with the family realizes the close overlap of the workplace and domestic spheres. That is why both work and family should be defined specifically in relation to each other. This is because the family is inextricably understood because of their relation to the work, and also because the family is the place where a forced distribution of work activities is performed.

The operation necessarily induces the work negotiations among its members, to ensure the survival of the family unit since the maintenance of this cell constitute housework job resources that come from the work. The family can then be understood as the unit of reference governing the distribution between the work and the home, thereby allowing the regulation of both aspects (Barrerre-Maurisson, 1999)<sup>4</sup>.

Specifically, it should be taken into account that the modes in which this distribution is organized and the family forms are associated in different ways. Therefore, it is important to review briefly how the links have been between the family and the work, and fundamentally how they have been studied, with which kind of analysis unit, by which methodologies, the results they have attained, and how the analysis in the small establishments in relationship between the work and the family has been presented. But before giving way to this brief review, it should stop for a moment in considering the role the family which is understood as a reproduction unit will play.

In discussing the ways by which the work and the family have been articulated in an academic research, following Garcia and Oliveira (1998) and Garcia and Pacheco (2000), it proposes a periodization that shed some light on the nature and features that this link has been presented in time.<sup>103</sup>

During the fifties and sixties, characterized by urbanization and precipitated process and also due to strong changes in the economic

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<sup>103</sup> From this perspective, it can be thought uponas the family playing the role of a mediator between the development activities of its members in a domestic sphere and in a work sphere, i.e. between the home and the work (spheres that have been imbricated in this project).



structure, topics such as the analysis and the macro structural processes grasp has dominated the academic attention sphere. The outstanding topics analyzed in this period had to do with the dynamics and the characteristics of the industrial jobs, the changes in the organization forms of production, the expansion and the tertiary sector heterogeneity and the migration (Garcia and Oliveira, 1998).

Parallel to this process, studies on how economic and demographic changes were shaping different structures of opportunities for the people were considered. Likewise, several studies has began to incorporate the concern about the characteristics of the families and the influence of kinship in acquiring employment and occupational success, by analyzing the variables such as social mobility patterns and the social origin (Garcia and Oliveira, 1998).

In the seventies, migration to metropolitan areas of the country and how this phenomenon got an interrelation with the transformations in the work markets and also with the occupational structure has stood out. Of many studies made in that context,<sup>5</sup> the most important results indicates that the netting of relationships between family and friends that came to demystify arrived alone to the cities. In these studies, the traits and characteristics of the origin families are present as determinant of schooling and the occupation of the persons (García and Oliveira, 1998).<sup>104</sup>

Even though the family is not yet a central goal in the investigations about the work markets in these studies, they were important backgrounds to understand the emphasis subsequently granted to the families, as units of analysis in the process of the supply work training.

During the last years of the seventies, the depletion development model (based on import substitution industrialization) began to become increasingly evident in Latin America. In this context, it became the limitation of a conception of the socio-demographic behavior, based only on an aggregate of isolated people. Hence, we attempted to retrieve items as modes of production, social classes, and the conflict, so as to understand the reproduction of the society and accept the work force as a part of the reproduction of the society as a whole. The plane structures, the interest in social groups, their interaction areas, and their influence on the demographic behavior was began to be emphasized (Garcia and Oliveira, 1998)

Thus, there emerges a clear and explicit interest in the domestic unit and the family understood it as places where persons organize their daily and generational reproduction, and where the socialization of new members take

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<sup>104</sup> Among the studies that stand out are the study of Monterrey of Balan, Browning and Jelin, 1974 and the one of Mexico city of Muñoz, Oliviera and Stern, 1981, aforementioned in Garcia and Oliviera, 1994.

place and the strengthening of the meanings and motivations that the group activities is based on (Garcia and Oliveira, 1998).

Also in relation with the work markets, it has been noted that the economic dynamics did nothing, but only emphasize the importance of the nettings and family characteristics in maintaining people. The research on job market from this perspective “(...) *is to analyze how the participation of men and women in the economic activity is affected by the fact that they live the most of the time in their families and organized their support together. Belonging to a home implies sharing an experience of common life, to find multiple stimuli or obstacles to the individual’s action*” (Garcia, Muñoz and Oliveira, 1989).

In the same line of analysis, other authors emphatically stated that “(...) *the survival of the people depend largely on the domestic unit, as it is the main defense against unemployment, insufficient personal entrance, and the old age or the disease*” (Margulis, Rendon and Pedrero, 1981:298).

In the period of the nineties and the continuity and deepening of the economic problems of the country, some authors suggested that the family strategies are beginning to exhaust its possibilities while they no longer give an answer to the problem of the survival of domestic units (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000).

From this moment, it began to be evident that the increased participation in the work markets of wives, not only constituted an answer to the house with the lowest incomes, but also extended the domestic units of media sectors with labour schooled (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000). The increased participation in the work market of the wives has been associated with the expansion of employment opportunities for some women with higher pupilage, with the decline in fertility and especially with the answer that many women adopted to confront the decline in their living ties.

The research findings may arise in two dimensions: the first one as a methodological perspective and the other as a level of theoretical and empirical results. From the methodological perspective, the research on the work and the family has discussed the use of relevant concepts such as strategies for survival and reproduction, referring to both the set of activities that develop the domestic units to ensure their daily maintenance. The economic family participation is an essential component of strategies; hence, it is necessary to consider in this analysis other aspects, such as the unit counts or not with its own productive resource, the domestic work and the migration among others (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000).

Out of the main results, some conclusions were made to stand out: a) the domestic units guided by self-employed and registered as an important participation for women and children (Garcia, Muñoz and Oliveira, 1982), b) the labour participation of the members’ families ‘can be associated with

agents at multiple levels; individual, family and the broader socio-economic context (Garcia, Muñoz and Oliveira, 1982), c) In this same investigation, the authors found that in poor homes who base their support on the work of head household salaried manual, the economic participation of other members was found to be low (for the contexts and analyzed periods in Mexico) and d) From these and other researchers findings, Garcia and Pacheco (2000) indicate that the increase in the educational level of women have helped to shift gradually the demands of the monetary support family from the children to the wives and other adult relatives.

These findings and the recognition of the growing importance of women's work make it necessary to consider the studies of women's work in the articulation of the dimensions of work and family.

The female work within the peasant domestic units has been studied in various studies which addresses the problem of the behavior of peasant economies in Mexican society. Overall, these studies can be divided into two major branches. On one hand, those in which the role of women in the domestic groups is revealed as a determinant of the daily reproduction family, whose work is displayed in a diluted form within the set of economic activities of the unit production; and secondary to the one, the family chief performed, and in general to the other male members. In this aspect, the women's participation, within the social and sexual division of work at the inner of the domestic group is considered inherent to the natural condition of women and her social role as a housewife or mother. This slope is derived from the theoretical approach of "the peasant economic unit organization" of Chayanov (1981), and its reproduction in a social system is determined by a capitalist relations of production.

Otherwise, in the second aspect, the economic participation of women claimed the importance of the social role it plays in the reproduction of the domestic group. In this, it is argued that women's responsibility is not limited to the realization of activities intended for the daily maintenance of the house, but also covers those that generate economic incomes, but are considered marginal to the ones that the chief family performed, and it is assimilated even by themselves as part of their domestic activities. Thus, Garcia and Pacheco marked out that "*the female work is the cheapest resort when you have business or services that are provided in the family sphere*" (2000:53).

In this aspect in the first instance, it is a possible value of domestic work and not only for the social reproduction of the family component, but also as a producer of the job that will be consumed in the work market. Secondly, it can be read as a way to assert their participation in the household production unit and as important survival strategies that the rural and working classes of Latin American societies are confronted with the

necessity to perform, in order to address the deteriorating of their living conditions and the development process of capitalist relations of production.

The woman takes the largest workloads in this process, because in addition to having to perform the domestic chores assigned to her in the sexual division of the work, she have to participate more directly in the generation of incomes through the productive activities of the family and the paid work. In the context of this discussion, there is a need to vindicate the value of women´s work compared to that of the man, such as in the domestic sphere as in the work market sphere, and the need to establish the legal frameworks that grant equal rights to both.

But not only that the woman requires special attention in this research, the role of the sons and daughters is also highlighted in the work in small establishments.

Regarding the work of the daughters and sons, Garcia and Pacheco (2000), found that in the case of the daughters, civil status and schooling are variables that increase the probability of work outside the house. Likewise, these authors reported that the characteristic of income and employment of the house chief are significant for the probability of the outside work: if the boss does not pay manual worker, the probability of girls working is restricted.

Regarding the children, the authors indicate a higher propensity to work if they are between 30 and 39 years old, and have at least their complete primary education. Also, report that the propensity of children work is higher when the head of the house engaged an economic activity independently indicates that; *“The family business and the businesses of all kinds certainly rely significantly on the sons for labour; also, it is a source of employment perhaps irreplaceable for the young in times of economic crisis when scares employees´ work”* (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000:55).

The joint family and work in this research involves the link of two units; the domestic and the labour. Also, it involves the collection of people who assume different roles and the social relationships established between them. From a werbian approach, a social relationship is a behavior that implies the other, as it goes beyond the other´s behavior, and rests on the possibility that socially act in an expected sense. Thus, people in their relationships guide their actions mainly for three reasons: the habit or rules, the emotions and the feelingsis subjective; the goals or rationalitycompromises others expectations and resource acquisition and media (Weber, 1996).

In this action orientation, the people need to consider others to interact and socialize; and to negotiate their participation both within the family that are part and beyond. And that negotiation entails the exercise of

power and authority, and the establishment of different hierarchies in all areas in which people are related.

Within the family as an economic group, there is a necessary division and differentiation of tasks which accomplished reciprocity and dependence among its members. It is valid to ask whether the division of activities associated with the subordination of one sex to another functions. In what way have we constructed and valeted the hierarchies in the family? By what mechanisms is the division of task established? (Levi-Strauss, 1985).

These elements strongly linked with social relationships that people develop, are discussed and analyzed from a qualitative approach which was carried out during investigation.

Once positioned as family labour, it is proposed to analyze this familiar involvement in the specific cases of small establishments.

### **The Family Unit into Small Establishments**

However, factor that have also led to the increasing presence of microbusiness are present in the analysis of the incorporation of family members in the economic activity; increasing economic difficulties, the diversification of the few job opportunities, and the demographic characteristics (changes in schooling and fertility) takes the family looks to incorporate increasingly in the work market (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000).

The selection of the microbusiness as developmental places where the family is involved due to the hypothesis that within the small establishment is often a close relationship between the work unit and the family unit. Thus, the family is formed at the same time as a unit of production and reproduction. Therefore, the relationships that are held within the family are both family relations of production and reproduction (Garcia and Pacheco, 2000).

From the moment that the interest of this research is in searching the interaction between the family unit and the small establishment, it becomes necessary to think about the construction of the problem discussed in this literature, which contributes to the understanding of the incorporation of the labour family to the microbusiness work.

Returning to the discussion of the labour participation of the family, and focusing it on small establishments, Alba and Krujit (1995) indicated that in these works spheres which include the family participation for the analysis of the Mexican micro establishments “(...) *extended roles assumed by each member before, has reinforced or redefined the authority relations*” (Alba and Krujit, 1995:113)

The extension of the roles that are assumed and awarded often involves identifying the role of a person as a father (in the orbit of the family unit) and the pattern (in the field of the labour unit), (Alba and Krujit, 1995).

And not only the identification of roles, but also the integration of activities, organization forms, relationships, exercise of power and authority, which can be confused and integrated as a single unit of the family and the establishment.

Of course, there are no conflicts in the unit that integrates the familiar and work areas. Even the linking family and work can generate a shift during conflict situations; “(...) of their social and institutional dimensions, to an area of personalized relationships whereby the psychological occupies a prominent place” (Alba and Krujit, 1995:114) In relation with this shift roles, activities and even conflicts, Alba and Krujit (1995) stated that in the case of family business, transfer is generated from the house to the establishment and vice versa.

Another situation that can be reached when the units of production and reproduction have a strong link is that “(...) the size of the production unit allows the owner of the micro industry exercise a total control over the personnel” (Alba and Krujit, 1995:114). This linking of extreme closeness is between the owner of the establishment and its employees, beyond the scope of labour relations and it crosses and been introduced into the innermost world of the workers; family life. “The owner has a history of family worker, their likes and weakness, capabilities and problems between the industry members with a personalized involvement with functions of integration and they identity and serves as a vehicle of ideological forms that give cohesion continuity to the production unit” (Alba and Krujit, 1995:115)

In the analysis of small industry of Guadalajara, Alba and Krujit observed that:

- Once the economic units grow to be able to start expanding and not reinvested in the business itself, other small units or property purchased is been generated.
- There is an important diversification of economic activities across sectors, and it was discovered that the sectors with greater participation of family units and crafts workshops outside the family are agriculture and livestock, while that of manufacturing workshops are involved with other industries.
- “The brake position for small businesses to the vertical growth of its industries (...) is an alternative for maintaining the social control within the company. This also explains that in many cases, the medium enterprises is being divided into several small workshops, which increases their ability to maneuver to the physicist, sectioning workers, taking away force and cohesion and capitalize on cultural resources associated with the small workshop” (Alba and Krujit:115-116).

Thus, the form of organization that acquires work in small establishments provides insight to the nature and the function of the small production and the family relationships that “(...) exert a social pressure on

*work and constrict in and around the domestic unit”* (Alba and Kruijt, 1995:116).

This situation has been analyzed and discussed in the research by Beneria and Roldan (1987), who suggest that the distribution patterns and monetary control constitute an essential point of a style of marital interaction that form the basis of the household exchanges through its link in a variety of reciprocity, expressed through sexuality, parenting, personal attention, free domestic work, as well as the opportunity or the obligation for various household members to engaged themselves in paid job.

From an analytical perspective, Beneria and Roldan (1987) is within this grid of exchanges where it is possible to understand the integration of women into paid work as well as the limits and capabilities of their trading strategies. The flow mechanisms assists in the allocation and control of money into the domestic unit part of the sphere of decision making.<sup>105</sup>

These mechanisms are considered as distribution channels and exchanges of unpaid domestic work, exchange of quantifiable unpaid domestic work, and are linked by axis (husbands and wives contributions) which works differently depending on the stage of the family life cycle or the kinship composition of the households.

One important category (to start the discussion of the valuation unwaged work and the different forms to appreciate according to age and sex) to analyze the participation of family labour in small establishments, is compensation for work. The importance of unwaged workers can be understood as a response to households to assume economic problems and low incomes levels.

This type of unpaid work has been characterized by a number of elements; e.g the rate of women employed into unpaid work activities is higher than their presence in the retail sector, and basically in micro businesses (setting 1-5 workers) (Pacheco, 2004).

### **Some final comments**

We develop this document with the idea of providing answers about the form in how the micro business in the Mexican market has been conceived. In this respect, we can say that the small, micro and the small production units have had various forms of representation in the academic discussion of the work market; from underemployment and the underground economy to vulnerability, the quality of work and the discussion of the micro company generating job opportunities.

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<sup>105</sup> Industrial survey of Jalisco in which micro and small industries were classified in three substrata; cottage industry (3/4 staff are familiar), extra workshop (36.0% of workers are familiar) and manufacturing workshops (15.0% of workers are familiar) (Alba, 1995).

The universe of small establishments in Mexico has included from small family units framed in the informal sector, to the micro business segment producers, and both ends with very different economic logic of production.

In each one of these discussion, each characterizing that the various currents postulated theoretical discussion, can be organized into distinctive micro elements of the micro business known in Mexico at the current time; however, they are precarious to low productivity, mostly unpaid workers and family with a little relation to the credit system,—usually experience continuous growth.

As the working conditions inside seem to become increasingly unstable to the extent that work market heterogeneity complicates the relationship of these small establishments with the workplace, the participation of workers in this niche market would keep on increasing.

The micro businesses in Mexico are a segment where much is traditionally expected, but very little is known as a result of the real problems they face. Face with such a question, Briones (1998) indicated that small establishments expected to fulfill functions such as employment generation and thus become an efficient tool to fight poverty, and to become flexible in adapting to the environment in which they are inserted.

If we are analyzing or just watching what has occurred in the Mexican work market in recent years and decades, the loss and deterioration of the quality of jobs, the worsening working conditions (in terms of low wages, lack of benefits, lack of training, long hours, etc.), the insecurity of workers, the growth of self – employment and the growth of small business, small establishments, micro changarro, microenterprises or micro industries (depending on the actor mentioned) seem to be more associated with these poor conditions of life and work that holds the majority of the population a better state of the economy and creation of new jobs. Sure, do not rush, maybe this kind of conclusions can be drawn to see numbers and quantitatively analyze the phenomenon. Now considering the theoretical framework of analysis, what can be said of micro business?

Surely, the first thing that jumps out is the recognition of the small units linked strongly with informality and poverty. Eye not with the fight against poverty, but fight against poverty as a way of life. Thus, from the different theoretical currents considered, the microbusiness are associated with the subsistence, the precariousness, the survival with the problematic situations in the work market at the end.

One thing that is very clear is that the work market can maintain its operation and continue its existence without the full and complete inclusion of a large number of workers in it. In this sense, the supply and demand of the work can become a social constructions with great power differentials



between them, which is one of the characteristics of the actual labour market as a social construction composed of the previous two (Of Garza, 2000).

The relationship between the presence and growth of microbusiness and the development model as well as the type of current work market, may well be the context of growing insecurity which is associated and already noted to the processes of crisis and subsequent reforms and structural adjustments that followed. It is necessary to account for these situations not only by the equal importance of these processes, but by the need to frame the theoretical in a historical, social and economic context that helps to better understand the interpretations that are made.

The transformations that are occurring in a development model of almost all Latin American countries, has also impacted a generational change in the workforce. The prevailing development model (accumulation, based on the industry, with salaried jobs) has somehow determined the characteristics of the jobs and the characteristics before the changes have been blurred.

Now, what was good and generous by this model or what are the regrettable loss? Again, there are options to consider. Reminding the theme of the historical contextualization, Castell (1997) indicates that in the early nineteenth century, the salaried worker was practically a slave, devoid of freedom and independence. However, it is ironic when you consider that in the early twenty – first century, what you will be paid is an essential mechanism of inclusion and social mobility (Mancini, 2003)

The import substitution model had in the marginality its main characteristic analysis- Worth remembering the work of Lomnitz (1975) in which the author first defines the underserved as those occupations and unskilled manual devalued by the urban work market: “the common denominator of all these occupations is the lack of social and economic security”. Secondly, the author defines the social group as marginal through its structural position in the urban economy. Currently, vulnerability appears as the common denominator of studies in Latin American social structure (Pizzaro, 2001) and can identify the characteristics and conditions inside the microbusiness. Thus, you could say that such units are exposed to multiple risks.

Then, in what specific sense can theoretically relate the micro business with the characteristics of the work market and the dominant development model? First, both the self-employed such as micro- workers are exposed to situations of increased vulnerability from the conditions imposed by the external opening of the work market, since it implies higher demands of competitiveness in general and deregulation of the work market in particular. Hence, this in turn is related with the deterioration of the

welfare state, which purchased the system in Mexico import substitution corporate and selective (Mancini, 2003)

Moreover, the incorporation of the family into the work market reflects the impact the labour market dynamics have on family units, and has also demonstrated the depletion of family strategies and the increasing incorporation of spouses and children to the work activities

In this regard, he noted that “*family dynamics affects a variety of phenomena (...) so it is up to the theme of the wider world of work, among the phenomena that stand out are the social and occupational mobility, the choice of inserts the work market, and, of course, the career paths*” (Blanco, 2001) One might then wonder about issues such as the transmission of this type of work activities from one generation to another (one can speak of micro business and family traditions), and the possibilities of social mobility involving and real job opportunities involved Again, the question is how far and how small family establishments are small areas of quality in Mexico?

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